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Author(s): Thomas Patin

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From Deep Structure to an Architecture in Suspense: Peter Eisenman, Structuralism, and Deconstruction

THOMAS PATIN, *Western Washington University*

This article examines the events that led architect Peter Eisenman to abandon his earlier mode of working, exemplified by his houses of the sixties through the seventies, and to begin his "deconstruction" projects, such as the Wexner Center in Columbus, Ohio. Eisenman's early concerns centered on late-modernist understandings of form, structure, autonomy, self-sufficiency, and strict self-referentiality. Through his writings, Eisenman situated his work within related theoretical issues that were circulating in the fields of linguistics, painting, and sculpture, using them as examples, analogies, and theoretical support. These other related disciplines reached a limit in the quest for autonomy and self-sufficiency due to the limit immanent in the logic and rhetoric employed to achieve their goals. The same deconstruction occurred in other fields, eventually resulting in theories called poststructuralist. This article explores the process through which Eisenman met such an impasse in his early work and began a more self-consciously deconstruction mode of working. I also consider how Eisenman's more recent work participates in an ongoing critique within cultural theory in general of institutions and power. Finally, I suggest that we reconsider just what deconstruction and post-modernism mean in architecture.

Introduction

IN A PUBLIC DEBATE WITH ARCHITECT AND THEORIST CHRISTOPHER Alexander at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the early eighties, architect Peter Eisenman was accused by someone in the audience of "screwing up the world" and by Alexander himself of "fucking up the whole profession of architecture."[1] The comments came toward the end of a long and spirited debate on issues of harmony, the history of architecture, and the role of theory in architectural design. A theorist as well as an architect, Eisenman considered his early theoretical writing on his designs and those of other architects to be as essential to his work as his drawings and models. (This attitude persists in his more recent working method, as well.) Each project was considered to be research into the "nature" of architecture or, more specifically as he put it at that time, into the "syntactic" dimension of architecture. In this sense, his writing was both descriptive and prescriptive of an architecture not of disharmony, but of self-reflexive complexity.

Eisenman prescribed for himself an autonomous architecture. According to critic Manfredo Tafuri, this was to be accomplished through the greatest possible reduction of the system of ambiguities that he had arranged through a distilled network of formal relations. Eisenman's main concern in this regard was with not allowing his "architectural signs" to stand alone, ensuring a controlled one-way decodification of these signs and preventing secondary languages from penetrating the text and charging it with "irrelevant meanings."[2] As Eisenman described the process and the importance of this general project:

> To distinguish architecture from building requires an intentional act—a sign which suggests that a wall is doing something more than literally sheltering, supporting, enclosing; it must embody a significance which projects and sustains the idea of "wallness" beyond mere use, function, or extrinsic allusion. Thus its paradoxical nature: the sign must overcome use and extrinsic significance to be admitted as architecture; but on the other hand, without use, function, and the existence of extrinsic meaning there would be no conditions which would require such an intentional act of overcoming.[3]

The statement contains within it many of the important elements of Eisenman's early work: his desire for autonomy and repulsion of extrinsic allusion and his interest in linguistics and disinterest in function. Most importantly for us, the statement contains the central and eventually deciding contradiction, what he calls here a "paradox," of his desire. That desire is that architecture be autonomous, not merely functional, while at the same time recognizing that without that external requirement of function there would be no architectural condition to overcome.

In fact, despite Eisenman's desire for an architectural system unrelated to any exterior reference, three important references to the external world in his early work help us to understand it: Eisenman's understanding and criticism of classical architecture; his critical relationship to modernist architecture, formalism, aesthetic autonomy, and his eventual theories of "conceptual" and "cardboard architecture"; and his intense interest in structuralist linguistic theory, especially that of Noam Chomsky.

The Classical, the Autonomous, and Syntax

Classical Architecture

Eisenman sees two assumptions running throughout the classical tradition of architecture, both related to classical notions of representation. First is the notion that it is possible to represent the essential quality of the human being by creating physical correspondences of the human body moving through space, and second, through a denial of the senses altogether, by using architecture to represent reason alone.[4] Architectural theorist Mario Gandelsonas helped to clarify these ideas by explaining that in classical architecture, from the Renaissance on, the definition of both subject and object was permitted by the idea of representation inherent in perspective.[5] The invention of geometrical perspective allows "reality" to be seen as if through a window.

At the same time, however, representation is itself complicated by the notion of the sign—something mediating and representing, in other words, semantics. Eisenman insisted that traditional architecture, beginning with the Renaissance, is articulated primarily within the semantic dimension, that is, any description or interpretation of buildings, in whole or in part, made by linking physical "indicators" to form, function, or expressive meanings. This production of "external" meaning, in his view, has always been the first step and final objective in any building. The *syntactic* dimension since the Renaissance can be described as functioning in the alignment of doors and windows, symmetry and proportion, but always playing a secondary role to semantics in architecture. In these early years, Eisenman often asserted that the classical relation between humans and their forms, including architecture, was no longer possible.[6] He saw this as the result, historically speaking, of an exhaustion of semantic variation and modification in both classical and modernist architecture. Eisenman shifted from the traditional strategy of architectural modifications within a semantic dimension to a play of architectural variation within a syntactic dimension.

Formalism and Autonomy

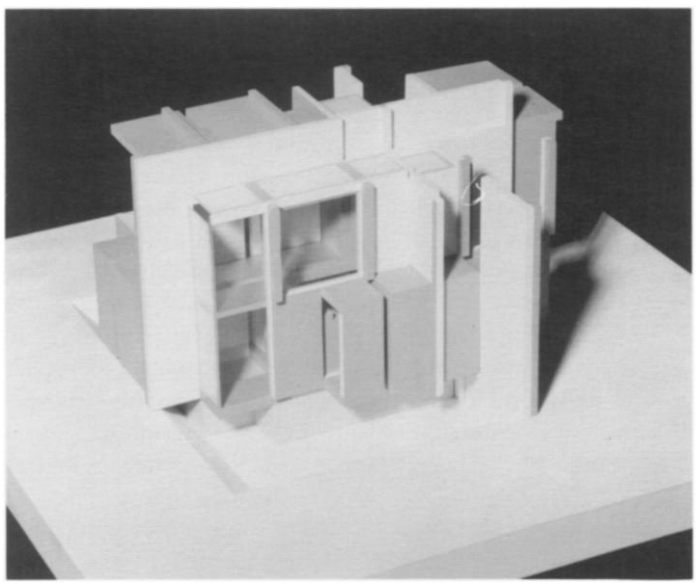
Eisenman was not uncritical of modernist architecture. He was especially so when it came to lingering classical influences. However, we must remember that Eisenman's early work was itself thoroughly modernist, something increasingly obvious as contemporary culture attempts to distance itself from modernism. The significance of modernist design for Eisenman was that in its most important instances it tended toward a conception of architecture as autonomous, especially in its efforts to pursue an architectural "essence."[7]

During Eisenman's work on his early houses, especially House I through House III, it became more apparent to him that the relationship between the human body and its dwelling had long been an "institutionalized signifier." Scale had been dependent on, and governed by the dimensions of the body, a convention that modernist architecture retained from the classical tradition. Eisenman worked for an autonomous architecture, "one not obedient to the traditional vectors of man. Man and the object would be independent and the relationship between them would have to be worked out anew."[8] Eisenman proposed that the architectural sign could be distilled by "reducing or stripping away the meaning and function of the architectural object."[9] Accordingly, House I took the form of "*reducing* the apparent structure to non-structural elements," whereas House II took the form of "*exaggerating* the structure through an explicit, nonfunctional redundancy."[10] In both cases, the work was accomplished through a concentration on what Eisenman understood as those formal and structural aspects of architecture. Eisenman saw the making of architectural form as "a problem of logical consistency. . . . Equally, the meaning which accrues to form may be in some way derived from the logical interaction of formal concepts."[11] In House I, "the attempt was to find ways in which form and space could be structured so that they produce a set of formal relationships which is the result of the inherent logic in the forms themselves. And second, to find a more precise control of the logic inherent in the relationships of form so that it may be invoked and understood in a way which is neither accidental nor tangential to the conception of the work."[12] House I was thus an attempt to understand the physical environment in a logically consistent manner, independent of its function or external meaning.

