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The Primacy of Collage: The Crisis of Representation and the Truth of Hermeneutics in 1970s Architecture Culture

Introduction

Usually, architects such as Robert Venturi and Rem Koolhaas are seen as opposites—as belonging to entirely different camps in the architecture of the 1970s. This idea was popularized by Charles Jencks, who regarded Venturi and Scott Brown as "historicists", whereas Koolhaas and his Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) were placed in the category of "ad hoc urbanism".[1] Likewise, the break between Oswald Mathias Ungers and Colin Rowe takes center stage in a much more recent commentary, Pier Vittorio Aureli's *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (2011), in which Rowe's formalist approach to "collage" has been pitted against Ungers's politically charged idea of the "archipelago".

1 Jencks 1977: 87.

What I aim to show with these examples is that if we stick to stylistic categories only, or to narrow ideological assessments, we will fail to understand the crisis of representation that prompted these architects to think anew—with collage. As Reinhold Martin has demonstrated, stylistic labels fail to adequately characterize developments in architecture of the 'postmodern' period, the 1970s and 1980s.

What I instead propose, with this article, is to examine the 1970s manifestos laterally, aided by philosopher Thomas P. Brockelman's aesthetic inquiry into the phenomenon of collage. I contend that collage was not merely a random aesthetic tool available to architects in the 1970s; its popularity in the designs and publications of this period was rather a tell-tale sign of the crisis of representation and the culmination of the changing status of truth in aesthetic representation.

Interest in architectural postmodernism has surged in recent years, and four texts in particular have acted as focal points for the contemporary discussion of postmodernism: *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (1972/77) by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and

Steven Izenour, *The City in the City—Berlin: A Green Archipelago* (1977) by Oswald Mathias Ungers, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Riemann, Hans Kollhoff, and Arthur Ovaska, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (1978) by Rem Koolhaas, and *Collage City* (1978) by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter. In what follows, I will mostly focus on the three latter texts which all originate more or less in the intellectual milieu of Cornell University of the 1970s.

Some of today's rereadings of these canonical manifestos—conducted by Pier Vittorio Aureli, Alexander Eisenschmidt, Emmanuel Petit, Lara Schrijver, and Martino Stierli, to name just a few—are themselves manifestos, some are works of historiography, some aim to (re)define the phenomenon of postmodernism, while others seek to inscribe these postmodern narratives into wider accounts of visual or metropolitan culture.

Yet while all these works successfully transcend the narrow stylistic definition of postmodernism that was promoted and popularized by Jencks, and while they also succeed in breaking new ground in terms of how we think about postmodernism, their understanding of the phenomenon might not be radical enough to grasp the sea change of postmodernist thought. Furthermore, since the more 'operative' (in the Tafurian sense) of these works aim to distinguish between avant-gardist positions and conformist positions in order to instrumentalize certain insights, they have little to say about the intellectual climate of the 1970s in general. In contrast, this article aims at identifying a common ground in the 'collaged' projects of 1970s architecture culture and refrains from discussing the value systems of the avant-gardes.

Collage versus Montage

In spite of the fact that it does not comment on postmodernism at all, Martino Stierli's important study on *Montage and the Metropolis* (2018) is the only study to systematically consider aspects of collage/montage aesthetics in 1970s architecture culture. His contribution, in which he argues that montage can be considered both the "symbolic form" of twentieth-century modern urban culture and the successor model to the perspectival worldview of the Renaissance[2], fills a gap that had emerged between two separate research cultures: one that took visual culture as its object and another that dealt with urbanism.

2 Stierli 2018: 11.

But let us first turn to an unfairly overlooked commentary on the postmodern, for sometimes new perspectives on well-travelled terrain emerge from outside the discipline of architecture. In philosopher Thomas P. Brockelman's book on collage, *The Frame and the Mirror: On Collage and Postmodernism* (2001), both Rowe and Koolhaas have been included in the book's general search for 'collage' as an active principle in many media. What Brockelman aims to show is that the emergence of collage techniques—painterly, literary, cinematic, urbanistic, or otherwise—testifies to a postmodern crisis of representation:

> "The truth we find in collage is that there cannot any longer be an 'ornamental' art, an art that orders truth itself. In essence, the crisis apparent in collage is this impossibility."[3]

3 Brockelman 2001: 35.

Brockelman is concerned with the status of truth in art since around 1900. He finds that, at the time of the fin-de-siècle, academic art, and even some strands of avant-garde art (Gustav Klimt, for instance)[4], had descended into kitsch. It had become purely ornamental and was no longer capable of expressing any truth about society, culture, or existence.

Brockelman argues that truth can still be found in art, albeit in a fundamentally new way. And here the collages by Pablo Picasso serve as both model and metaphor for a radical (post)modernist redefinition of art. More precisely, if montage occupies an ideal role for Stierli, collage performs the same function for Brockelman. Yet, because of Stierli's adherence to the logic of the avant-gardes, he sees the surfacing of collage strategies within the confines of photomontage as an encroachment on the montage principle, although he also acknowledges, several times, that the "shock aesthetic has worn out at this point"[5]. This shock aesthetic, distilled from the urban lifeworld by the avant-gardes and first theorized by Walter Benjamin, is a pivotal point for both Brockelman[6] and Stierli[7]. This difference is evident from Stierli's treatment of the subject:

> "Collage is symptomatic of a crisis of representation, directly presenting fragments of reality rather than re-presenting them, whereas montage is the affirmation of the work of art in the age of technological reproducibility. Hence, montage embraces representation, albeit in an altered sense."[8]

4 Brockelman 2001: 23.

5 Stierli 2018: 159.

6 Brockelman 2001: 9.

7 Stierli 2018: 8.

8 Stierli 2018: 18.

The Communicative Position: *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*

Learning from Las Vegas is the earliest of the manifestos covered here, yet unlike all the other ones, the contribution by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour was equally as focused on architectural form as on urban structure, as the subtitle added in the revised edition suggests. Not only did the book devise new, innovative mapping tools that were informed by the *terrain vague* of Las Vegas, thus turning the architect into a cultural anthropologist, it also outlined a typological classification of the new, commercial vernacular at the roadside, thus completing the book's argument that the young, unplanned and car-based North American city was every bit as complex, layered, and meaningful as the archetypal, classical, and monumental European city (such as the one idealized in Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*).

Any architectural student of today will be familiar with the new typology proposed by the Venturis: the "duck" (a self-referential, iconic building, whose shape reflects its purpose and function, often sculpturally) and the "decorated shed" (a building where façade and building volume have no common program; the former being a vehicle for messaging and symbolization, the latter being a mundane, anonymous, and utilitarian facility of the modernist kind).[9]

The "decorated shed," the authors' favorite solution that, from their viewpoint, would enable architecture to regain the upper hand in the competition for perceptual attention from motorists, is symptomatic of the prag-

9 Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour 1977: 87.

matic spirit of 1970s manifestos: in order to preserve certain aspects of the modernist project, other aspects would have to be abandoned. To the Venturis, this meant detaching exterior from interior, thus radically reprogramming the definition of the art of building. By creating the split model of the "decorated shed," the Venturis formulated a solution to the building–street relationship that Koolhaas would later reiterate in his *Delirious New York*, except for the caveat that any notion of authorship had been rendered virtually impossible in Koolhaas's understanding of urban architectural making.

