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The End of the Classical:

the End of the Beginning,
the End of the End

Architecture from the fifteenth century to the present has been under the influence of three «fictions.» Notwithstanding the apparent succession of architectural styles, each with its own label—classicism, neoclassicism, romanticism, modernism, postmodernism, and so on into the future—these three fictions have persisted in one form or another for five hundred years. They are representation, reason, and history. Each of the fictions had an underlying purpose: representation was to embody the idea of meaning; reason was to codify the idea of truth; history was to recover the idea of the timeless from the idea of change. Because of the persistence of these categories, it will be necessary to consider this period as manifesting a continuity in architectural thought. This continuous mode of thought can be referred to as the classical.

It was not until the late twentieth century that the classical could be appreciated as an abstract system of relations. Such recognition occurred because the architecture of the early part of the twentieth century itself came to be considered part of history. Thus it is now possible to see that, although stylistically different from previous architectures, «modern» architecture exhibits a system of relations similar to the classical. Prior to this time, the «classical» was taken to be either synonymous with «architecture» conceived of as a continuous tradition from antiquity or, by the mid-nineteenth century, an historicized style. Today the period of time dominated by the classical can be seen as an «episteme,» to employ Foucault’s term—a continuous period of knowledge that includes the early twentieth century. Despite the proclaimed rupture in both ideology and style associated with
the modern movement, the three fictions have never been questioned and so remain intact. This is to say that architecture since the mid-fifteenth century aspired to be a paradigm of the classical, of that which is timeless, meaningful, and true. In the sense that architecture attempts to recover that which is classic, it can be called «classical».

The «fiction» of representation: the simulation of meaning

The first «fiction» is representation. Before the Renaissance there was a congruence of language and representation. The meaning of language was in a «face value» conveyed within representation; in other words, the way language produced meaning could be represented within language. Things were; truth and meaning were self-evident. The meaning of a romanesque or gothic cathedral was in itself; it was de facto. Renaissance buildings, on the other hand—and all buildings after them that pretended to be «architectures»—received their value by representing an already valued architecture, by being simulacra (representations of representations) of antique buildings; they were de fide. The message of the past was used to verify the meaning of the present. Precisely because of this need to verify, Renaissance architecture was the first simulation, an unwitting fiction of the object.

By the late eighteenth century historical relativity came to supersede the face value of language as representation, and this view of history prompted a search for certainty, for origins both historical and logical, for truth and proof, and for goals. Truth was no longer thought to reside in representation but was believed to exist outside it, in the processes of history. This shift can be seen in the changing status of the orders: until the seventeenth century they were thought to be paradigmatic and timeless; afterwards the possibility of their timelessness depended on a necessary historicity. This shift, as has just been suggested, occurred because language had ceased to intersect with representation—that is, because it was not meaning but a message that was displayed in the object.
fiction of representation by asserting that it was not necessary for architecture to represent another architecture; architecture was solely to embody its own function. With the deductive conclusion that form follows function, modern architecture introduced the idea that a building should express—that is, look like—its function, or like an idea of function (that it should manifest the rationality of its processes of production and composition). Thus, in its effort to distance itself from the earlier representational tradition, modern architecture attempted to strip itself of the outward trappings of «classical» style. This process of reduction was called abstraction. A column without a base and capital was thought to be an abstraction. Thus reduced, form was believed to embody function more «honestly.» Such a column looked more like a real column, the simplest possible load-carrying element, than one provided with a base and capital bearing arboREAL or anthropomorphic motifs.

This reduction to pure functionality was, in fact, not abstraction; it was an attempt to represent reality itself. In this sense functional goals merely replaced the orders of classical composition as the starting point for architectural design. The moderns’ attempt to represent «realism» with an undecorated, functional object was a fiction equivalent to the simulacrum of the classical in Renaissance representation. For what made function any more «real» a source of imagery than elements chosen from antiquity? The idea of function, in this case the message of utility as opposed to the message of antiquity, was raised to an originary proposition—a self-evident starting point for design analogous to typology or historical quotation. The moderns’ attempt to represent realism is, then, a manifestation of the same fiction wherein meaning and value reside outside the world of an architecture «as is,» in which representation is about its own meaning rather than being a message of another previous meaning.

Functionalism turned out to be yet another stylistic conclusion, this one based on a scientific and technical positivism, a simulation of efficiency. From this perspective the modern movement can be seen to be continuous with the architecture that preceded it. Modern architecture therefore failed to embody a new value in itself.