With hindsight, it is clear that in this early work Eisenman attempted to create an "opaque" architecture. As art and architectural critic Rosalind Krauss described opacity in *Houses of Cards*, it is "ultimately, a way of using the object as a lever on reality in order to essentialize a certain part of it. It is a moment of essentialization or reduction back to an ontological absolute."[13] Krauss further elaborated that formalism demanded a reading that converted transparency into opacity. The formalist distinction between transparency and opacity was crucial in order to differentiate between everything which was and was not art. Clement Greenberg addressed the opposition of pictorial, illusionistic art that had "dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art" (transparency) and modernist art that "used art to call attention to art" (opacity).[14] In modernist painting, the formalist saw the picture as first of all a flat surface upon which the devices of the painter were displayed.

Just as important to our understanding of Eisenman, the modernist artwork also was a cognitive object in so far as it is internally coherent, inwardly referential to its own laws and forms, and logically distinct from everything else. In architecture, the formalist critic Colin Rowe, with whom Eisenman studied in the fifties and who was, with Greenberg, an important influence on Eisenman's thinking, published a series of essays, beginning in 1963, concerning the issue of transparency.[15] Rowe distinguished two kinds of transparency, the "literal" and the "phenomenal."[16] Literal transparency is the use of glass or openings that allow one to peer through a structure. Phenomenal transparency describes the coexistence of phenomena that "interpenetrate without optical destruction of each other." In other words, Rowe sets up a dialectic between the literal or actual object and the phenomenal or virtual object. The former is the building that is made of physical facts, while the latter is the building that is made of layered implication, figuration, ambiguity, interpretation, and inference. The actual object is one thing, but the object that is a function of the viewer's capacity to organize and reflect is quite another, and it is to the actual object that our attention should be given. Rowe created a possibility of architectural organization without specific content and

House III, Lakeville, CT, 1976. (Photo by David Morton.)



House VI, Cornwall, CT, 1971. Study model. (Photo by Dick Frank.)

was differentiating the kinds of meanings that Eisenman would eventually identify with the *semantic* from those to which he would apply the term *syntactic*. For Eisenman, formalism meant the replacement of semantics with syntax. Eisenman was trying to connect formalism and linguistics logically. His choice of the terms *semantics* and *syntactics* begins to accomplish this. Even more so, Eisenman's acceptance of the notion that a thing is perceived as a sign within a field of differences attaches his thinking to structuralist linguistics. To cement the connection of his ideas of architecture to linguistics, however, Eisenman developed his theory of conceptual architecture.

Cardboard and Conceptual Architecture

According to Gandelsonas, a tendency to view architecture as a system of cultural meaning emerged in Eisenman's early work.[17] The architect attempts to explain the nature of form through the understanding of the generation of form as a specific manipulation of meaning within a cultural system. *Cardboard architecture* was first applied as an epithet to the work of Le Corbusier in the late twenties, because his work had a uncanny likeness to his models. Eisenman took up the term precisely because its associations with models signaled his interest in ways of generating structures and forms at the level of abstraction. "Cardboard architecture" also became a metaphor of intentions. As Eisenman explained:

1. Cardboard is a term which questions the nature of the reality of the physical environment.
2. Cardboard is a term which attempts to shift the focus from the existing conceptions of form to a consideration of form as a signal or a notation which can provide formal information.
3. Cardboard is a means of exploration into the nature of architectural form itself, in both its actual and conceptual states.[18]

Eisenman considered House I through House IV to be examples of cardboard architecture, and asserted that on examination "they reveal a set of rules for syntactic structures—which in their turn generate other formal structures for other buildings."[19]

Eisenman's notion of conceptual architecture was similar to cardboard architecture because of the insistence on underlying formal relationships. His premise was that architectural form is neither mere shape nor conventional sign usage (doors, windows, etc.), but has an essence that was "a set of archetypal relationships which affect our most basic sensibilities about our environment."[20] These relationships exist regardless of the "superficial style or shape" we may give to any particular piece of architecture. These relationships are manifested and only understood in certain juxtapositions in solids and voids. The term *conceptual* hinted at Eisenman's position within the formalist

and modernist system by focusing on the rift between object and idea and was related to classical notions of form by including an opposition between appearance and a deeper reality. To Eisenman, the conceptual house should take precedence in the viewer's experience of his building. In that sense, it was only *real* building. As Krauss described it, the visible building is to be mentally replaced by the "transcendental object" lying underneath it.[21]

Syntax and "Deep Structure"

From Eisenman's early perspective, architecture traditionally developed along semantic lines, sought solutions to problems imposed from external sources, and increased a dependence on external requirements. The uniqueness of his early work was that the semantic aspect had been absorbed by the syntactic. This work, and such a reading of architecture, required a method that was firmly founded on linguistic theory. Traditionally, architecture as a discipline had been especially resistant to linguistic theory. The impact of linguistic theory on architecture has been limited and not wholly positive. There is a limited knowledge of linguistic theory in architecture, as well as a confusion about what constitutes theoretical technical practices to begin with.[22]

In 1966, Eisenman began looking at other disciplines in which problems of form had been presented within a critical framework. This took him into linguistics and, more precisely, into the work of Noam Chomsky, which led Eisenman to make several important analogies between architecture and language and even to construct a crude hypothesis about the syntactical aspects of architectural form. There are, of course, vast differences in specifics between linguistic theory and architectural theory and practice. Eisenman's use of Chomsky's linguistics is more metaphorical than literal explication as such. For Eisenman, both language and architecture can be seen in three semiotic categories: pragmatics, semantics, and syntactics. Pragmatics relates form to function, semantics relates form to iconography, and syntactics distinguishes between the relations of the *physical* forms of a space or building and the *conceptual* spaces of a structure. Syntax mediates between the intended meaning derived from, or "generated" by, the "conceptual structure" and the possible distortions of this meaning.[23] Eisenman's interest in the "structuralists" began with his understanding of their interest in the "ontology of things as opposed to the epistemology of things, i.e., their internal structure." He was interested in the structuralist insistence on structure, what gets us beyond function to the "innate structure or order" of things. All this he contrasted with "the hierarchical, mechanistic, and deterministic order of the past 300 years [in architecture]."[24]

Eisenman found two ideas from Chomsky's work to be especially pertinent in this regard: (1) that it is possible and even necessary to separate semantics and syntax, and (2) that it is within the latter that we can further discern surface syntax and "deep level" syntax. Chomsky distinguishes between a surface or perceptual structure and a conceptual or deep structure. For Eisenman, the surface level corresponds to the physical aspect of architecture, and the deep level corresponds to the syntactic aspect. Deep structures, as Eisenman repeatedly referred to them, concern implicit, underlying relations, an abstract order.[25] Deep structures provide an abstract or conceptual framework for the formal regularities common to all languages.