With the notable exception of Jencks's output, which falls beyond the scope of this article, *Learning from Las Vegas* is unique amongst the 1970s manifestos in that it maintains the presupposition that transparency of communication in architecture can be restored. All the other texts either disregard this issue or refrain from attempting to reestablish any communicative logic in the urban environment, and if we follow Emmanuel Petit's interpretation of these 'ironic' manifestos, they all contend that architecture is "not a transparent medium into the metaphysical Absolute."[10]

10 Petit 2013: 214.

The Aesthetic Position: *Collage City*

Collage is very often mentioned as part of the intellectual inventory of postmodernism, just like quotation, irony, contextualism, ambiguity, pastiche, playfulness, kitsch, and other tropes and themes. Several of the urbanistic meanings of the term came into play in the title of the manifesto *Collage City* (1978) by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, in which the principle of collage was seen as a possible escape route from the demise of modernist urban planning. To Rowe and Koetter, the heterogenous and chameleonic character of collage was attractive, as it offered a compromise between the traditional city and the modern one. The authors saw the blueprints of Versailles and Haussmann's Paris as totalitarian, utopian models for city building, and as an alternative they turned to the so-called "museum city" of the Biedermeier period, such as the Munich of Leo von Klenze. Such a city did not obey a centrist master plan but cultivated instead several improvised local monumental loci, yet the result still radiated a sense of classical order. They asked:

> "Could not this ideal city, at one and the same time, behave, quite explicitly, as both a theatre of prophecy and a theatre of memory?"[11]

11 Rowe and Koetter 1978: 49.

Just like other books of the postmodern era, *Collage City* also testifies to an interest in typology, and the authors established a principle of urban negotiation between typologies based on Gestalt theory. Rowe and Koetter argue that "the appreciation or perception of object or figure is assumed to require the presence of some sort of ground or field".[12]

12 Rowe and Koetter 1978: 64.

Because of their aversion to utopianism of any sort, Rowe and Koetter identify with the Lévi-Straussian figure of the bricoleur, who, unlike the engineer, improvises rather than programs[13]. The way in which collage acts as an active principle in this 'collaged' city is thus twofold: it enables improvisa-

13 Rowe and Koetter 1978: 102–103.

tion with “whatever is at hand” (the explicitly anti-utopian component), and it makes possible a coexistence of two dissimilar urban paradigms that stand for two opposing philosophies of urban culture.

Collage City was the first publication to turn collage into a working concept for architecture and planning, yet as of late the book’s message has attracted criticism for being complacent with the late-capitalist city. While Stierli merely finds the book marginal to his discussion of montage, Aureli rejects *Collage City* as a relevant manifesto for urban reconciliation between old and new. Both, however, see *Collage City* as an embryonic concept that is inferior to its later fulfilments in the theories of Ungers and Koolhaas, and both take issue with the dominance of Gestalt theory and formalism in Rowe and Koetter’s project.

From Stierli’s viewpoint, the ‘collage city’ of contrasting urban fabrics is not one governed by a dialectical principle, unlike the ‘montage city,’ and this makes it unsuitable for conveying the shock experience that is quintessentially urban and modern. Aureli shares the same objection—that the collage city is not dialectical—and additionally finds that Rowe and Koetter misrepresent a city such as Rome,

> “by collapsing its complexity into a single temporal layer. The potential for conflict was reduced to mere morphological variety contained within the informal framework of the topographic ground—the city’s irregular fabric—which in Rowe’s terms was meant to act as a poche between the different figures.”[14]

14 Aureli 2011: 205.

Rowe was not alone in searching for a formal vocabulary that could unite architecture and the visual arts—Sigfried Giedion had pioneered the idea that Cubism offered a new spatial paradigm for architecture—yet most theorists, especially the pedagogues of Bauhaus and New Bauhaus, such as László Moholy-Nagy and György Kepes, favored a visual paradigm—*Neues Sehen*—where photography was taken as the exemplary model for reshaping visual culture. In many ways, Stierli’s project of elevating montage to a “symbolic form” presupposes the tenets of *Neues Sehen*.

Rowe’s formalism belonged to a minority, yet influential current in architectural theory where the exchange between painting and architecture was explored and encouraged. Rowe’s interest in ‘pictorializing’ architecture and the city goes back at least to his collaboration with Robert Slutzky, with whom he authored the influential essay *Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal* (1955–56, first published 1963 and 1971). Here they distinguish between “literal” and “phenomenal” transparency in key works of modern architecture. Stierli, who finds a parallel between this idea and Sergei Eisenstein’s montage manifesto, credits Rowe and Slutzky with influencing, directly or indirectly, the developments of montage theory since 1945.[15]

15 Stierli 2018: 112, 207.

To conclude so far, Rowe and Koetter identified in collage a possible remedy for the failures of the Modern Movement that would allow them to maintain the modernist urban project as a depoliticized, antiutopian preoc-

cupation centered on aesthetic, typological composition and combination. They considered collage a technique that would enable the profession of urban planning to survive in a diminished capacity, thereby resisting the grassroots movements' call for abolishing planning altogether.

The Dynamic Position: *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*

With *Delirious New York*, the antithesis to the *Collage City* of Rowe, his former mentor, Koolhaas paradoxically provided avant-gardism with a fresh start by going back in time, by completely sidestepping the legacy of the European avant-gardes, and by choosing New York as his object of study. Similarly, by fueling his part factitious, part fictitious narrative of the genesis of New York with Surrealism, Koolhaas carefully aligned himself with the only avant-garde movement that had not impacted architecture and, consequently, had thus not been implicated in the downfall of modern architecture.

In this book, collage is no longer seen as a formal gesture that can be authored, appropriated, and used at will, but as the unruly autopoietic dynamics of the modern, capitalist city, which is perpetually in a state of becoming. *Collage City* was the last token of the British tradition for theorizing the picturesque townscape, and the uniqueness of *Collage City* resides in how the book's pluralist vision draws upon a combination of aesthetic and political liberalism. In contrast, *Delirious New York* does away with theory altogether, and only the forces, be it economic, technological, or desirous, remain.

The main point in *Delirious New York* is that New York has developed into a partial realization of the modernist utopia—not because of avant-garde theory but exactly because of the *lack* of it. The book charts a need-based modernism that has no need for theoretical support[16], and which has spawned new 'scripted' typologies—the skyscraper, the amusement park, the grand hotel—in no need of an author. Unlike the doctrinaire potential of *Collage City*, it is thus impossible to use Koolhaas's book as a foundation on which to establish a new architectural language that can be mastered and taught by the architectural profession, and in terms of typology, there is no end to the types that can be produced in the "culture of congestion" typical of Manhattan.

16 Brockelman 2001: 165.

Whereas Rowe and Koetter arrive at a compositional principle that can prevent utopia from ever gaining foothold in the city, yet use universalizing thought to do so, Koolhaas instead finds not a universal principle, but a real-life fact—the Manhattan grid, dictated in 1811—that leaves Manhattan "forever immunized against any further totalitarian intervention."[17] Being merely an enabling device, pure functionality, this grid does not represent anything, and its ruthless technocratic logic does not allow for accommodating any of the traditional European urban typology celebrated by Rowe and Koetter. In combination with the zoning ordinances of 1916 that provided a formula for the gradual setbacks of skyscrapers, the grid makes impossible the use of Manhattan as a testing ground for the urban utopias of the Corbusian kind, where the very principle of circulation were to be showcased and shaped ar-

17 Koolhaas 1994 [1978]: 20.

chitecturally.[18] Similarly, the individual ownership of plots and the competitive climate of real estate business further prevent any coordinated urban intervention from happening. The monumental arteries of highways and carefully sculpted skyline of Brasília cannot happen in unpredictable New York.