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For in trying to reduce architectural form to its essence, to a pure reality, the moderns assumed they were transforming the field of referential figuration to that of non-referential "objectivity." In reality, however, their "objective" forms never left the classical tradition. They were simply stripped down classical forms, or forms referring to a new set of givens (function, technology). Thus, Le Corbusier's houses that look like modern steamships or biplanes exhibit the same referential attitude toward representation as a Renaissance or "classical" building. The points of reference are different, but the implications for the object are the same.

The commitment to return modernist abstraction to history seems to sum up, for our time, the problem of representation. It was given its "Post-Modern" inversion in Robert Venturi's distinction between the "duck" and the "decorated shed." 8 A duck is a building that looks like its function or that allows its internal order to be displayed on its exterior; a decorated shed is a building that functions as a billboard, where any kind of imagery (except its internal function)—letters, patterns, even architectural elements—conveys a message accessible to all. In this sense the stripped-down "abstractions" of modernism are still referential objects: technological rather than typological ducks.

But the Post-Modernists fail to make another distinction which is exemplified in Venturi's comparison of the Doges' Palace in Venice, which he calls a decorated shed, and Sansovino's library across the Piazza San Marco, which he says is a duck. 9 This obscures the more significant distinction between architecture "as is" and architecture as message. The Doges' Palace is not a decorated shed because it was not representational of another architecture; its significance came directly from the meaning embodied in the figures themselves; it was an architecture "as is." Sansovino's library may seem to be a duck, but only because it falls into the history of library types. The use of the orders on Sansovino's library speaks not to the function or type of the library, but rather to the representation of a previous architecture. The facades of Sansovino's library contain a message, not an inherent meaning; they are sign boards. Venturi's misreading of these buildings seems motivated by a preference for the decorated shed. While the replication of the orders had significance in Sansovino's time (in that they defined the classical), the
The «fiction» of reason: the simulation of truth

The second «fiction» of postmedieval architecture is raison. If representation was a simulation of the meaning of the present through the message of antiquity, then reason was a simulation of the meaning of the truth through the message of science. This fiction is strongly manifest in twentieth-century architecture, as it is in that of the four preceding centuries; its apotheosis was in the Enlightenment. The quest for origin in architecture is the initial manifestation of the aspiration toward a rational source for design. Before the Renaissance the idea of origin was seen as self-evident; its meaning and importance «went without saying», it belonged to an a priori universe of values. In the Renaissance, with the loss of a self-evident universe of values, origins were sought in natural or divine sources or in a cosmological or anthropomorphic geometry. The reproduction of the image of the Vitruvian man is the most renowned example. Not surprisingly, since the origin was thought to contain the seeds of the object’s purpose and thus its destination, this belief in the existence of an ideal origin led directly to a belief in the existence of an ideal end. Such a genetic idea of beginning/end depended on a belief in a universal plan in nature and the cosmos which, through the application of classical rules of composition concerning hierarchy, order, and closure, would confer a harmony of the whole upon the parts. The perspective of the end thus directed the strategy for beginning. Therefore, as Alberti first defined it in Della Pittura, composition was not an open-ended or neutral process of transformation, but rather a strategy for arriving at a predetermined goal; it was the mechanism by which the idea of order, represented in the orders, was translated into a specific form. 

10 Baudrillard p.99.
In referring to the death of the reality of God, Baudrillard says: «...metaphysical despair came from the idea that the images concealed nothing at all, and that in fact they were not images... but actually perfect simulacra.»
Reacting against the cosmological goals of Renaissance composition, Enlightenment architecture aspired to a rational process of design whose ends were a product of pure, secular reason rather than of divine order. The Renaissance vision of harmony (faith in the divine) led naturally to the scheme of order that was to replace it (faith in reason), which was the logical determination of form from a priori types.

Durand embodies this moment of the supreme authority of reason. In his treatises formal orders become type forms, and natural and divine origins are replaced by rational solutions to the problems of accommodation and construction. The goal is a socially «relevant» architecture; it is attained through the rational transformation of type forms. Later, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, function and technique replaced the catalogue of type forms as origins. But the point is that from Durand on, it was believed that deductive reason—the same process used in science, mathematics, and technology—was capable of producing a truthful (that is, meaningful) architectural object. And with the success of rationalism as a scientific method (one could almost call it a «style» of thought) in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, architecture adopted the self-evident values conferred by rational origins. If an architecture lacked rational—that is, represented rationality—it was believed to represent truth. As in logic, at the point where all deductions developed from an initial premise corroborate that premise, there is logical closure and, it was believed, certain truth. Moreover, in this procedure the primacy of the origin remains intact. The rational became the moral and aesthetic basis of modern architecture. And the representational task of architecture in an age of reason was to portray its own modes of knowing.