Eisenman's interest in Chomsky allowed him to generate systematic methods of generating forms hitherto precluded from both the classical and modernist canons. This syntactic basis for architecture constituted a reaction against the perceptual, relativistic realm of conventional meanings. Eisenman's linguistic interests forced him to concentrate on the only objective material available to him, that is, form in its syntactic capacity. This "antifunctionalism" attempted to enclose all meaning within form. Any meaning emerging from the form must be reincorporated within that form.[26] A syntactic system, then, is defined as an interplay of empty positions and binary oppositions. In Houses I through IV especially, the signs do not refer outward to anything else, but rather to other shapes within the system.

Chomsky's idea of deep structure was especially useful to Eisenman. Eisenman saw it as a model for describing the processes by which the physical environment of architecture is *derived or generated from* a series of abstract formal regularities, another level at which formal relationships interact.[27] Of the two formal structures, one received from the actual environment and the other latent and only potentially received, the deep structure conditions the way we perceive everyday forms. Deep structure describes formal regularities and their transformation into a specific environment, while "prior condition" is a description of certain formal regularities that are juxtaposed in such a way as to produce a relationship with the actual geometry of an eventual building. This prior condition cannot be marked in itself and yet, for Eisenman, is present in the environment. As Gandelsonas explained it, deep structure allows for an analysis of the interactions of the surface and deep structural levels.[28]

This more easily allowed Eisenman to approach the surface level of architecture not as an end in itself, but as a site on which to mark the operations of the deep structure. Eisenman's early houses were representations of how transformations at the deep level of formal relationships acted on the surface level of buildings. The relationships between units in Eisenman's architectural designs are based upon complex systems of syntactical oppositions of line, plane, and volume. Oppositions of these syntactical forms eventually represent themselves at the surface or semantic level of architecture in corresponding oppositions of column, wall, and window or door.[29] Like-

wise, a limited number of spatial relationships can be considered archetypal, as Eisenman put it, pertaining to the basic nature of space itself. Eisenman's first four houses, for example, were basically variations on white cubes.[30]

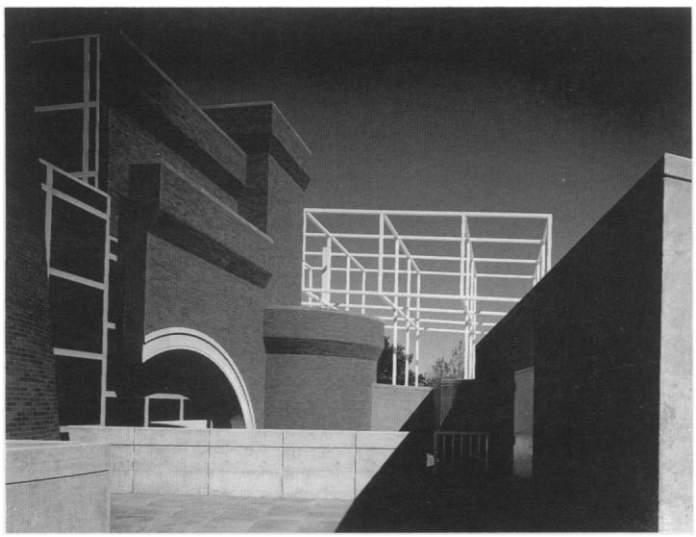
Chomsky described deep structure as partially defined by "universal rules. . . . which specify an abstract underlying order of elements that makes possible the functioning of *transformational* rules . . . that map deep structures into surface structures."[31] Chomsky's notion of transformation was crucial to Eisenman's process of architectural design. The relationship of deep structure to transformation is obvious. Eisenman's concern was with the building as a manifestation of a system of relationships, that is, with the architectural system as a *generator* of form as well as meaning. Syntax is then seen as a generative or transformational process, not only as a system of visual relationships. This syntactic generator of form replaces the traditional "external" or semantic generator of architectural form (the human body, rational ideals, function, and so on). Eisenman's work was "self-reflexive" in that it existed as its own representation. Drawings, plans, and models do not only lead to and represent the house—they *are* the house. As art critic and theorist Hal Foster describes it, this is a kind of "auto-architecture," representing itself in order to become its own representation.[32] Eisenman's early houses almost seemed to design themselves through his establishment of a transformational program seemingly free of authorial constraints. The object becomes the result of its own generative history, and yet retains this history, serving as a record of the process. The process itself becomes the object, but not an object in a strictly aesthetic sense. Instead, it becomes, Eisenman argued, an exploration into the range of potential manipulations possible in the nature of architecture yet unavailable to our consciousness because they are obscured by "cultural preconceptions."[33]

Aporetic Architecture

The quest for autonomy in art and "full self-presence" in semiotic theory, both disciplines to which Eisenman looked for theoretical guidance, had come to an impasse by the time Eisenman was producing his later houses (more on those "crises" below). Several similar "events" occurred in Eisenman's early houses, which he later realized were unraveling his general project. First, all formal relationships and spatial transformations of his early houses were theoretically the result of what he regarded as the inherent logic of the forms themselves. It was as if Eisenman desired an architecture so autonomous that it depended not on an inhabitant nor a viewer nor even the architect for its existence. However, unlike logic, as Rosemarie Haag Bletter tells us, the transformation of this architecture did not require logical manipulation.[34] It *required,* that is, *depended upon,* willful choice in the initial design move that *preceded* any possible logical transformation (the selection of the cube, its first division, and so on). Second, and this is related to the first, Eisenman's own extensive writings betrayed his desire for an autonomous architecture (as did the other explanatory devices of architecture used by Eisenman, such as drawings, models, exhibits with other architects, and so on). Despite his belief in an architectural form that was impervious to and exclusive of all external semantic requirements and significations, Eisenman's three-dimensional production was dependent on his essays to be recognizable as architecture, to be placed within the discourse of architecture, and to prevent it from being mistaken, for example, as minimalist sculpture (of course, such an object would have its own set of problems). Third, and this is an implication of the second, no inherently logical system (the use of the golden section, or Eisenman's own deformation of a cube, the extensive references to linguistic theory) is quite so logical that it *could not* allow the presence of other equally logical systems. Eisenman's architecture could not be totally autonomous, because the logic used to produce it was not autonomous—it was shared with other architecture and other discourses.

There was, however, another discursive system with which Eisenman's work shared a logic. As Richard Pommer observed, "Certainly [Eisenman's] shifting appeals to dubious absolutes have diminished the plausibility of his explicit efforts. . . . Nevertheless the ancient association of architecture with power and control over the world ... give to Eisenman's work a range of meanings deeper than his own rationalizations."[35] Indeed, Gandelsonas criticized Eisenman's discourse on universal underlying structure as sharing a logic with that of imperialistic bourgeois ideology. The specifics of his assertion are important, so I will quote him at length:

> This notion of universal [structure] . . . has the complementary function of erasing the fact that the architectural knowledge is owned and produced by a limited sect to the service of a determined social class. It is the notion of culture which is hidden or excluded which functions in a way to in itself "exclude" other cultures. For example, in the west "primitive" cultures such as savages and/or barbarians are excluded as are forms of the "Orient" which are accepted under the degraded form of "chinoiserie." This exclusion is a double one: of culture and of "other" cultures. The exclusion of culture implied by the notion of the universal can only reinforce the ideological machinery built during centuries by the histories of art and architecture. History orders buildings and objects in a hierarchical way through its uses of the implied opposition between Western culture and the rest of the world. The latter is always



Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, 1989. (Photo by D.G. Olshavsky/ARTOG.)