Just like *Collage City, Delirious New York* rotates around a structuring principle, in this case "manhattanism", yet

> "[t]here can be, in fact, no adequate compaction of the structure of delirious representation, the structure of manhattanism, into an adequate representation".[19]

18 Brockelman 2001: 175.

19 Brockelman 2001: 169.

Two Manifestos, Two Vestiges of Modernism

What unites these seemingly very different urban manifestos from the 1970s, in addition to their unison rejection of utopianism, is an acceptance of having to abandon some received dimension of modern urban planning—either its claim to totality, its institutionalization, its avant-garde ideology, its typological monopoly, or its universal applicability—in order to salvage some other aspect of the project of modernism, be it formal, aesthetic, social, or civic. Even *Learning from Las Vegas*, whose condemnation of modernism is quite outspoken, preserves modernism as a practical structure behind the *appliqué*.

Brockelman deems the struggle between presence and spontaneity on the one hand and representation and formalization on the other hand central to the emergence of the postmodern situation, and he finds that *Collage City* and *Delirious New York* each capture and promote one key aspect of modern urban life, yet are incapable of yielding a solution that can accommodate the totality of the urban lifeworld by means of urban design. And this inability to represent, to stimulate, or to alter aspects of urban metropolitan life is testament to how the impact of the postmodern has divorced meaning and representation.

The central ambition of the avant-garde was to facilitate a unification of art and life under the umbrella experience of the urban and thus to undo the divide that had been forming after the advent of modernization, rationalization, industrialization, and urbanization. They ascribed, often unadmittedly, to Richard Wagner's pronouncement of cultural crisis in the nineteenth century. Life itself were to be channeled into a reborn and reconfigured art based either on new media or on new ways of treating ancient techniques, or sometimes on both.

In his concluding chapter on the postmodern metropolis, where he compares *Collage City* to *Delirious New York*, Brockelman uses collage as a lens for understanding the crisis of the metropolis as a locus for civic life and the predicament of the discipline of urban planning. There are interesting similarities and divergences between Brockelman's treatment of these texts and Aureli's more recent, and more ideological, use of them, and both commentaries shed light on how collage is at work in the conflicting theories of Rowe/Koetter and Koolhaas. Brockelman considers both *Collage City* and *Delirious New York* antitheses to Le Corbusier's 1925 *The City of Tomorrow* manifesto

for rational urban planning, and finds that the two works offer contrasting, if mutually complementing reactions to the Corbusian program for radically redefining what a city is, and how it should function:

> "[R]eturning to a philosophical tradition that extends from Plato, Le Corbusier sees the task of the city as to *represent* reason itself and, in so doing, to reinforce reason as the very bond of community."[20]

20 Brockelman 2001: 150.

As Brockelman explains, it was a defining element of Le Corbusier's urban vision to reunite the divorced domains of feeling and reason, to make the new technocratic world amenable to an aesthetic worldview and to make art, life, and reason collapse into one, meaningful unity.

The orchestrator of this utopian synthesis were to be no other than Le Corbusier himself, and by casting himself as the genius aesthete and engineer combined who holds the ability to see both the problem and its future solution in totality, he introduced a powerful and recurring archetype in the gallery of modern architects. "The architect *humanizes* technological rationality", Brockelman points out, with reference to Le Corbusier[21] and this entails, in the case of Le Corbusier, a desire and an ambition to arrive at a "synthesis between utopian reason and modernist immanentism, the artist/philosopher and the engineer". In such a project, "nothing remains of the *difference* between the critical, rationalist moment and the essence of modern life", which is why it is "totalizing in the most violent sense".[22]

21 Brockelman 2001: 152.

22 Brockelman 2001: 155.

In the Corbusian *City of Tomorrow*, not only would the traditional urban fabric have either been disregarded or, in the case of Paris, used as a quarry from which to carve out the new, vast landscape that would operate as the *tabula rasa* for orderly rows of glass skyscrapers, the very idea of representation would have been rendered null and void. All that is left is mobility, transit, and speed combined into one, overarching ordering principle, and thus it would seem that Le Corbusier had devised the ultimate solution to the problem of how to give aesthetic form to urban life itself.

What Rowe and Koetter accomplishes, says Brockelman, is to establish an urban "countertradition"[23] built upon the figure/ground relationship as its core mechanism. In *Collage City*, which is inspired by Giovanni Battista Nolli's 1748 map of Rome, it is the spatial interplay between figure (building mass) and ground (open space) that constitutes the urban scenery—not any sole component, whether monumental or not—and this reciprocity, or undecidability, of the urban fabric holds primacy over any typology. In Nolli's map, the *poché* functioned as an indicator of public space, but for Rowe and Koetter this collage effect is no mere representational technique; it is a constitutive formal principle for the (traditional) city.

23 Brockelman 2001: 156.

If Le Corbusier's urban vision had prescribed voiding the city to make way for utopianism's pure field of action, *Collage City* instead "represents the impossibility of such a pure *field*".[24] Yet, as Brockelman makes clear, while *Collage City* abandons the *architectural* legacy of modernism, it does

24 Brockelman 2001: 158.

not forsake modernism as a *critico-historical* practice, since its authors insist on historical knowledge and historical situatedness setting a finitude for any urban invention.[25]

In fact, Brockelman argues that echoes of utopia can still be heard in *Collage City*; this time not in the modernist planning practice, which has been outlawed by Rowe and Koetter, but in the still-powerful role of the architect.[26] The architect's privilege to intervene in the city, to interpret its world of form—and above all, to make the 'collage' mechanism happen—remains unshaken, so as a replacement for the artist–engineer of Le Corbusier the authors cast the contemporary architect as the preeminent interpreter, theorist, and form-giver of the city.[27] Here, theory of urban form is still capable of generating morphological rules (around the same time, Rowe endorsed Rob Krier's rulebook for contextualist urban design).

Steps towards this new role were already taken by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour in *Learning from Las Vegas*, which, however, equips the architect with anthropological and sociological competences rather than aesthetic ones.

Collage City thus succeeds in reaffirming architecture's disciplinary control over the fate of the contemporary, post-industrial city. The architect has become a kind of curator who manages the inventory of the "museum city," where utopia has been confined to individual monumental edifices—sometimes evocating faraway places or exotic motifs—and is no longer allowed to serve as a source for the texture of the city.[28]

25 Brockelman 2001: 159.

26 Brockelman 2001: 159.

27 Brockelman 2001: 159, 162.

28 Rowe and Koetter 1978: 149.

Two Sides of Collage

Not only did *Collage City and Delirious New York* appear in the same year, 1978, they are also mutually complementing, Brockelman argues. If, for Rowe and Koetter, the task is to salvage the role of the architect as a modern, enlightened figure, the opposite task characterizes Koolhaas's project, which instead seeks to salvage the anonymous forces at work in the production of the modern metropolis, not the figure of the avant-garde modernist genius.