At this point in the evolution of consciousness something occurred: reason turned its focus onto itself and thus began the process of its own undoing. Questioning its own status and mode of knowing, reason exposed itself to be a fiction. 3 The processes for knowing—measurement, logical proof, causality—turned out to be a network of value-laden arguments, no more than effective modes of persuasion. Values were dependent on another teleology, another end fiction, that of rationality.
Essentially, then, nothing had really changed from the Renaissance idea of origin. Whether the appeal was to a divine or natural order, as in the fifteenth century, or to a rational technique and typological function, as in the post-Enlightenment period, it ultimately amounted to the same thing—to the idea that architecture's value derived from a source outside itself. Function and type were only value-laden origins equivalent to divine or natural ones.

In this second «fiction» the crisis of belief in reason eventually undermined the power of self-evidence. As reason began to turn on itself, to question its own status, its authority to convey truth, its power to prove, began to evaporate. The analysis of analysis revealed that logic could not do what reason had claimed for it—reveal the self-evident truth of its origins. What both the Renaissance and the modern relied on as the basis of truth was found to require, in essence, faith. Analysis was a form of simulation; knowledge was a new religion. Similarly, it can be seen that architecture never embodied reason; it could only state the desire to do so; there is no architectural image of reason. Architecture presented an aesthetic of the experience of (the persuasiveness of and desire for) reason. Analysis, and the illusion of proof, in a continuous process that recalls Nietzsche's characterization of «truth,» is a never-ending series of figures, metaphors, and metonyms.

In a cognitive environment in which reason has been revealed to depend on a belief in knowledge, therefore to be irreducibly metaphoric, a classical architecture—that is, an architecture whose processes of transformation are value-laden strategies grounded on self-evident or a priori origins—will always be an architecture of restatement and not of representation, no matter how ingeniously the origins are selected for this transformation, nor how inventive the transformation is.

Architectural restatement, replication, is a nostalgia for the security of knowing, a belief in the continuity of Western thought. Once analysis and reason replaced self-evidence as the means by which truth was revealed, the classic or timeless quality of truth ended and the need for verification began.

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The «fiction» of history: 
the simulation of the timeless

The third «fiction» of classical Western architecture is that of history. Prior to the mid-fifteenth century, time was conceived nondialectically; from antiquity to the middle ages there was no concept of the «forward movement» of time. Art did not seek its justification in terms of the past or future; it was ineffable and timeless. In ancient Greece the temple and the god were one and the same; architecture was divine and natural. For this reason it appeared «classic» to the «classical» epoch that followed. The classic could not be represented or simulated, it could only be. In its straightforward assertion of itself it was nondialectical and timeless.

In the mid-fifteenth century the idea of a temporal origin emerged, and with it the idea of the past. This interrupted the eternal cycle of time by positing a fixed point of beginning. Hence the loss of the timeless, for the existence of origin required a temporal reality. The attempt of the classical to recover the timeless turned, paradoxically, to a time-bound concept of history as a source of timelessness. Moreover, the consciousness of time's forward movement came to «explain» a process of historical change. By the nineteenth century this process was seen as «dialectical.» With dialectical time came the idea of the zeitgeist, with cause and effect rooted in presentness—that is, with an aspired-to timelessness of the present. In addition to its aspiration to timelessness, the «spirit of the age» held that an a priori relationship existed between history and all its manifestations at any given moment. It was necessary only to identify the governing spirit to know what style of architecture was properly expressive of, and relevant to, the time. Implicit was the notion that man should always be «in harmony»—or at least in a non-disjunctive relation—with his time.

In its polemical rejection of the history that preceded it, the modern movement attempted to appeal to values for this (harmonic) relationship other than those that embodied the eternal or universal. In seeing itself as superseding the values of the preceding architecture, the modern movement substituted a universal idea of relevance for a universal idea of history, analysis of program for analysis of history. It
presumed itself to be a value-free and collective form of intervention, as opposed to
the virtuoso individualism and informed connoisseurship personified by the post-
Renaissance architect. Relevance in modern architecture came to lie in embodying a
value other than the natural or divine; the zeitgeist was seen to be contingent and of
the present, rather than as absolute and eternal. But the difference in value between
presentness and the universal—between the contingent value of the zeitgeist and the
eternal value of the classical—only resulted in yet another set (in fact, simply the
opposite set) of aesthetic preferences. The presumably neutral spirit of the «epochal
will» supported asymmetry over symmetry, dynamism over stability, absence of
hierarchy over hierarchy.