> thought of as the inferior replica of the former, without even the slightest suspicion that the inferiority might only reflect the inadequacy of a conceptual apparatus.[36]

Ironically, then, the early houses actually *reinforced* much that they were attempting to dislocate. The search for what Eisenman criticized as the center inherent in western architecture's historical anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism was, in fact, the same search for essence indicated in the traditional pursuit of architectural autonomy. The problem begins with the notion of autonomy itself, which, especially in the early houses, operated as an uncritical goal. In the end, autonomy could be seen as a concept that participates in the very discourse Eisenman sought to displace.[37]

Autonomy became more and more a fleeting apparition. The "architecture itself" that Eisenman sought so voraciously eventually seemed illusory to him. Even so, this problem was seen as a fruitful and positive one that allowed for further work and exploration. As he put it:

> That there is no autonomous, fully defined architecture, suggests the possibility of architecture's open-ended capacity for displacement, for new possibilities of meaning. The attempt at autonomy was a dream of illusory presence, of the denial of absence, of the "other." *Were autonomy possible, there would be no reason to undertake the process at all*. . . . The original goal of *autonomy*, once the source of the transformational design strategies, is no longer considered tenable. Rather than see the transformations as logical processes of discovery, they can be seen as processes of invention, fictions constructed in an attempt to dislocate the work from the tradition of presence in the architectural object. Absence, as an aspect of text, opened the possibility of a true dislocation of architectural conventions while remaining within the metaphysical discourse of architecture. It was this idea [absence] which progressively supplanted *autonomy* in the work after House VI.[38]

Eisenman then faced a difficult task: to dislocate that which he had been attempting to locate all those years before—essence, center, structure, exclusivity. Eisenman saw this as a paradox for architecture because of the imperative of presence, the importance of the architectural object to the experience of presence.[39] This problem only heightened Eisenman's interest in theory, especially the post-structuralist theories of philosopher Jacques Derrida. Already somewhat architectural in its figurative sense, Eisenman understood Derrida's idea of "double occupancy" to refer to "a presence of absence; a structure that reveals, signifies and contaminates the assumed ideal and the seemingly ordinant structure of the positive."[40]

Derrida's texts on the subject of "double writing," the paradigmatic reversal of hierarchy and subsequent displacement of systems within a text, also became important references for Eisenman. In his view, architects traditionally attempted to make the heterogeneous or the figurative a secondary event, while presupposing a homogeneous primary original event, the literal. Unity, sameness, and "origin" were always preferred over diversity, difference, and what seemed to be supplementary. Indeed, this was the attitude present in Eisenman's early search for the essential and the universal, for deep structures. This priority, in Nietzsche's view, is false, as this "Naturalization" is really a *redescription* for the first time, a fiction.[1] In fact, by the mid-eighties, Eisenman was seeing the task of architecture in more post-structuralist terms. As he phrased it, "Only when the architectural text dislocates this repression is it able to stop reenacting an endless nostalgia for the aura and authority of traditional presence and begin to explore its own displacing possibilities. In language, signs are not objects, but the indications of the absence of an object. Unlike language, architecture is both object, a presence, and sign, an absence."[42] By the late eighties, Eisenman saw his own work as involved in "the generation of fiction, histories, archaeologies, and narratives. . . ."[43] For example, he realized that the texts for his early houses, ostensibly explanations of the process of their making, were in fact, fictionalizations, misreadings, creations of unreal histories. The difference between the earlier houses and his later work is that the fictional text, the misreading, has become the project itself. An explicit dependence on misreading and fiction acknowledges itself as the absence of a sin-

gular architectural essence. In other words, Eisenman's more recent architecture includes *aporias*, or deconstructive events, within the structure, rather than a logic of autonomy. This forces architecture into what I would call an "aporetic condition."

Deconstruction, Space, and Power

Immanent problems in the discourse of aesthetic autonomy, such as those that Eisenman eventually encountered in his early houses, prompted contemporary theorists and critics within the arts and humanities to recognize several important interrelated issues. The remainder of this article addresses a number of these. Following a brief discussion of deconstruction, I examine the deconstruction of the notion of aesthetic autonomy in the field of visual art, which has, among other things, produced a recognition of a general dependence of art and other forms of representation and cultural production upon apparatuses.[44] This leads to a discussion of the museum as one prominent example within the general field of visual art (and particularly within architecture) of an invisible apparatus of autonomous aesthetics and related ideologies. Finally, I examine Eisenman's Wexner Center as a critical project that is in part implicated in the deconstruction of both the discourse of aesthetic autonomy and the museum as "invisible" apparatus. Ultimately, all of these issues, prompted by the problem of aesthetic autonomy in the cultural field in general, have a great deal to do with an understanding of the relationship of deconstruction to architecture.

In recent architectural discourse, "Post-Modernism" and "Deconstructivism" are often positioned as opposites or at least in such a way that they seem like two radically different architectural trends.[45] This opposition is curious, considering the wider fields of literary theory and contemporary art criticism. While it would be an overstatement to claim that deconstruction and postmodernism are posed in these discourses as identical, they certainly have often been widely understood as existing in a less oppositional relationship than they do in much architectural writing. This state of affairs prompts reflection on two sets of issues related to deconstruction in architecture: First, from the viewpoint of literary theory and philosophy, how is the term *deconstruction* being used in the discourse on architecture in general, and in relation to Eisenman's work in particular? Second, because so much of Eisenman's early theory was borrowed from art criticism and because there is in contemporary art theory and practice an ongoing critique (often associated with deconstruction) of institutions and apparatuses of power, especially museums, I am led to speculate on what architectural results could be anticipated from this critique and deconstruction. What would an architecture look like that had as its project a critique of institutions and power? Is Eisenman's Wexner Center, which I examine below, "deconstructivist" in this sense? If so, how? How does it accommodate art—or does it? Is such a museum even possible?

Metaphors in the Pharmacy

In an overly straightforward description, a deconstruction is a kind of *event*. It involves the use of so-called self-evident binary oppositions or conceptual pairs that are placed at the basis of an argument or theory. A deconstructive reading sees the pairs as written into a particular argument from the very start so as to give one term a privileged or ruling position over the other. The first term is presented as primary and ontologically prior (coming first in the presentation of the pair as well as being seen as having existed first), while the other term is secondary and serves as a supplement to the first.[46] This opposition would control the meaning of the argument and restrict its possible direction and outcome. Through a close reading, a crucial point in a text or argument is located where its logic and rhetoric (*what* it says and *how* it says it) contradict one another. As described earlier, this point is called an *aporia*. The first term announces its own partial complicity with, dependence upon, and circumscription by the term it would suppress. The whole argument becomes suspect, destructured or decentered, and loses its power to convince. A *reversal* occurs, whereby the ruling term becomes governed by the other term. The extent to which philosophy, architecture, art, and other practices are fields of discursive struggle, while posed as disinterested scholarship or reflection, is made more obvious. This predicament is often the concern of deconstructive writing along with *différance*, supplementarity, free-play, dissemination, and so on, or the conditions of signification after a deconstruction.[47] As one consequence of a deconstruction, the extent to which philosophy, architecture, art, and other practices are fields of discursive struggle, while posed as disinterested scholarship or reflection, becomes more obvious.