Both works capture one aspect of collage yet lacks another aspect of it. Both texts, however, crucially represent "the impossibility of such a pure field" of visual control as the one envisioned in Le Corbusier's urban schemes.[29] In *Collage City*, such a totalizing field is negated by "built forms that demand double readings"[30], and in *Delirious New York* "the grid transforms totality, robbing it of the ability to play a utopian role outstripping representation".[31]

According to Brockelman, the mechanism of the figure/ground relationship of *Collage City* transcends the established language of architecture, since only the components, not the spatial relationship itself, have corresponding terms[32], and, in the case of Delirious New York, "in disallowing an ontological distinction between 'levels' of discourse to stand, in insisting on the continuity between any languages, Koolhaas opens the possibility for an open and indefinite exchange".[33]

If we accept the general verdict of Manfredo Tafuri, architectural discourse has been trapped in a linguistic endgame ever since the Enlightenment, and

29 Brockelman 2001: 158.

30 Brockelman 2001: 158.

31 Brockelman 2001: 175.

32 Brockelman 2001: 160.

33 Brockelman 2001: 166.

this development culminated in the semiological and rationalist attempts of the 1960s to turn architecture into a closed system of finite types with corresponding signs. Most theorists active around this time had some sort of affinity with this project, yet "OMA refuses the [...] attempts to develop 'true' languages in recent years,"[34] Anthony Vidler observed, and Brockelman concurs.[35] This cannot be said about Rowe and Koetter who maintain the operationality of a pure architectural language.[36] This move gives them a tool with which to combat Le Corbusier's erasure of history and experience, but it is also a move that distances them from the true—un-instrumental—nature of collage.[37]

34 Vidler 1992: 196.

35 Brockelman 2001: 166.

36 Brockelman 2001: 162.

37 Brockelman 2001: 163.

Both Rowe/Koetter and Koolhaas invoke collage as a solution to the loss of the utopian possibility, but what remains of the polis in their proposals or fantasies, asks Brockelman. In the museum city of *Collage City*, the authors hope for "a reality of change, motion, action and history"[38] to take place, yet "the *idealization* of the public sphere *qua* public" leads to a formula where "culture is something to be absorbed rather than made", which "would spawn a purely scopic culture, a culture without the real possibility of meaningful engagement".[39] In spite of the fact that Rowe and Koetter distances themselves from the late-nineteenth-century disciplinary city—the object of Aureli's critique, as it happens—they accept the citizen-as-spectator role implicit in the museum metaphor. The collaged city is a place of tolerance and "a whole range of axes mundi"[40], yet the predefined static and historical character of the ensemble ensures that competing ideologies and viewpoints can only announce themselves in aesthetic form.

38 Rowe and Koetter 1978: 149.

39 Brockelman 2001: 163.

40 Rowe and Koetter 1978: 149.

So, for Brockelman, Rowe and Koetter succeed in breaking the totality of the Corbusian vision, but they fail to make room in their collage city for an active inhabitant, who takes part in interpreting and shaping his or her environment.[41]

41 Brockelman 2001: 164.

While *Collage City* fails to acknowledge the dynamism and productivity of the urban lifeworld itself, by simply reverting to a form-centric, pre-modernist model, *Delirious New York* outlines a city with no specific content but with plenty of action and eventfulness. If the museum becomes the emblem of the anti-utopianism of the collaged city, the anti-utopianism of the delirious city instead works by 'capturing' each utopian attempt, relegating it to a single plot only. In *The City of the Captive Globe*, a bird's-eye isometric fantasy by the soon-to-be partners of OMA, the utopia-preventing mechanism of the Manhattan grid has been illustrated. Here, various famous architectural proposals, built and unbuilt, including the Corbusian cruciform tower block, have been placed on pedestals, each towering on a single, identical plot. Almost like in a computer game, the snapshot-like, Surrealist fantasy orchestrates the simultaneous gathering of icons across time, compressing time into a single, imaginary moment. Importantly, the pedestals do not signify museification but rather separation—each project becomes a world unto itself, each governed by a singular logic. The result is "an *event city* or city *as* event. That is, it is *change itself, dynamism itself*–the excess within every representation–that is celebrated".[42] Thus, Brockelman concludes, "Koolhaas's vision

42 Brockelman 2001: 164.

marks a real victory. Finally, finally, the speed of modern life has been appropriated for those who otherwise would only *suffer* it".[43]

43 Brockelman 2001: 176.

When this aspect of Koolhaasian urbanism surfaces in Aureli's *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, it returns not as triumph, however, but as tragedy. For Aureli finds that such a vision marks the culmination of a long process whereby the city as an architectural project has been superseded by the city as a technocratic system with no room for political action. Infrastructure has replaced architecture as the driving force in the shaping of cities, and even the bold projects of the avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1960s failed to counteract this development.

This verdict was anticipated by Brockelman, who concludes that the shocking revelation of *Collage City* and *Delirious New York* is that there can be no polis, no space for political action, in the contemporary city. And it is the collaged messages of both pieces of writing that reveal this condition, directly or indirectly. In *Collage City*, order, harmony, and meaningfulness are restored to the city, urban space is available, albeit only as historical sceneries, and conflicts play out in aesthetic rather than political form, but the price to be paid for this gain is the loss of the modern subject, the incapacity to channel ideological confrontations into built form, and the loss of the unpredictability of the urban lifeworld. A remnant of the project of modernism has been preserved as the enlightened and critically aware architect–interpreter.

In *Delirious New York*, the very forces of modernity have been stimulated to the highest degree, and the quintessentially urban experience of modernity rules architectural production, yet the space of politics is nowhere to be found, as the grid facilitates nothing but endless capitalist cycles of production and consumption. Unlike the stasis of *Collage City*, events abound in *Delirious New York*, and the shock effect described by the avant-gardes has now been integrated into the commercial vernacular, yet these events are never directable towards political action, nor can they result in a locus for political identification.

In both visions, we look in vain for an architectural representation of political action, and thus they both inadvertently confirm that urban public space has been rendered commodified, meaningless, and irrelevant – if it exists at all. Culminating in *Junkspace* (2000), Koolhaas explored further this semantic and symbolic voiding of public space in his later writings. Brockelman finds that these two manifestos address the crisis of urban democracy—of the *polis*—in illuminating ways. For

> "each of them, like a spy protecting a code, holds half of the utopia of modernism itself. Each of them holds half of the double demand that we be able to build a world that would both represent reason–the uniquely human activity–and connect to the possibilities opened by modernity".[44]

44 Brockelman 2001: 180.

This epistemological interdependence manifests itself in two very different ambitions on behalf of urbanism. Roughly speaking, *Collage City* serves the purpose of honing the architect's interpretative ability and historical awareness,

and *Delirious New York* serves the purpose of stimulating the architect's ability to envision buildings as social systems, to learn from the typological legacy of modernism, and to prepare the architect to acquiesce, creatively, to the unpredictable impact of technological innovation on architectural making. This tells us that Brockelman's analysis can be augmented: What *Collage City* offers us is modernism condensed into an urban pattern that only makes sense in contrast, not independently. And what *Delirious New York* offers us is a fascinating, ever-evolving series of exceptional modern building types, which can never, however, be allowed to inform the city as a whole. As Aureli reports, this is why the mechanism celebrated in *Delirious New York* can be regarded as a precursor to the logic of 'iconic architecture' prevailing in today's megalopolises.