The imperatives of the «historical moment» are always evident in the connection
between the representation of the function of architecture and its form. Ironically,
modern architecture, by invoking the zeitgeist rather than doing away with history,
only continued to act as the «midwife to historically significant form.» In this sense
modern architecture was not a rupture with history, but simply a moment in the
same continuum, a new episode in the evolution of the zeitgeist. And architecture's
representation of its particular zeitgeist turned out to be less «modern» than
originally thought.

One of the questions that may be asked is why the moderns did not see themselves
in this continuity. One answer is that the ideology of the zeitgeist bound them to
their present history with the promise to release them from their past history; they
were ideologically trapped in the illusion of the eternity of their own time.

The late twentieth century, with its retrospective knowledge that modernism has
become history, has inherited nothing less than the recognition of the end of the
ability of a classical or referential architecture to express its own time as timeless.
The illusory timelessness of the present brings with it an awareness of the timeful
nature of past time. It is for this reason that the representation of a zeitgeist always
implies a simulation; it is seen in the classical use of the replication of a past time
to invoke the timeless as the expression of a present time. Thus, in the zeitgeist
argument, there will always be this unacknowledged paradox, a simulation of the
timeless through a replication of the timeful.
Zeitgeist history, too, is subject to a questioning of its own authority. How can it be possible, from within history, to determine a timeless truth of its "spirit"? Thus history ceases to be an objective source of truth; origins and ends once again lose their universality (that is, their self-evident value) and, like history, become fictions. If it is no longer possible to pose the problem of architecture in terms of a zeitgeist—that is if architecture can no longer assert its relevance through a consonance with its zeitgeist—then it must turn to some other structure. To escape such a dependence on the zeitgeist—that is, the idea that the purpose of an architectural style is to embody the spirit of its age—it is necessary to propose an alternative idea of architecture, one whereby it is no longer the purpose of architecture, but its inevitability, to express its own time.

Once the traditional values of classical architecture are understood as not meaningful, true, and timeless, it must be concluded that these classical values were always simulations (and are not merely seen to be so in light of a present rupture of history or the present disillusionment with the zeitgeist). It becomes clear that the classical itself was a simulation that architecture sustained for five hundred years. Because the classical did not recognize itself as a simulation, it sought to represent extrinsic values (which it could not do) in the guise of its own reality.

The result, then, of seeing classicism and modernism as part of a single historical continuity is the understanding that there are no longer any self-evident values in representation, reason, or history to confer legitimacy on the object. This loss of self-evident value allows the timeless to be cut free from the meaningful and the truthful. It permits the view that there is no one truth (a timeless truth), or one meaning (a timeless meaning), but merely the timeless. When the possibility is raised that the timeless can be cut adrift from the timeful (history), so too can the timeless be cut away from universality to produce a timelessness which is not universal. This separation makes it unimportant whether origins are natural or divine or functional; thus, it is no longer necessary to produce a classic—that is, a timeless—architecture by recourse to the classical values inherent in representation, reason, and history.
The not-classical: architecture as fiction

The necessity of the quotation marks around the term «fiction» is now obvious. The three fictions just discussed can be seen not as fictions but rather as simulations. As has been said, fiction becomes simulation when it does not recognize its condition as fiction, when it tries to simulate a condition of reality, truth, or non-fiction. The simulation of representation in architecture has led, first of all, to an excessive concentration of inventive energies in the representational object.

When columns are seen as surrogates of trees and windows resemble the portholes of ships, architectural elements become representational figures carrying an inordinate burden of meaning. In other disciplines representation is not the only purpose of figuration. In literature, for example, metaphors and similes have a wider range of application—poetic, ironic, and the like—and are not limited to allegorical or referential functions. Conversely, in architecture only one aspect of the figure is traditionally at work: object representation. The architectural figure always alludes to—aims at the representation of—some sètor object, whether architectural, anthropomorphic, natural, or technological.

Second, the simulation of reason in architecture has been based on a classical value given to the idea of truth. But Heidegger has noted that error has a trajectory parallel to truth, that error can be the unfolding of truth. Thus to proceed from «error» or fiction is to counter consciously the tradition of «mis-reading» on which the classical unwittingly depended—not a presumed logical transformation of something a priori, but a deliberate «error» stated as such, one which presupposes only its own internal truth. Error in this case does not assume the same value as truth; it is not simply its dialectical opposite. It is more like a dissimulation, a «not-containing» of the value of truth.