Derrida's best-known "example" of a deconstruction is discussed in his essay "Plato's Pharmacy."[48] It concerns Plato's dialogue "Phaedrus," in which there is a discussion regarding the nature of speech and writing and the implications they have for epistemology and the search for truth.[49] In the dialogue, Socrates states that speech is preferred to writing. Socrates designates speech as the correct vehicle for truth, while writing is coupled with rhetoric and painting, as an "art." Speech, the "living word," has a "soul," while writing is "no more than an image." Since it originates from the body, speech is presented as having a prior existence to writing, which is seen as a mere representation of speech, a supplement. Derrida's concern with "Phaedrus" is the repeated use of metaphor and analogy throughout the text. A four-termed metaphor is constructed between the two top-

ics: remedy is to poison as dialectic (speech) is to rhetoric (writing). Elsewhere, speech is to writing as form (truth) is to painting (illusion/image/representation). Socrates, in order to convince Phaedrus of the deception inherent in the art of rhetoric, constructs an identity of rhetoric (including writing and metaphor) and "the opposite of truth."

For Derrida, the fabric of Plato's argument unravels precisely at this point. Even though the logic of the dialogue would have us believe that speech is preferable to writing, it uses metaphor and figuration *extensively* to argue the point. Further, the dialogue exists only in written form and may have never been a representation of the spoken word.[50] Socrates, in such a scheme, is a character, a figuration, which, with writing and metaphor, was seen by classical philosophers like Plato as belonging to the art of rhetoric. The dialogue contradicts itself in a very crucial manner, one more serious than a mere contradiction in logic. An *aporia* develops. The very structure or foundation of the dialogue becomes suspect and weakened. The attentive reader realizes that not only may the assertions of the dialogue be unconvincing, but that the reverse may be the case: Writing may have preceded speech (Plato's writing may have preexisted Socrates' speech), and even human existence, or speech may supplement writing. Another possibility is that writing (or graphic representation) may be the only means to signify existence, but only as a trace of the *absence* of that existence.

The Deconstruction of Aesthetic Autonomy

Eisenman often employed art history and art theory to discuss his early work. His work enjoyed great similarities to the work of minimalist artists, such as Donald Judd, as well as theoretical agreements with the writings of Greenberg, Michael Fried, and Rosalind Krauss.[51] A brief explanation of the deconstruction of the discourse of aesthetic autonomy, as often exemplified by the work of Judd, Greenberg, and Krauss, would help to explain further the changes in Eisenman's architecture and theorizing about that work. Greenberg and Fried envisioned modernist art as progressing toward total autonomy. Greenberg perceived that art was threatened with assimilation into mere entertainment and academicism. Art could save itself by demonstrating that what it had to offer as experience was unique and valuable in itself and was unique and irreducible not only in art in general but also in each particular art. Greenberg understood the uniqueness of each art as located in its medium and claimed that modernist art excelled at eliminating all qualities not unique to its own medium. This purified each art and guaranteed standards of quality and autonomy.[52] As an example, flatness and the "delimitation of flatness" would establish the "legitimate boundary" of painting.[53] The artist's work would transcend such concerns as pictorial imitation, and attention would instead turn to the *processes* by which pictures of that world had been produced. Moreover, to Greenberg, there had been a progression of such purification, the history of which was a progressive surrender of modernist painting to its medium, beginning with Manet and culminating with a number of artists, such as Morris Louis. Eisenman's early preference of the syntactic over the semantic, or of formal relationships over iconography, found support in these ideas.

For Fried, the task of painting is to suspend its objecthood, to strive toward presentness, and defeat theater.[54] Fried envisioned art as something other than a "mere object," which is the condition of nonart. There developed, around 1960, according to Fried, a risk of paintings and sculptures becoming mere objects, as well as an imperative for artists to fight this possibility. Fried described the history of events leading up to this predicament as a "delusive" drive on the part of many "advanced" painters (no doubt due to a misreading of his writing and that of other formalists) to reveal progressively the essential "objecthood" of their work or for painting to become more like objects.[55] While many other artists and critics understood minimalism as a successful modernist project, extending the discourse of aesthetic autonomy, Greenberg and Fried understood minimalism as problematic, because it is especially dependent on the circumstances in which the viewer encounters the work for its recognition as art (the gallery and museum space—the same space that includes the beholder—as well as promotional information, artists' and curatorial statements, criticism, and so on). This theater redoubles the threat to the work of art by making it into a singular experience, by offering art to a viewer. This offering interferes with the self-sufficiency of art, requiring a viewer to affirm its existence. It became obvious to many critics that with minimalism the goal of self-sufficiency had been accomplished, but at the cost of that very autonomy.[56] It is through the institutionalized theater of criticism and theory that the autonomy of art is asserted, because art should not or could not signify anything *itself* and still be modernist. Alternatively read, the logic of the autonomy of the work of art is contradicted by the rhetoric of some or all of the minimalist artists, in the sense that the more that modernist artists worked toward that autonomy, the more objectlike art became and the more dependent it became on the institution for support as art. In other words, autonomous art is conditional, that is, contingent on criticism and theory.[57] Logic and rhetoric conflict. *Aporia*. Deconstruction.

Space and Power

Such a predicament has prompted many recent artists, architects, and critics to rethink and rewrite the relationship of the arts to the wider culture in which they find themselves. These events made it more

possible to see the already forceful relationship of discourse, power, and culture. The works of Michel Foucault have been most helpful in this regard.[58] As Foucault showed in his genealogy of the prison in *Discipline and Punish*—and this has been echoed by contemporary critics of art and culture—the mechanisms that organize us into disciplined subjects work through the body. Social order depends upon the control of people's bodies and behaviors, not thoughts. It is at the body where social and aesthetic theory stops being abstract and has its material effects. Space, as Foucault describes it, "is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power."[59] It would be no coincidence for Foucault that the rise of the public museum occurs roughly at the same time as Jeremy Bentham's 1791 design of the Panopticon prison and the "epistemic break" toward the end of the "Classical" epoch. Like the discourse of nineteenth-century life sciences, museums were and still are structured according to ideals of rigid taxonomies and classifications, and artifacts are usually exhibited in a unitary and linear fashion.[60] The extent to which museum visitors find the exhibition of objects meaningful, convincing, or at least agreeable is the extent to which the representational practices of the museum are in Foucaultian terms, "coercive." Becoming a subject in such a context means being a subject *of* discourse, but also being subject *to* discourse.[61]

The museum in general—and the Museum of Modern Art in New York is a particularly good example—is the space where the intersection of art criticism and theory works on the body to *naturalize* aesthetics and "veil" the institution. The art and architecture that emerge from the discourse of autonomous aesthetics are involved in a struggle for control over the representation of sensual experience, the discourse of the body, and their places in cultural production. Although MOMA has revised its arrangement of works over the years, the arrangement has usually tended to signify a teleology of the history of art toward autonomy. As such, artworks, architecture, and art historical and critical discourse intersect at the museum where the permanent collection of painting and small sculpture lies in an almost undisturbed chronological and morphological continuum from the late nineteenth to late twentieth centuries. This transformation of critical discourse on the visible into spatial fact allows the museum to function as an apparatus for an ideology of aesthetic detachment, disinterestedness, and autonomy.[62]

As a discursive space, the museum operates through exclusivity and well-defined texts, margins, and narratives. Rooms are devoted to artists or periods. Each room is then arranged in chronological order. The collection of rooms has a designated entrance and exit, with some floor plans in museum guidebooks including arrows to indicate directions for the visitor. The doors of the rooms are such that one must walk either forward or backward through the collection. Of course, throughout the rooms, artwork is hung on, or otherwise exhibited next to, white walls. The walls perform as the museum's textual space, providing a seemingly natural and neutral grounding for the discourse enacted as well as a means of marginalizing and separating the vast majority of visual products produced throughout culture. The bodies of museum visitors are led through the spaces in the museum in such a fashion that any vision of art, interrelationships between artworks, and their interrelationships with anything outside is heavily regulated.