The Civic Position: *The City in the City—Berlin as a Green Archipelago*

The City in the City, which prescribes the archipelago principle as a solution to a situation of fragmentation and urban degrowth in the divided city of Berlin, was the outcome of a collaboration between Ungers and his followers, among which Koolhaas was the driving force, as evidenced by his first draft of the text. Recently rediscovered, not least by Aureli, who models his manifesto on it, the manifesto documents the productive meeting between Ungers's ideas on urban typology and Koolhaas's ideas on the confrontational coexistence of radically different functional programs.

What interests us here, however, is the fact that "[t]he concept of the city in the city [...] proceeds from a collage of different urban entities".[45] The notion of collage was pivotal to the proposal, and, unlike the speculative *Collage City, The City in the City* outlined highly specific remedial strategies for restoring urban order in Berlin—by converting urban wastelands into all sorts of green spaces and by densifying and intensifying the typological blueprints of the existing fragments of perimeter blocks, garden suburbs, and infrastructure. "The plan of the current situation is a book of events in which the traces of history have remained clearly visible. It is not a unified image but a living collage, a collection of fragments."[46]

Furthermore, again unlike *Collage City*, the selected districts, "so-called 'identity-spaces' should not be chosen on the basis of a particular taste or aesthetic conceptions".[47] For this reason, and especially for the reason that the imagined insular enclaves would have their own formal and ideological identity, Aureli finds the archipelago model to be vastly superior to the aesthetic collage model.[48]

With *The City in the City*, we find the collage principle transformed once more. By merging the ideas of Ungers, Rowe, and Koolhaas in order to confront a real-life and large-scale urbanistic problem, the manifesto makes the collage principle truly operational. As we recall, Brockelman concluded that civic participation was made impossible by the approaches taken by Rowe and Koolhaas in their respective books, but in *The City in the City*, "the city dweller in an open system may choose the identity-space that corresponds

45 Ungers et al. 2013: 106.

46 Ungers et al. 2013: 122.

47 Ungers et al. 2013: 94.

48 Aureli 2011: 210, 225.

to his desires and expectations". Its authors argue that "[f]or personal initiative and participation, the small entity always provides a much better field of operations than the city as a whole".[49]

49 Ungers et al. 2013: 96.

Echoing the tolerant vision of *Collage City*, the collage principle in the archipelagic city thus results in "a pluralist concept, in which many different ideological visions find their own places next to one another".[50] And Berlin is a particularly suitable testing ground for collage urbanism, for "[i]t is a city [...] where attempts at standardization under the aegis of a single principle have always failed".[51]

50 Ungers et al. 2013: 96.

51 Ungers et al. 2013: 120.

The first version of *The City in the City* was drafted by Koolhaas, and many of the ideas that would go into *Delirious New York* clearly shine through in embryonic form. His version of the Berlin manifesto devises radically collaged spatial maneuvers such as inserting Ivan Leonidov's unbuilt megastructures into the urban fabric or roofing over "the 1936 Olympic Stadium with one of Taut's domes".[52] What is surprising, though, is Koolhaas's endorsement of the Gestalt principle and of the use of typology in such a way "that the history of architecture would coincide with the history of ideas once more".[53] In the final version, where this sentence has been omitted, such a synthesizing ambition has been abandoned in favor of a much more skeptical and hermeneutic approach. For instance, the authors dismiss "the assumption that the city can be repaired to its former historical substance and configuration".[54] When they recommend to complete and augment the local typologies partially in existence, it is based on the realization that only formal manipulation is available to architects. Furthermore, the surviving typologies are not to be taken as exemplary models but rather as inspirational material.

52 Ungers et al. 2013: 16.

53 Ungers et al. 2013: 14.

54 Ungers et al. 2013: 88.

To Aureli, the advantage of *The City in the City* over *Delirious New York* is that the enclaves, being irreproducible and agonistic, refuse the general principle of urbanization:

> "While for Ungers the parts that compose the city are meant to oppose each other and are thus bound to the dialectical principle that something is united by being separated, for Koolhaas, the difference between the blocks is difference itself, where variations can unfold infinitely without affecting the general principle".[55]

55 Aureli 2011: 25.

The Crisis of Representation

By attempting to construe postmodernism as a necessary and dialectical next step in the internal development of modernism, Jencks failed to acknowledge the radicality of the postmodern experiments of the 1970s. In contrast, Aureli not only succinctly acknowledges the crisis in the architecture-urbanism relationship that emerged full force on the ashes of modernism, he also recognizes the far-reaching implications of Unger's archipelago model, even if his project is ultimately removed from representation in the sense discussed here.

What *Learning from Las Vegas, The City in the City*, *Collage City*, and *Delirious New York* have in common is, first, the awareness of the fact that

the traditional means of representation available to architecture no longer suffice when it comes to studying and conveying the contemporary city, and second, the recognition that the architecture-city relationship is in dire need of renegotiation and reconfiguration. Some of these books explicitly present a new theory of architecture and urbanism while others treat the question indirectly or site-specifically. And all of them zoom in on concrete, real-life cities, allowing the encounter with specific urban lifeworlds to inform their approaches and methodologies.

This turn to realism is key to understanding the collaged nature of the books' messages. They testament to a collapse of representation—both in terms of the impossibility of accurately conveying the urban lifeworld in all its complexity and in terms of the inadequacy of the means of representation traditionally available to architecture. Just when architects were discovering an extended field of means of representation in order to better describe the city—drawing upon techniques derived from Gestalt psychology, sociology, statistics, anthropology, art history, and so forth—emerging ruptures in the classical relationship between building and city called the very mission of mapping the city into question. This double reflexivity, which contains a certain skepticism, sets the 1970s works apart from their rationalist predecessors, such as Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960).

All these 1970s publications discuss the part-to-whole relationship between the city as a field and the building as an object (or as a sign), and all of them retain some aspect of the modernist project. In *Delirious New York*, Koolhaas divorces the project of the exterior from the project of the interior, and, in the case of *Learning from Las Vegas*, the same awareness leads to a situation where the authors' preferred model of "the decorated shed", in which interior and exterior likewise become unrelated projects, presupposes an acceptance of the anonymity, efficiency, and meaninglessness of the modernist 'shed' behind the screen-like façade. In none of these books do we find an "embodiment of the modernist dream".[56] To Brockelman, this indicates that we can only hope for a piecemeal understanding of the contemporary city, not a synthetical or holistic one. In other words, not only has the modernist utopia become out of reach, we are not even in a position to fully grasp, nor less represent, the actual urban experience. As illustrated by *Delirious New York* in particular, the modern metropolis retains its aura of enigma.

56 Brockelman 2001: 161.

Anti-Instrumentality—Collage versus Montage

Although many of these architectural manifestos of the 1970s sought to make new means of representation and new analytical tools available to architects, who would then be capable of using them instrumentally and systematically, they achieved the opposite—to cast doubt on the very idea of instrumentality that has otherwise been part and parcel of the architect's legitimation since time immemorial. This effect is especially prominent in *Delirious New York*, which does not offer any kind of roadmap for the future of architecture and urbanism. And even the message of *Learning from Las Vegas*, which pro-

vided us with the famous "duck" and "decorated shed" dichotomy and with a set of mapping approaches, was not readily translatable into other contexts, as the authors stressed the need to learn from site-specific environments. Similarly, *The City in the City* responded to conditions that its authors felt would soon become prevalent in other places, yet the conclusions of the study were inseparable from the peculiar conditions of Berlin.