Finally, the simulated fiction of modern movement history, unwittingly inherited from the classical, was that any present-day architecture must be a reflection of its zeitgeist; that is, architecture can simultaneously be about presentness and universality. But if architecture is inevitably about the invention of fictions, it


«Error is the essential counter-essence to the primordial essence of truth. Error opens itself up as the open region for every opposite essential truth... Error and the concealing of what is concealed belong to the primordial essence of truth.»
should also be possible to propose an architecture that embodies an *other* fiction, one that is not sustained by the values of presentness or universality and, more importantly, that does not consider its purpose to reflect these values. This *other* fiction/object, then, clearly should eschew the fictions of the classical (representation, reason, and history), which are attempts to "solve" the problem of architecture rationally; for strategies and solutions are vestiges of a goal-oriented view of the world. If this is the case, the question becomes: What can be the model for architecture when the essence of what was effective in the classical model—the presumed rational value of structures, representations, methodologies of origins and ends, and deductive processes—has been shown to be a simulation?

It is not possible to answer such a question with an alternative model. But a series of characteristics can be proposed that typify this aporia, this loss in our capacity to conceptualize a new model for architecture. These characteristics, outlined below, arise from that which can *not* be; they form a structure of *advance*.14 The purpose in proposing them is not to reconstitute what has just been dismissed, a model for a theory of architecture—for all such models are ultimately futile. Rather what is being proposed is an expansion beyond the limitations presented by the classical model to the realization of *architecture as an independent discourse*, free of external values—classical or any other; that is, the intersection of the meaning-free, the arbitrary and the timeless in the artificial.

The meaning-free, arbitrary, and timeless creation of artificiality in this sense must be distinguished from what Baudrillard has called *simulation*;15 it is not an attempt to erase the classical distinction between reality and representation—thus again making architecture a set of conventions simulating the real; it is, rather, more like a *dissimulation*.16 Whereas simulation attempts to obliterate the difference between real and imaginary, dissimulation leaves untouched the difference between reality and illusion. The relationship between dissimulation and reality is similar to the signification embodied in the mask: the sign of pretending to be *not* what one is—that is, a sign which seems not to signify anything besides itself (the sign of a sign, or the negation of what is behind it). Such a dissimulation in

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architecture can be given the provisional title of the not-classical. As dissimulation is
not the inverse, negative, or opposite of simulation, a not-classical architecture is
not the inverse, negative, or opposite of classical architecture; it is merely different
from or other than. A not-classical architecture is no longer a certification of
experience or a simulation of history, reason, or reality in the present. Instead, it
may more appropriately be described as an other manifestation, an architecture as is,
now as a fiction. It is a representation of itself, of its own values and internal
experience.

The claim that a not-classical architecture is necessary, that it is proposed by the
new epoch or the rupture in the continuity of history, would be another zeitgeist
argument. The not-classical merely proposes an end to the dominance of classical
values in order to reveal other values. It proposes, not a new value or a new
zeitgeist, but merely another condition—one of reading architecture as a text. There
is nevertheless no question that this idea of the reading of architecture is initiated
by a zeitgeist argument: that today the classical signs are no longer significant and
have become no more than replications. A not-classical architecture is, therefore,
not unresponsive to the realization of the closure inherent in the world; rather, it is
unresponsive to representing it.

The end of the beginning

An origin of value implies a state or a condition of origin before value has been
given to it. A beginning is such a condition prior to a valued origin. In order to
reconstruct the timeless, the state of as is, of face value, one must begin: begin by
eliminating the time-bound concepts of the classical, which are primarily origin and
end. The end of the beginning is also the end of the beginning of value. But it is
not possible to go back to the earlier, prehistoric state of grace, the Eden of
timelessness before origins and ends were valued. We must begin in the present—
without necessarily giving a value to presentness. The attempt to reconstruct the
timeless today must be a fiction which recognizes the fictionality of its own
task—that is, it should not attempt to simulate a timeless reality.
Motivation takes something arbitrary—that is, something in its artificial state which is not obedient to an external structure of values—and implies an action and a movement concerning an internal structure which has an inherent order and an internal logic. This raises the question of the motivation or purpose from an arbitrary origin. How can something be arbitrary and non-goal oriented but still be internally motivated? Every state, it can be argued, has a motivation toward its own being—a motion rather than a direction. Just because architecture cannot portray or enact reason as a value does not mean that it cannot argue systematically or reasonably. In all processes there must necessarily be some beginning point; but the value in an arbitrary or intentionally fictive architecture is found in the intrinsic nature of its action rather than in the direction of its course. Since any process must necessarily have a beginning and a movement, however, the fictional origin must be considered as having at least a methodological value—a value concerned with generating the internal relations of the process itself. But if the beginning is in fact arbitrary, there can be no direction toward closure or end, because the motivation for change of state (that is, the inherent instability of the beginning) can never lead to a state of no change (that is, an end). Thus, in their freedom from the universal values of both historic origin and directional process, motivations can lead to ends different from those of the previous value-laden end.