For literary and cultural theorist Terry Eagleton, however, the project of aesthetics is one that is self-undoing. The very language, including architectural figurations of walls, period rooms, and spatial arrangements, which elevates art simultaneously proceeds to undermine it.[63] MOMA presents an architectural discourse within which art progresses historically toward an autonomy that is total, separated from literature, theater, and other cultural production. With the general self-undoing of aesthetic autonomy, however, it became obvious that modernist art succeeded in securing its "boundaries" within the discourse of the museum, but did so in direct proportion to polluting its purity and compromising its autonomy through its dependence upon the theater of architecture.

Theory, criticism, and architecture, when viewed in this way are apparatuses or techniques that go a long way toward fashioning the social meaning and function of sensual experience, and producing the possibilities for subjectivity. Aesthetics, again citing Eagleton, is a discourse about sensual experience, a discourse of the body, and is not ultimately concerned with art but with the project of "reconstructing the human subject from the inside."[64] The discourse on aesthetic autonomy in art and architecture, despite an ostensibly "purified" aesthetic, is a discourse that is distanced from both material sensuality and the predicament of the historical and material conditions of wider society. Aesthetic discourse becomes a "coercion to hegemony, ruling and informing our sensuous life from within while allowing it to thrive in all its relative autonomy," "inscribing" the body within its own laws.[65] Aesthetics is "an apparatus of power in the field of culture . . . which determines the political meaning and function of 'culture' as such."[66]

The Center without a Center

The recognition on the part of postmodern, or poststructuralist, critics and historians of the unavoidable relationships of culture and the wider spectrum of ideology and social power has prompted many of these producers of culture to produce objects and discourses that include in an explicit manner their complicity with wider social conditions and cultural politics. This takes various forms, of course. Some artists (Louise Lawler, Sherry Levine, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, Michael Asher, and Andrea Fraser, and many others) enfold a deconstruction or *aporia* within

their works, preventing narrow aesthetic readings. Others make explicit the relationship between representation, sexual or ethnic identity, and national or international media and politics. In other words, many artists, novelists, critics, and theorists have produced texts with built-in contradictions of the sort that force a critique of institutions and apparatuses. In this sense, we can, with justification and however loosely, term this work deconstruction or at least poststructuralist.

In the field of architecture, however, deconstruction does not always have such an understanding. One definition of deconstruction was produced by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley for the Deconstructivist Architecture exhibit at MOMA in 1988, an exhibit that included Eisenman. In the catalog, Wigley took pains to assert the nonrelationship of deconstruction architecture and poststructuralist theory, concentrating instead on a consideration of architectural *form*. Wigley eventually attempted to tie deconstruction architecture to a purified and depoliticized Russian Constructivism. The projects in the Deconstructivist Architecture show "complete" Russian Constructivism with a "twist," that is, they draw from and deviate from Russian Constructivism.[67] Wigley's insistence on the nonrela-tion of recent architecture to the deconstruction of literary theory leads me to two conclusions. First, Johnson and Wigley are wildly imprecise in assigning the term *deconstruction* to such a definition of recent architecture, given the already widespread use of the term in literary studies, philosophy, art, and cultural theory. Second, and this is more interesting and productive, this definition is inadequate, and further thinking about the relationship of deconstruction in literary theory and deconstruction architecture would be helpful.

A different understanding of the relationship of deconstruction to architecture can be gathered from Eisenman's recent writings. He insists that former ways of conceptualizing architecture be displaced.[68] To do so, Eisenman proposes four areas of rethinking. First, we need to reconceive architecture as "textual," in relationship to an otherness, trace, or absence. Second, this otherness or "two-ness" has traditionally been positioned in architecture as hierarchical categories, such as form follows function, ornament added to structure, and so on. The second term is usually positioned as within the first. The first term is therefore in a position of strength as well as existential and discursive priority. So the third of Eisenman's suggestions for rethinking architecture is to conceive of it as existing between, that is, as he put it, "almost this, or almost that, but not quite either."[69] For architecture to enter a post-Hegelian condition, it must move away from the structured rigidity of dialectical oppositions and explore the between within these categories.[70] This betweenness leads us to the fourth condition of a displaced architecture, interiority, that is, the unseen and the hollowed out. This deals with the textual condition of displaced architecture in which signs refer not outward, but inward. In such an architecture, these four aspects provoke uncertainty in the object by removing the architect from any control of the object. The architect is no longer the hand and mind of the design.

Three of the four characteristics of displaced architecture explained by Eisenman could also be said to describe very roughly the condition of signification as presented by the poststructuralist writing of Derrida.[71] First, otherness and trace in Derrida's writing refer in part to the condition of writing as representation. Writing signifies the absence of the presence of the author and is therefore a trace. Eisenman's two-ness corresponds somewhat to Derrida's critique of violent hierarchies, in which two terms in an argument or theory are posed in such a way as to give priority to, usually, the first term in a pair. A deconstruction as described above prompts an overturning of this hierarchy, a move away from Hegelian dialectics as Eisenman urges in his discussion of the third condition, betweenness. However, it is not always clear how post-Hegelian Derrida's writing is at all times. It also seems doubtful, to me, that Eisenman's notion of betweenness would satisfy someone looking for the reversal produced by a deconstructive event. The fourth condition described by Eisenman, interiority, is a puzzler in the context of deconstruction, for Derrida has made strides toward an understanding of textuality that allows for *différance*, the dissemination of signification, and more referencing *outside*, rather than within. This seems to be another serious yet productive misreading of Derrida's texts on the part of Eisenman, one which, ironically, is very possibly a reversion to earlier working methods. As he states, "I have probably misread Derrida's work, but misreading is in the end a way of creating, and it is through misreading that I succeed in living in reality and that I am able to work with it."[72]

In any case, the aim here is not to compare the Wexner Center logocentrically to either Eisenman's or Derrida's writings as a search for influences or origins. (Such an influence of Derrida on Eisenman seems to have been after the fact in the case of the Wexner Center.[73]) Nor do I propose to return to the thing itself, which would be an equally problematic method from a poststructuralist view. The aim is to consider the Wexner Center's textual operations, to ascertain whether or to what extent it always already enfolds a deconstruction, to see whether it participates in an analysis of architectural discourse that forces a recognition of the institution as an apparatus for the relation of culture and power.

The Wexner Center has been described as a nonbuilding, situated as it is *between* Weigel Hall and Mershon Auditorium on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus.[74] Eisenman's building consists of a glass-filled grid enclosing an empty space between these other buildings. The grid is repeated, with differing materials and scales, both inside and outside the Center to the campus, the city, and the state. Its limits are indeterminate, making even a simple descrip-

tion difficult. The Wexner Center depends on these others for its own definition and limits. It hardly functions as a particular shelter or enclosed space. It is a center that denies its own center, a structure that is post-structural. R. E. Somol writes that the Wexner Center "is most successful when it disappears, when it erases all planes of figure and ground, when its visibility is reduced to zero-zero.... Strictly speaking, the Wexner Center has no identity."[75]

The four spaces within the Center devoted to exhibiting art make up only about 15 percent of its "total" 100,000 square feet.[76] Unlike MOMA, these spaces are separated by walls, grids, and glass and do not allow for an unobstructed flow of traffic from one to the other. The galleries, once named Ohio Gallery, Main Gallery, and so on, have now been renamed A, B, C, and D Galleries, and are not designated for particular periods or types of art.[77] Hilton Kramer, editor of the *New Criterion* and long-time apologist for the modernist project, including MOMA, has described the exhibition spaces as ". . . eccentric and incommodious, . . . inhospitable to the showing of discrete art objects and thus so hostile to the kind of aesthetic experience we look to such objects to give us. . . . The unshapely exhibition sites . . . [will] pose maddening installation problems for the curators, who, it may be confidently predicted, will learn to despise every square inch of the space they have been saddled with."[78] This may be the case. The glassed-in grids allow a great deal of direct sunlight, and therefore shadows of the grids, onto the walls of the exhibition spaces at unpredictable and shifting angles. Similarly, many of the angles that make up the shapes of the walls, corners, and ceilings are as unpredictable as the ever-rotating exhibitions of experimental artwork installed in these spaces. The rhetoric of the exhibition space, ostensibly invisible at a museum like MOMA, is here manipulated to such an extent as to be unavoidable. The contradiction of logic and rhetoric, of function and form, the *aporia* that lay unnoticed at MOMA for so long, is enfolded into the very fabric of the Wexner Center.