Collage City presents us with a methodology yet does not specify how that translates into architectural or planning practice—and, unlike Koolhaas's more critical view of Rowe's philosophy, Tschumi's retrospective memoir credits Rowe with breaking down the binarism of established thinking about urban matters. He sees a congeniality between Rowe's collaged model and his own work on montage. [57] When Peter Eisenman complains that "*Collage City* introduced the idea of space, but only as a solid–void, figure–ground, gestalt dialectic, and again not in any way as generative material"[58], he indirectly confirms the work's lack of instrumental ambition, thus highlighting the elusiveness of collage.

Stierli asserts that montage "is the specialized tool conceived for the new purpose of representing the modern city".[59] Demonstrative montage, his preferred form, "is often employed in order to convey political or polemical messages".[60] In fact, the medium often serves "a didactic purpose"[61] and is "highly suited to propaganda".[62] Although Stierli clearly considers this a historical fact rather than a desirable quality, and although he rejects the "space of willed ignorance"[63] prevalent in propagandistic montage, it nonetheless emphasizes why collage is superior to montage when it comes to opening up avenues of epistemic inquiry and aesthetic revelation.

For, in contrast, Brockelman stipulates that "there is a kind of *truth* to collage, but that truth is precisely unsuited to articulation as an ideology". And he adds that "there is a truth of the postmodern [...], but this truth cannot be embraced, appropriated, made into the material for an avant-gardist ideology".[64] The ambiguity, incommensurability, and open-endedness of a collage composition elude totalizing interpretative efforts, and since collage has not been associated with the urban situation to the extent that montage was, it often offers the spectator a greater freedom of imagination and association. In fact, it might be a revealing point in itself that collage was never subject to contemporary, oftentimes instrumentalist, theorization to the same degree as montage was.

The potential of collage is directly related to its properties which differ from those of montage. In spite of its roots in the avant-garde, montage presupposes the conventionality and familiarity of photographic and cinematic representation, whereas collage resets representation as such and transcends mediatic boundaries. Both montage and collage share a common ground in their explicit constructedness—a feature prized by Stierli—,yet this aspect is often more prominent in collage. Both montage and collage might share a *non finito* aesthetic, yet, unlike collage, montage belongs solely to the realm of artifice, as Stierli acknowledges, and no trace of nature—in the sense of tactile

57 Tschumi 2015: 141–142.

58 Eisenman 2007 [2004]: 136.

59 Stierli 2018: 21.

60 Stierli 2018: 6.

61 Stierli 2018: 19.

62 Stierli 2018: 27.

63 Stierli 2018: 27.

64 Brockelman 2001: 8.

materiality—is to be found in montage. There is no activation of play between made and unmade in montage. It would also seem that improvisation plays a greater role in collage and bricolage than it does in montage.[65]

65 Stierli 2018: 21.

The last important difference between montage and collage that appear on Stierli's list is that montage makes use of prefabricated images from photography and film, whereas collage imports fragments of reality into its pictorial world. Montage is thus doubly mediated, being a polyfocal representation of elements already represented—"the medium of photomontage is itself based on an advanced technology of reproducibility"[66]—creating greater facticity, but also greater distance from the actual object. In contrast, Stierli notes, "collage is subject to tactile perception, at least on behalf of its maker; montage fundamentally is not".[67] And it is a defining factor of collage that this medium, more than any other avant-garde art form, achieved the oft-stated modern aim of merging art and life by importing real-life items, frequently as fragments, onto the picture plane. This aspect is crucial, as the presence of phenomenological and indexical traces of empirical reality serves to partially obstruct representation, and for that very reason collage cannot perform the epochal function—the "symbolic form" or "scopic regime"—that Stierli demands of montage.

66 Stierli 2018: 158.

67 Stierli 2018: 18.

Although it has several features and ambitions in common with texts discussed here, Bernard Tschumi's *The Manhattan Transcripts* (1976–81), which Stierli includes into his account as one of the most determined uses of cinematic montage in the representation of architectural space[68], deviates from collage practice exactly because the book's experimentation in many respects mirrors the typical properties of montage just described above. When Tschumi characterizes his drawings of objects, movements, and events as "first a device".[69] they become defined by their instrumentality, and, in spite of the fact that the "Transcripts always presuppose a reality already in existence, a reality waiting to be deconstructed".[70] they constitute a series of diagrammatic notations. Consequently, Tschumi makes clear that "the role of the *Transcripts* is never to represent; they are not mimetic".[71]

68 Stierli 2018: 223.

69 Tschumi 1981: 7.

70 Tschumi 1981: 8.

71 Tschumi 1981: 8.

Since a diagram, not being susceptible to hermeneutic inquiry, establishes its own conditions of truth, and since it is a generative tool, not a piece of representation, the self-referential manifesto of *The Manhattan Transcripts*, for all its dedication to architectural process and making, lacks the openness of collage aesthetics. In spite of radically divorcing form and event by Situationist strategies of *de-familiarization* and *détournement*[72], it schematizes urban reality in a way that reaffirms—in much the same way as *Collage City*—the primacy of a 'true' architectural language in our encounter with the city. For it must be stressed, again, with Brockelman, that collage is no mere technique—it is any art form in which we encounter an aesthetically mediated meeting between irreconcilable positions or worldviews, where both representation and its collapse are co-present, and where an attempt has been made to insert reality itself directly into—and in competition with or in violation of—the overall composition. The significance of this intrusion by reality in collage aesthetics was already acknowledged by Gregory L. Ulmer, albeit in the con-

72 Eisenschmidt 2019: 182.

text of literary criticism, in his contribution to Hal Foster's seminal anthology on postmodernism, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (1983). Here, Ulmer argues that the cultural critic operating in a postmodernist setting must apply "the devices of modernist art to critical representations", with "the compositional pair collage/montage".[73] Quoting Edward Fry on Cubism, Ulmer remarks "that the borrowed fragment is a signifier 'that would summarize in one form many characteristics of a given object'"[74], and this phenomenological expansivity also distinguishes collages from montage.

73 Ulmer 1983: 83.

74 Ulmer 1983: 84–85.

For that reason, collage—unlike montage—cannot serve the ideological end of making art available to the masses through increased reproducibility, and—unlike montage—collage is not dependent upon established media such as photography and film. Collage can appear in many forms, from the unique compositions of Picasso to the widely accessible printed messages of Koolhaas. What makes collage interesting as a key to interpreting developments in architectural postmodernism becomes clear when we look at the postmodern mainstream, where the Jencksian stylistic paradigm prevailed and shaped the architecture of the 1980s. By its emphasis on codification and its conventionality, Jencks's theory made possible the mastery of style by architects—in this case, of postmodernism. Yet despite its professed "Radical Eclecticism", Jencksian postmodernism, being rooted in semiology and sociology, was a return to rationalism, as it sought to return semantic stability and social meaningfulness to architecture. Its key notion of "double coding" reinforced rather than destabilized the modernist idiom as the necessary point of reference for all other stylistic developments.[75] Furthermore, it made possible an accelerated commodification of both architecture and urbanism in the 1980s.[76]

75 Steen 2015: 142–143.

76 Larson 1993, Boyer 1994, Martin 2010, Foster 2011.

Art and Life, Formlessness and Theatricality

The manifestos under discussion here have very little share of this formulaic and instrumentalized postmodernism. Although it might well be argued—as Hal Foster does[77]—that the Venturis created a blueprint for an aesthetically digestible architecture obsessed with the façade[78] and paved the way for New Urbanism, other aspects of their work counterbalance this tendency. Ritu Bhatt, for instance, suggests that the aesthetic message of *Learning from Las Vegas* "does not lie in the imagery of built forms, but in the recognition of the inflexion of buildings and billboards, in the recognition of the manner in which different typologies add density to the landscape".[79] In other words, part of the attraction of Las Vegas as a study object for the Venturis was certainly the collaged nature of the urban landscape, and it is worth noting that although there are scattered indications in *Learning from Las Vegas* of a semiotic framework for interpreting urban settings, and although their attention is mainly visual, the authors' mission clearly is to characterize Las Vegas as a total aesthetic atmosphere, in all its messy and random splendor, and in more than semiotic terms.