The end of the end

Along with the end of the origin, the second basic characteristic of a «not-classical» architecture, therefore, is its freedom from a priori goals or ends—the end of the end. The end of the classical also means the end of the myth of the end as a value-laden effect of the progress or direction of history. By logically leading to a potential closure of thought, the fictions of the classical awakened a desire to confront, display, and even transcend the end of history. This desire was manifest in the modern idea of utopia, a time beyond history. It was thought that objects imbued with value because of their relationship to a self-evidently meaningful origin could somehow transcend the present in moving toward a timeless future, a utopia. This idea of progress gave false value to the present; utopia, a form of juxtaposed in such a way as to create movement, and the deconstruction (graffiti) is identifiable in terms of that motivation. This paper, which concentrates on transposing these ideas from a pure analytic framework into a program of work, is more concerned with what happens in the process of consciously making graffiti than finding those that may have been placed unconsciously in a text. Since a graffiti by definition is a process of modification, it is unlikely that one could find a static or undeveloped moment of graffiti in an architectural text; one would be more likely to read only its results. Graffiti is used here in a way that closely resembles Coller's analysis of Derrida's method for deconstruction of oppositions: «To deconstruct an opposition . . . is not to destroy it . . . To deconstruct an opposition is to wound and displace it, to situate it differently.» (p. 33)

This concentration on the apparently marginal puts the logic of supplementarity to work as an interpretative strategy what has been relegated to the margins or set aside by previous interpreters may be important precisely for those reasons that led it to be set aside.» (p. 34)

Derrida emphasizes graffiti as a «non-dialectical condition of opposition; this paper stresses the processual aspects which emerge from the moment of graffiti. The major differences are of terminology and emphasis.

30 Coller p. 59.

«The arbitrary nature of the sign and the system with no positon terms gives us the paradoxical notion of an «instituted trace», a structure of infinite referral in which there are only traces—trajectories prior to any entity of which they might be the trace.» This description of «instituted trace» relates closely to the idea of motivation as set forth in this paper. Like Derrida's «instituted trace», «motivation describes a system which is internally consistent, but arbitrary in that it has no beginning or end and no necessary or valued direction. It remains a system of differences, comprehensible only in terms of the spaces between elements or moments of the process. Thus, motivation here is similar to Derrida's description of difference—it is the force within the object that causes it to be dynamic at every point of a continuous transformation. Internal motivation determines the nature of modification for the object and is rendered readable through trace.

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As has been suggested above, latent in the classical appeal to origins is the more general problem of cause and effect. This formula, part of the fictions of reason and history, reduces architecture to an «added to» or «inessential» object by making it simply an effect of certain causes understood as origins. This problem is inherent in all of classical architecture, including its modernist aspect. The idea of architecture as something «added to» rather than something with its own being—as adjectival rather than nominal or ontological—leads to the perception of architecture as a practical device. As long as architecture is primarily a device designated for use and for shelter—that is, as long as it has origins in programmatic functions—it will always constitute an effect.

But once this «self-evident» characteristic of architecture is dismissed and architecture is seen as having no a priori origins—whether functional, divine, or natural—alternative fictions for the origin can be proposed: for example, one that is arbitrary, one that has no external value derived from meaning, truth, or timelessness. It is possible to imagine a beginning internally consistent but not conditioned by or contingent on historic origins with supposedly self-evident values. Thus, while classical origins were thought to have their source in a divine or natural order and modern origins were held to derive their value from deductive reason, «non-classical» origins can be strictly arbitrary, simply starting points, without value. They can be artificial and relative, as opposed to natural, divine, or universal. Such artificially determined beginnings can be free of universal values because they are merely arbitrary points in time, when the architectural process commences. One example of an artificial origin is a graft, as in the generic insertion of an alien body into a host to provide a new result. As opposed to a collage or a montage, which lives within a context and alludes to an origin, a graft is an invented site, which does not so much have object characteristics as those of process. A graft is not in itself genetically arbitrary. Its arbitrariness is in its freedom from a value system of non-arbitrariness (that is, the classical). It is arbitrary in its provision of a choice of reading which brings no external value to the process. But further, in its artificial and relative nature a graft is not in itself necessarily an achievable result, but merely a site that contains motivation for action—that is the beginning of a process. 

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state of no change (that is, an end). Thus, in their freedom from the universal values
of both historic origin and directional process, motivations can lead to *ends* different
from those of the previous value-laden *end*.