Kramer's spleen-venting is one indication of the effects of Eisenman's design at the Wexner Center. It would indeed be inhospitable to the kinds of objects Kramer looks to for aesthetic experience. The spaces at the Wexner Center refuse to allow architecture to be a blank receptacle or background for the work of art. In this sense the Wexner Center challenges, or at least makes problematic, the hegemony of certain aesthetic ideologies, installed in MOMA and other spaces, which place the work of art in the foreground and the institutional support invisibly in the background. The Wexner Center suggests, as Somol insightfully states:

> that the project of looking and evaluating cannot be conducted from an innocently distant and contemplative space, but that the eye is always in a body . . . and that the building must therefore recognize and exhibit the tactile and *theatrical conditions of reception* for itself as well as for the objects it houses. In Wexner, the triadic relationships of viewer, object and setting [here, we could add institution] is made thematic with each term sliding into and redefining the others. If there is one consistent strategy manifested throughout the project it consists in this dissipation of hardened boundaries and established contexts and codes.[79]

Eisenman's early architecture eventually dislocated not only widely held notions of aesthetic autonomy and architectural function, but also wider notions of architecture itself. Clearly, if Eisenman's early design and theory are taken seriously, architecture can no longer be simply functional, but neither could it be autonomous. Eisenman's early work thus set architecture into a condition of suspension: It could no longer exist except as it is continuously distanced from itself; it could not be established except by undercutting its foundations. The extent to which Eisenman's later work, exemplified by the Wexner Center, is deconstructive is the extent to which he makes problematic and complicates, through rhetorical devices, the textual operations, specifically the rhetoric of architectural invisibility as an apparatus for ideologies played out in aesthetics. I do not want to claim, as an answer to the debate I cited at the beginning of this article, that Eisenman is saving the profession of architecture from ruin. What I wish to argue is that his more recent work, especially the Wexner Center, participates, intentionally or not, in an ongoing analyisis of architectural discourse and its relationship to institutions and power.

The approach to architecture and deconstruction taken in this article may also help with the problem of the usual separation of postmodernism and deconstruction in the field of architecture. If we agree with Derrida that "poststructuralism is basically what [we] mean by postmodernism . . . , postmodernism is poststructuralism in the widest sense of the word," then viewing Eisenman's work, such as the Wexner Center, as a poststructuralist *and* postmodernist project can enable us to reconsider what postmodernism in architecture has been all along.

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Notes

1. Peter Eisenman and Christopher Alexander, "Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture: Debate between Christopher Alexander and Peter Eisenman," *Lotus International* 40 (1983): 67.

2. Manfredo Tafuri, in Peter Eisenman, Rosalind Krauss, and Manfredo Tafuri, *Houses of Cards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 167–68.

3. Peter Eisenman, "Aspects of Modernism: 'Maison Dom-ino' and the Self-Referential Sign," *Oppositions* 15–16 (Winter–Spring 1979): 127.

4. John Whiteman in Peter Eisenman, *Investigations in Architecture: Eisenman Studios at the GSD, 1983–85* (Cambridge: Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1986), pp. 7–13.

5. Present discussion from Mario Gandelsonas, "From Structure to Subject: The Formation of an Architectural Language," *Oppositions* 17 (Summer 1979): 14; and Mario Gandelsonas, "Linguistics in Architecture," *Casabella* 374 (1973): 22.

6. See, for example, the arguments put forth by Eisenman in such essays as his "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End," *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 155–72.

7. Eisenman, *Houses of Cards*, p. 172.

8. Ibid., p. 177.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., p. 174.

11. Present discussion from Eisenman in Colin Rowe, Kenneth Frampton, and Peter Eisenman, *Five Architects* (New York: George Wittenborn & Company, 1972), p. 15.

12. Ibid.

13. Krauss, *Houses of Cards*, pp. 184, 168–73.

14. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in Gregory Battcock, ed., *The New Art* (New York: Dutton, 1966), p. 102.

15. Richard Pommer, "The New Architectural Supremacists," *Artforum* 15/2 (Oct. 1976): 42.

16. Present discussion from Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, "Transparency, Literal and Phenomenal," *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976), p. 170.

17. Mario Gandelsonas, "On Reading Architecture," *Progressive Architecture* 53-3 (Mar. 1972): 69–70.

18. See Eisenman in *Five Architects*, p. 15; and "Cardboard Architecture," *Casabella* 374 (1973): 24.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 25.

21. Krauss, *House of Cards*, p. 176.

22. Gandelsonas, "Linguistics in Architecture," p. 17.

23. Peter Eisenman, "From Object to Relationship II: Guiseppe Terragni Casa Giuliani Frigerio," *Perspecta* 14–14 (1977–78): 38.

24. Eisenman, "Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture," p. 60.

25. Eisenman, "From Object to Relationship II," pp. 38–40, 61.

26. This is not unlike art critic Clement Greenberg's appropriation of the word *content* into formalist discourse by assigning it the meaning of form. What we would normally call content was assigned the term *subject matter*. Similarly, Gandelsonas, a critic and apologist for Eisenman's early work, used the terms *form* and *expression* interchangeably. These are both examples of the extent to which formalism sought to undercut any discourse outside of itself. See Gandelsonas, "From Structure to Subject," pp. 8–9.

27. Present discussion from Eisenman, *Five Architects*, pp. 16–17, 25.

28. Gandelsonas, "On Reading Architecture," p. 85.

29. See, for example, Gandelsonas's reading of House II, p. 82.

30. Peter Eisenman, "House VI," *Progressive Architecture* 58/6 (June 1977): 57.

31. Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), p. 141.

32. Hal Foster, "Pastiche/Prototype/Purity," *Artforum* 19/7 (Mar. 1981): 79.

33. Eisenman, "House VI," p. 59.

34. Rosemarie Haag Bletter, "Five Architects—Eisenman, Graves, Gwathmey, Hejduk, Meier." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 38 (May 1979): 205–7.

35. Richard Pommer, "Some Architectural Ideologies after the Fall," *Art Journal* 39/3–4 (Fall–Winter 1980): 357.

36. Gandelsonas, "Linguistics in Architecture," pp. 29–30. For a source of poststructuralist approaches to the difficulties in the representation of non-Western cultures, see Thomas Patin, "White Mischief: Metaphor and Desire in a Misreading of Navajo Culture," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 15/4 (Dec. 1991): 75–80.

37. This is doubly ironic when we consider that Eisenman's main inspiration for the notion of deep structure was Chomsky, who, in addition to being known as a linguist, is also well known as a writer who espouses leftist and certainly anti-imperialist politics.