77 Foster 2011: 6.

78 Venturi 1984 [1978].

79 Bhatt 2009: 28.

Here it might be worth recalling the question of negotiating art and life in aesthetic experience. As Brockelman understands it, collage aesthetics is the most radical attempt at channeling modern life into art and architecture.

He exemplifies this by touching upon the notion of "theatricality," a central term in discussions about modern art ever since Michael Fried's 1967 critique of it. To Fried, the integrative aesthetics of theatricality—exemplified in the "literalism" of minimalism—runs counter to the project of autonomy that Fried (and Greenberg before him) identifies with the development of modern art. For minimalist art, or any other art form that "depends on the beholder, is incomplete without him"[80], is tied to spatial situatedness and relatedness, just in the way an audience is defined by the staged spectacle of theatre. As Brockelman understands this point, art becomes divorced from everyday life, as the artistic quest for presentness and immediacy only allows for a dedication to autonomous formal properties, not to social or relational ones. "[T]heatricality is equivalent to *artificiality*", Brockelman states[81], and to some extent the modernist ambition to arrive at an art freed from representation and built upon pure material effect means that art would attain the status of a new nature—exactly by disallowing any imprint of quotidian, real-life events on art. This was of course already the ambition of many a romantic artist, who sought to turn color itself, movement itself, or atmosphere itself into the very subject matter of art.

80 Fried 1998 [1967]: 163.

81 Brockelman 2001: 63.

Montage, still being implicated in a replicatory relationship with the life-world, is antithetical to formalist modern art, and it is exactly its artifice and its half-representational function that, for Stierli, make montage a privileged cultural lens with which to access modern metropolitan life. However, as collage is always composed out of part artifice, part artlessness, or references these dualities, it contains two aspects (or projects) of modernity: the representational function, necessitated by a historico–critical sensibility, and the immanent function, necessitated by a desire to reconnect with nature and by a desire to confirm the existence of the emancipated, autonomous modern subject. This 'natural' aspect of collage not only entails pure material or perceptual effects, for to Brockelman it also means "the invasion of human language by the *dynamism* of nature. Or [...] an art that literally takes on the characteristics of theater—expressive, gestural, sensuous, and active".[82]

82 Brockelman 2001: 67.

In fact, the aesthetic experience of collage makes room for a coexistence of both the modernist formalist program and the postmodernist theatrical program. It highlights a cultural dilemma, no less, for

> "the modernist threat to theatricality is also [...] a threat to the possibility of meaningful action. We are left with a choice between a world of a 'truth' that only pacifies, that leaves no room for active human freedom, and a world of 'experience,' that, while promising absolute spontaneity, offers no truth. In other words, modernity sees the slow death of *ritual*."[83]

83 Brockelman 2001: 63–64.

Invoking Saussure, both Brockelman and Stierli find that collage and montage operate semiotically, and Brockelman specifically acknowledges Rosalind Krauss's claim that Cubist collage practice seeks "the determination of meaning from within a system of differences rather than by reference; for in

collage, we find a signifier that literally seems to 'cover' its signified".[84] Thus, the immediacy and presentness that Fried asks of modern art, and that would lead to aesthetic autonomy, are out of reach in collage if the semantic operativity of collage is actually language-like, and not merely formal and perceptual:

84 Brockelman 2001: 66.

> "Modernism's goal is to objectify the formal constituents of a given medium, making these, beginning with the ground that is the origin of their existence, the objects of vision. Collage problematizes that goal by setting up discourse in place of presence, a discourse founded on a buried origin, a discourse fueled by absence."[85]

85 Krauss 1985: 38.

In many ways, these ongoing battles between formalism and formlessness, representation and presence, theatricality and autonomy, modernism and postmodernism define collage aesthetics, which remains frustrating because no synthesis or reconciliation can be arrived at.

If we return to the architectural positions of the 1970s discussed in the context of this article, they all confront the dilemma between form and formlessness in the city, they all acknowledge a crisis of representation, and they all seek to make the urban fabric and urban typology legible and meaningful once more, in whole or in part. Yet most of these texts also shy away from attempting to restore or recreate a universal key with which to decipher urban phenomena at large. Instead, these investigations remain site-specific, whether the object of study (and possible intervention) be Berlin, Las Vegas, Munich, or New York. They generate scenarios rather than solutions.

Conclusion: Collage Hermeneutics as an Alternative to Code-Breaking

To Jencks, "double coding" was merely a language game; representation as such was never under siege. In fact, Jencks's notion of postmodernism announces a more self-reflexive and evolved stage of modernism—in the Hegelian sense.[86] For that very reason, the influence of Jencks's stylistic postmodernism quickly waned, as it was neither very responsive to new urban developments – such as sprawl or shrinking cities—nor preoccupied with integrating new tools into the architect's way of working. The catalogue of form of *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* was best suited for singular, iconic buildings, and even the occasional urbanistic critique—of Le Corbusier's Pessac district—that would surface from time to time mainly focused on how to restore meaningfulness in architectural form.

86 Steen 2015: 142.

Contrastingly, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form, The City in the City—Berlin: A Green Archipelago, Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, and *Collage City* offer neither a roadmap to restoring the lost network of meaning in the historical city nor a general rule for generating signification on the level of the building (perhaps with the exception of *Learning from Las Vegas*). At best, the lessons of these books can be considered situated knowledge.

If we accept Brockelman's notion that collage is not only a formal strategy made famous by Cubism but rather an epistemological response to the problem of representation brought about by the experience of (late) modernity, we are able to see the radical developments of the 1970s in a new light— as projects depending on a hermeneutics for their qualities to come forth. As it turns out, the Venturis' *appliqué*, Ungers's archipelago model, Rowe and Koetter's project of aesthetic negotiation, and Koolhaas's Surrealist montages share a common ground, and this ground is an acceptance of the need for a new, two-way, split, double-coded, or meta-reflexive representation.

One result of this epistemic rupture, which necessitates collage aesthetics, is the distrust of 'pure' architectural experience. As Karsten Harries has pointed out,

> "What now matters is no longer the transformational power of beauty but the insertion of markers into a work that will occasion interesting thoughts—thoughts especially about architecture and its past, present, and future. Instead of that harmonious interplay of understanding and imagination in which Immanuel Kant sought the source of aesthetic pleasure, we now have a play of reason that lets us judge what is before us as interesting."[87]

87 Harries 2009: 93.

Harries convincingly asserts that postmodern architecture cannot be adequately understood without the assistance of theory, yet his claim that the successful aesthetic experience of today now rests upon "an aesthetic addendum"[88] fails to acknowledge the deeper implications of this observation. For that very reason, Brockelman takes issue with the interpretations in Harries's narrative, in spite of sharing much of his analysis.