The end of the end

Along with the end of the origin, the second basic characteristic of a «not-
classical» architecture, therefore, is its freedom from a priori goals or ends—the end
of the end. The end of the classical also means the end of the myth of the end as a
value-laden effect of the progress or direction of history. By logically leading to a
potential closure of thought, the fictions of the classical awakened a desire to
confront, display, and even transcend the end of history. This desire was manifest in
the modern idea of utopia, a time beyond history. It was thought that objects
imbued with value because of their relationship to a self-evidently meaningful
origin could somehow transcend the present in moving toward a timeless future,
a utopia. This idea of progress gave false value to the present; utopia, a form of

juxtaposed in such a way as to create movement, and the deconstruction (graff) is identical in terms of
that motivation. This paper, which concentrates on transposing these ideas from a pure analytic
framework to a program for work, is more concerned with what happens in the process of consciously
making grafts than finding those that may have been placed unconsciously in a text. Since a graft by
definition is a process of modification, it is unlikely
that one could find a static or undeveloped moment of
graft in an architectural text; one would be more
likely to read only its results. Graft is used here
in a way that closely resembles Culler’s analysis of
Derrida’s method for deconstruction of opposition. «To
deconstruct an opposition . . . is not to destroy it. . . . To deconstruct an opposition is to undo and
displace it, to situate it differently.» (p. 150)
«This concentration on the apparently marginal puts
the logic of supplementarity to work as an
interpretative strategy: what has been relegated to
the margins or set aside by previous interpreters may be
important precisely for those reasons that led it to be
set aside.» (p. 140) Derrida emphasizes graft as a
non-dialectic condition of opposition; this paper
stresses the procedural aspects which emerge from the
moment of graft. The major differences are in
terminology and emphasis.

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Culler p. 59.
«The arbitrary nature of the sign and the system with
no positive terms gives us the paradoxical notion of
an insinuated trace, a structure of infinite referral
in which there are only traces—traces prior to any
entity of which they might be the trace.»
This description of «insinuated trace» relates clearly to the
idea of motivation as put forth in this paper.
Like Derrida’s «insinuated trace,» motivation
describes a system which is internally consistent, but
arbitrary in that it has no beginning or end and no
necessary or valued direction. It remains a system of
differences, comprehensible only in terms of the spaces
between elements or moments of the process. Thus,
motivation here is similar to Derrida’s description of
difference—it is the force within the object that
causes it to be dynamic at every point of a continuous
transformation. Internal motivation determines the
nature of modification for the object and is rendered
readable through trace.

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fantasizing about an «open» and limitless end, forestalled the notion of closure. Thus the modern crisis of closure marked the end of the process of moving toward the end. Such crises (or ruptures) in our perception of the continuity of history arise not so much out of a change in our idea of origins or ends than out of the failure of the present (and its objects) to sustain our expectations of the future. And once the continuity of history is broken in our perception, any representation of the classical, any «classicism,» can be seen only as a belief. At this point, where our received values are «in crisis,» the end of the end raises the possibility of the invention and realization of a blatantly fictional future (which is therefore non-threatening in its «truth» value) as opposed to a simulated or idealized one.

With the end of the end, what was formerly the process of composition or transformation ceases to be a causal strategy, a process of addition or subtraction from an origin. Instead, the process becomes one of modification—the invention of a non-dialectical, non-directional, non-goal oriented process.21 The «invented» origins from which this process receives its motivation differ from the accepted, mythic origins of the classicists by being arbitrary, reinvented for each circumstance, adopted for the moment and not forever. The process of modification can be seen as an open-ended tactic rather than a goal-oriented strategy. A strategy is a process that is determined and value-laden before it begins; it is directed. Since the arbitrary origin cannot be known in advance (in a cognitive sense), it does not depend on knowledge derived from the classical tradition and thus cannot engender a strategy.

In this context architectural form is revealed as a «place of invention» rather than as a subservient representation of another architecture or as a strictly practical device. To invent an architecture is to allow architecture to be a cause; in order to be a cause, it must arise from something outside a directed strategy of composition.

The end of the end also concerns the end of object representation as the only metaphoric subject in architecture. In the past the metaphor in architecture was used to convey such forces as tension, compression, extension, and elongation; these were qualities that could be seen, if not literally in the objects themselves, then in the relationship between objects. The idea of the metaphor here has nothing to do

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Modification is one aspect of extension which is defined by Kipnis as a component of decomposition. While extension is any movement from an origin (or an initial condition), modification is a specific form of extension concerned with preserving the evidence of initial conditions (for example, through no addition or subtraction of materiality). On the other hand, synthesis is an example of extension which does not attempt to maintain evidence of initial conditions but rather attempts to create a new whole.