38. Eisenman, *Houses of Cards,* p. 182, emphasis mine.

39. See, for example, Eisenman's arguments in "Blue Line Text," *Architectural Design* 58/7–8 (1988): 6–9; see also Andrew Benjamin, "Eisenman and the Housing of Tradition," *Oxford Art Journal* 12/1 (1989): 51.

40. Eisenman, *Investigations in Architecture,* p. 14.

41. For an application of this idea to architecture, see Benjamin, "Eisenman and the Housing of Tradition," p. 52.

42. Eisenman, *Houses of Cards*, p. 185.

43. Ibid., p. 186.

44. This and other deconstructions of modernist and structuralist theories prompted a questioning and rewriting of the theories that limited and controlled discourses on a range of topics: femininity, cultural identity, and subjectivity, to name a few. Derrida's notion of the "always already" of deconstruction prompted several writers to rethink the history of those issues. See Brian Wallis, *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984); and A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello, *The New Art History* (London: Camden Press, 1986).

45. In his essay "Deconstruction, Post-Modernism and the Visual Arts," Norris poses postmodernism as a "prevalent misreading of Derrida's texts." See Christoper Norris, *What Is Deconstruction?* (London: Academy Editions, 1988), pp. 7–31.

46. Derrida has cited many prominent examples of this idea of the supplement: Claude Levi-Strauss's opposition of Nature and Culture (and the Raw and the Cooked), as well as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's evaluation of writing as a "dangerous supplement" to speech. See Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Eugene Donato and Richard Macksey, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), pp. 247–72; and *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

47. This summary of "classic" deconstruction is gathered from several sources, most notably Christopher Norris, "Jacques Derrida in Discussion with Christopher Norris" and Andrew Benjamin, "Derrida, Architecture and Philosophy," *Architectural Design: Deconstruction II* 59/1–2 (1989): 7–11. See also Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 40–55. Other sources by Derrida are *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), esp. pp. 95–119; "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy"; "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences"; and *Of Grammatology.*

Secondary sources abound, but an excellent one is Vincent B. Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

48. Discussion of Plato's "Phaedrus" from Derrida's *Dissemination*, pp. 65–156. See also "Phaedrus" in Edmund Irwin, ed., *The Works of Plato* (New York: The Modern Library, 1956), pp. 286–324. I evoke Derrida's reading of Plato here to give "an example" of deconstruction. Derrida's example is important due to the tradition that resulted from that dialogue and other descendent philosophical texts, that is, the Western tradition of "logocentric" philosophical discourse. "Logocentrism" can be defined as the desire for a "center" or "grounding" or original guarantee of all meaning. Derrida's critique of logocentric thinking shows how it represses difference and alternative thinking.

49. There are also discussions on art, medicine, and love. In fact, it is easily read that Socrates is attempting to seduce young Phaedrus. This is not to point to evidence that Socrates was "corrupting the youth" of Athens. It is instead to point out the extent to which philosophy and knowledge were and are used as tools—not only in the search for truth—but in the exercise of desire, will, and power.

50. In fact, it may be the case that Socrates himself exists only in written form. Recent scholarship suggests that there is more primary evidence of Socrates's existence as a literary "type" in Plato's dialogues and in Aristophanes' *Clouds* than as an actual person.

51. For a discussion of "influences," see Charles Jencks, "Deconstruction: The Pleasure of Absence," in Andreas Papadakis, Catherine Catherine, and Andrew Benjamin, *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume* (London: Academy Editions, 1989), p. 126

52. See Clement Greenberg "Modernist Painting" (1961), in Gregory Battcock, ed., *The New Art: A Critical Anthology* (new York, 1966), p. 102.

53. See Clement Greenberg, "After Abstract Expressionism" (1962), in Henry Geldzahler, ed., *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970* (New York, 1969), p. 369. This drive toward purification led to what Susan Noyes Plat has called a "ghetto of purity." See Susan Noyes Platt, "Clement Greenberg in the 1930s: A New Perspective on His Criticism," *Art Criticism* 5/3 (1989): 52. See also Greenberg's "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7/4 (July–Aug. 1940): 296–310.

54. Present discussion from Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton, 1968), p. 135.

55. Ibid., p. 136.

56. See, for example, Hal Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," in Howard Singerman, ed., *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945–1986* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986): 162–183.

57. Fried, "Art and Objecthood." See also Howard Singerman, "In the Text," in A. Goldstein and M. Jacob, *A Forest of Signs: Art in the Crisis of Representation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989) 155–66; Stephen W. Melville, *Philosophy beside Itself: On Deconstruction and Modernism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 3–33.

58. See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1979).

59. Michel Foucault, in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 252.

60. The present discussion on the history and ideals of museums is in part from Charles Smith, "Museums, Artifacts, and Meanings," and Ludmilla Jordanova, "Objects of Knowledge: A Historical Persepctive on Museums," in Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989). pp. 6–21, 22–40.

61. For a further discussion of discourse (and ideology), see Terry Eagleton, "Ideology and Scholarship," in Jerome McGann, ed., *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 114–116.

62. There is no essential MOMA. The arrangement described here is especially the arrangement of art in place in the mid-eighties to early nineties. As this paper goes to press, a new arrangement of the permanent collection is being installed.

63. Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 2.

64. Terry Eagleton, "The Ideology of the Aesthetic," *Poetics Today* 9/2 (Summer 1988): 327–30.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Mark Wigley, in Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988), pp. 10–16. For an interesting "re-politicized" revision of constructivism, see Hal Foster's "Some Uses and Abuses of Russian Constructivism," in Richard Andrews and Milena Kalinovska, eds., *Art into Life: Russian Constructivism 1914–1932* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), pp. 241–53.

68. Present discussion from Peter Eisenman, "En Terror Firma: In Trails of Grotextes," *Architectural Design* 59/1–2 (1989): 42–43.

69. Ibid.

70. Eisenman, "Blue Line Text," p. 8.

71. Most of the following issues are discussed by Derrida in *Of Grammatology; Positions;* and *Dissemination.*

72. Eisenman, quoted from Benjamin, "Eisenman and the Housing of Tradition," p. 53.

73. Eisenman: "I doubt whether I had read one page of Jacques Derrida when I designed [the Wexner Center in 1983]." From Robert Benson, "Eisenman's Architectural Challenge," *New Art Examiner* vol. 17, no.11 (Summer 1990): 27–30. I wish to quantify my use of the sign "Eisenman," in regard to the Wexner Center. Throughout my discussions I wish the reader to understand that the sign is used as a rhetorical device. The initial designs for the Wexner Center were done by Eisenman/Robertson Architects and Trott & Bean Architects. The later development of the plans and the construction were developed by Eisenman Architects and Trott & Partners. For purposes of this article, I am using the sign "Eisenman." See Kurt W. Forster, "A Framework for the Future" *A+U* 232 (Jan. 1990): 117.

74. The present description of the Wexner Center is from several sources: Benson, "Eisenman's Architectural Challenge"; Kay Bea Jones, "The Wexner Fragments for the Visual Arts," *JAE* 43/3 (1990): 34–37; and R.E. Somol, "Between the Sphere and the Labyrinth," *Architectural Design* 59/11–12 (1989): 41–57.

75. Somol, "Between the Sphere and the Labyrinth," pp. 45, 51.

76. Personal correspondence with Robert Stearns, then director of the Wexner Center, Apr. 28, 1992.

77. Ibid.

78. Hilton Kramer, "The Wexner Center in Columbus," *New Criterion* 8 pt. 4 (Dec. 1989): 7.

79. Somol, "Between the Sphere and the Labyrinth," p. 45, emphasis mine.