88 Harries 2009: 93.

Harries might well be right when complaining that Venturian architecture treats theory as ornament, yet the importance of the theories discussed here, even the one by the Venturis, lies not in their intellectualization of architecture. Instead, they are epistemologically important because they rule out any possibility of returning to 'pure' architectural experience and 'pure' aesthetic signification. In these books, manifestos, and proposals, material reality destabilizes theory just as much as theory destabilizes access to aesthetic experience. This leads Brockelman to conclude that the strategy of collage "is the basis for an interpretive practice".[89] These works demand "the approach of a *hermeneutics*, an approach that mimes collage in emerging between the concreteness of a literary interpretation and the abstraction of a philosophical system".[90] He imagines

89 Brockelman 2001: 159.

90 Brockelman 2001: 14.

> "a hermeneutics, which would not be teleological, synthetic, or dialectical. So, let's say, instead of simply refusing totalization, collage hermeneutics totalizes: but the totalized knowledge that is its product informs us precisely of the *impossibility* of totalization."[91]

91 Brockelman 2001: 180.

Nothing is an addendum in this play between form and formlessness, life and art, nature and artifice, reality and imagination, and for that reason the

collaged experiments of the 1970s have—paradoxically—retained both their capacity to inspire and their aura of enigma. Exactly by not surrendering to pure instrumentality or pure codification, these works are constantly "productive of an endless series of historically finite interpretations".[92] A similar effect can be found in Umberto Eco's aesthetic definition of the 'open work'.[93] Similarly, as Stierli also observed, "the aesthetics of collage is fundamentally *ludic*, demanding an activation of the individual in relationship to the collage/work"[94], and the ongoing and intensified theoretic dialogue with these historical works, resulting in many different interpretations, attests to this inspirational quality.

92 Brockelman 2001: 161.

93 Eco 1989 [1962]: 21.

94 Stierli 2018: 164.

Several times Brockelman describes collage aesthetic as a kind of play—between the representational and the indexical, between the fragment and the whole, between art and life, and between utopia and reality. The notion of play will be familiar to readers of Hans-Georg Gadamer, in whose *Truth and Method* (1960) it is argued that "[a]ll presentation is potentially a representation for someone. That this possibility is intended is the characteristic feature of art as play."[95] Brockelman—who does not mention Gadamer—uses 'play' in a different meaning, however. According to Gadamer, "what we experience in a work of art and what invites our attention is how true it is—i.e., to what extent one knows and recognizes something and oneself. [...] The joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing more than is already familiar."[96] Yet the frustrating aesthetics of collage offer us only a partial recognition, and thus the hermeneutic awareness of which Gadamer speaks has to aim at more than just recognition.

95 Gadamer 2004: 108.

96 Gadamer 2004: 113.

Fellow hermeneuticist Odo Marquard calls attention to this problem when he claims that the experience of (post)modernity prompts an intensification of hermeneutic interpretative practice (and Harries's diagnosis echoes this stance):

> "It is *a reply to transitoriness*, and it is more prevalent the more the alteration of reality accelerates and thus produces more and more loss-of-familiarity, that is to say, strangeness. This is the case in the modern world."[97]

97 Marquard 1989 [1981]: 119.

> "The more rapidly everything in today's reality continually changes, the more the art of becoming familiar with something again—hermeneutics—becomes a necessity, generated by this speed."[98]

98 Marquard 1989 [1981]: 120.

According to Marquard, "hermeneutics *makes the transcendental* point of view into the historical one", and hermeneutic practice stands in opposition to "*code-breaking*" which is known "under various scientific names (as communication theory, as semiotics, and so forth)".[99] But code-breaking entails artificially alienating oneself from the phenomenological lifeworld and from daily life:

99 Marquard 1989 [1981]: 127.

> "The code-breakers start from a fundamentally foreign, nonunderstood world, whereas the hermeneuticists start from a fundamentally famil-

iar, already understood world: therefore, *the authority to which hermeneutics appeals is not a 'code,' but history*."[100]

100 Marquard 1989 [1981]: 129.

In the works by Ungers, Koolhaas, Rowe, and the Venturis, history returns —but not as historicism, not as raw material for random stylistic appropriation. In *The City in the City*, for instance, morphological fragments are recognized for their (re)generative potential, not only for their heritage value. This approach to history has recently been taken up by Sébastien Marot.[101]

101 Marot 2003 [1999].

The hermeneutic impulse governing the 1970s manifestos is also evident from their anti-utopianism. The well-known problem with the doctrinaire program of the Modern Movement was, in the words of Brockelman, that "when eternal reason corresponds exactly to historical reason, there is no need to preserve difference, to preserve the specific, the sensuous, or the individual".[102] In contrast, "[i]t's possible to use collage as an aesthetic weapon for resisting the establishment of any utopian totality, of any ultimate 'field' for the play of aesthetic vision".[103] And, as is evident from Marquard's 1979 lecture, it is part of the hermeneutic practice to call utopianism into question:

102 Brockelman 2001: 155.

103 Brockelman 2001: 165.

"But *must* one then get beyond history? One who does not get out of history, does not arrive at an absolute position. But *must* one then arrive at an absolute position?"[104]

104 Marquard 1989 [1981]: 130.

Marquard's reason for his skepticism has to do with the fact that "[i]n every future that is produced by a process of change there remains a quantity, always greatly exceeding the quantity of change, of derivation".[105] Unlike the theory proposed by Jencks, where history is instrumentalized in a nineteenth-century fashion, the positions discussed here treat our knowledge about history with caution and skepticism. The authors acknowledge the primacy of situatedness and the historical context, and in this they reject the tabula rasa ambition of modernism, yet they also acknowledge that the dialogue with history itself does not guarantee meaning, nor do monuments and other loci—as in Aldo Rossi's initial project on *The Architecture of the City* (1966)—necessarily retain their status as bearers of meaning in the city. They can be superseded or replaced by vernacular or commercial centers or building types, in a reversal of high and low culture.

105 Marquard 1989 [1981]: 116–117.

This attentiveness to random events and everyday life might sound like an invitation to an 'architecture without architects,' but it is worth accentuating that later movements, such as New Urbanism and Everyday Urbanism, either overstate the power of the architect (as in the former case) or understate the potential of architectural design (as in the latter case). They both fail to learn from collage hermeneutics.

Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1974) famously attacks the Icarian "projection that is a way of keeping aloof, by the space planner urbanist, city planner or cartographer".[106] And, in keeping with the book's phenomenological mission, this level of critique makes sense. Yet one of the

106 Certeau 1984 [1974]: 92–93.

merits of the 1970s architectural manifestos discussed here is that they succeed —by collage hermeneutics—in both preserving and reforming some valuable aspects of generic, modernist design culture while also adopting entirely new, lowbrow techniques. In other words, they do not forsake planning culture; instead, they bracket its claim to omniscience, they question its effective range, and, above all, they question its institutionalization. As a consequence, both the means of representation and the architectural experience have become fragmented and piecemeal—collaged, that is. They offer new ways of learning from and intervening in urban environments, and they stimulate reflexive attentiveness to the aesthetic function of representation.[107] For these reasons, the 1970s postmodern manifestos have retained their ability to fascinate and inspire new generations.

107 Petit 2013: 215.

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