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This suggests the idea of architecture as «writing» as opposed to architecture as image. What is being «written» is not the object itself—its mass and volume—but the act of making. This idea gives a metaphoric body to the act of architecture. It then signals its reading through an other system of signs, called trace. Traces are not to be read literally, since they have no other value than to signal the idea that there is a reading event and that reading should take place; trace signals the idea to read. Thus a trace is a partial or fragmentary sign; it has no objecthood. It signifies an action that is in process. In this sense a trace is not a simulation of reality; it is a dissimulation because it reveals itself as distinct from its former reality. It does not simulate the real, but represents and records the action inherent in a former or future reality, which has a value no more or less real than the trace itself. That is, trace is unconcerned with forming an image which is the representation of a previous architecture or of social customs and usages; rather, it is concerned with the marking—literally the figuration—of its own internal processes. Thus the trace is the record of motivation, the record of an action, not an image of another object-origin.

In this case a «not-classical» architecture begins actively to involve an idea of a reader conscious of his own identity as a reader rather than as a user or observer. It proposes a new reader distanced from any external value system (particularly an architectural-historical system). Such a reader brings no a priori competence to the act of reading other than an identity as a reader. That is, such a reader has no preconceived knowledge of what architecture should be (in terms of its proportions, textures, scale, and the like); nor does a «not-classical» architecture aspire to make itself understandable through these preconceptions. 23

The concept of trace in architecture as put forward here is similar to Derrida’s idea in that it suggests that there can be neither a representational object nor representable «reality». Architecture becomes text rather than object when it is conceived and presented as a system of differences rather than as an image or an isolated presence. Trace is the visual manifestation of this system of differences, a record of movement (without direction) causing us to read the present object as a system of relationships to other prior and subsequent movements. Trace is to be distinguished from Jacques Derrida’s use of the term, for Derrida directly relates the idea of «difference» to the fact that it is impossible to isolate «presence» as an entity. «The presence of motion is conceivable only insofar as every instant is already marked with the traces of the past and future . . . the present instant is not the past and future . . . the present instant is not something given but a product of the relations between past and future. If motion is to be present, presence must already be marked by difference and deferral.» (Culler 197). The idea that presence is never a simple absolute runs counter to all of our intuitive convictions. If there can be no inherently meaningful presence which is not itself a system of differences, then there can be no value-laden or a priori origin.

We have always read architecture. Traditionally it did not induce reading but responded to it. The act of architecturalness here is an idea to stimulate or induce the reading of traces without reference to meaning but rather to other conditions of process—that is, to stimulate pure reading without value or prejudice, as opposed to interpretation.

Previously, there was assumed to be an a priori language of value, a poetry, existing within architecture. Now we are saying that architecture is merely language. We read whether we know what language we are reading or not. We can read French without understanding French. We can know someone is speaking nonsense or noise. Before we are competent to read and understand poetry we can know something to be language. Reading in this context is not concerned with deciding for meaning or for poetic content but rather for indication.

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The competence of the reader (of architecture) may be defined as the capacity to distinguish a sense of knowing from a sense of believing. At any given time the conditions for «knowledge» are «deeper» than philosophic conditions; in fact, they provide the possibility of distinguishing philosophy from literature, science from magic, and religion from myth. The new competence comes from the capacity to read per se, to know how to read, and more importantly, to know how to read (but not necessarily decode) architecture as a text. Thus the new «object» must have the capacity to reveal itself first of all as a text, as a reading event. The architectural fiction proposed here differs from the classical fiction in its primary condition as a text and in the way it is read: the new reader is no longer presumed to know the nature of truth in the object, either as a representation of a rational origin or as a manifestation of a universal set of rules governing proportion, harmony, and ordering. But further, knowing how to decode is no longer important; simply, language in this context is no longer a code to assign meanings (that is to mean that). The activity of reading is first and foremost in the recognition of something as a language (that is to say). Reading, in this sense, makes available a level of indication rather than a level of meaning or expression.

Therefore, to propose the end of the beginning and the end of the end is to propose the end of beginnings and ends of value—to propose an other «timeless» space of invention. It is a «timeless» space in the present without a determining relation to an ideal future or to an idealized past. Architecture in the present is seen as a process of inventing an artificial past and a futureless present. It remembers a no-longer future.

This paper is based on three non-verifiable assumptions or values: timeless (originless, endless) architecture; non-representational (objectless) architecture; and artificial (arbitrary, reasonless) architecture.

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