

WestminsterResearch

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/westminsterresearch>

**Beyond formalism: the quiescent art of formal analysis in
architecture
Peckham, A.**

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Journal of Architecture, 21 (5), 679-689. The final definitive version is available online:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2016.1207441>

© Taylor & Francis Inc.

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.

Whilst further distribution of specific materials from within this archive is forbidden, you may freely distribute the URL of WestminsterResearch: (<http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/>).

In case of abuse or copyright appearing without permission e-mail repository@westminster.ac.uk

Beyond formalism: the quiescent art of formal analysis in architecture

(AOM Original Draft) Andrew Peckham

Introduction

The choice of papers (2004–2013) for the second supplementary issue of *The Journal of Architecture* is focused on the study of individual buildings, and this review essay considers the reciprocal relationship between different critical perspectives as they adapt and alter the nature of their engagement with the building as built-form. What kind of investigation or analysis is pursued, how is it written as a text, and what relationship may it have comparatively to the criticism of the recent past?

One can point to two extremes: first a tendency to rubber-stamp an ideological or interpretive case, which is then found to be evident in the form, appearance or organization of the building; and second a preoccupation with form that reverses that approach, scrutinizing formal and material facts before proceeding to interpretation. The latter may be limited to a summary of the preceding description or analysis, but essentially takes a retrospective view to reflect on what has gone before. In contrast there is also the critic or architect who ignores the evidence of the building beyond it being a Trojan horse to broadcast their own ideologies.

Neither premature judgment, nor its deferral, is necessarily categorical, and conviction may surface in a compromise, or an oscillation, between the two. Robin Evans' approach to Daniel Libeskind's *Chamberworks*,¹ jettisoned the search for depth and meaning 'assumed to exist behind, beneath, or within' the subject of criticism, for what lies 'beside, above and in front of' the constructed façade.²

Whether he was co-opting an overlooked aspect of the subject or constructing a novel perspective towards it, his was an inquisitive line of enquiry.

With a mind to architects' own explanations of their buildings, there is the extreme case of the 'little zoo of terminologies' with which Evan's argued, Peter Eisenman erected a defensive armour around his early conceptual architecture; conversely Eisenman described his own formal analysis of Giuseppe Terragni's Casa del Fascio as erecting a 'secondary' scaffolding around the building. Evans' point was not to denigrate an architect's view of their work, but to question the way in which ownership comes, in a complicit relationship, to define the building. The character of Eisenman's analysis assumed the logic of the 'building as object': constituting a 'total work of art', privileging formal consistency and the value of a degree of 'autonomy' (*bête noir* of anti-formalist criticism). Yet scaffolding, to reiterate his metaphor, is designed to be removable and he retrospectively views the political history of the building as its initial scaffold, paralleling the well-worn schism between formalist art theory and the new (now familiar) social history of art that sought to displace it.³

The seven papers identified with the 'Building as Artefact' theme, sample the diverse attitudes prevalent during the ten year period with which they are associated, and range from the realist (Gissen); polemical (Spencer); ideological (Yacubi); chronological (Thomas); historicist (Delbeke); philosophical (Xie) and mediated (Massey). Yacubi and Massey's papers additionally present an explicit or implicit, register of architecture associated with national identity. The texts were chosen as representative and, with Evan's discursive conceptual positioning in mind, are not necessarily those studies most inclined towards formal issues. Consequently, while

this review is primarily focused on the papers selected, reference is made to corresponding building studies (or those collected under the other editorial themes), in order to broaden an inclusive discussion, one pitched beyond the ‘post-critical’ milieu of the period and framed by the wider principle of formal analysis.

An architectural journal whose content is primarily research based or inclined towards critical theory, tends to have an ambivalent relationship with the concept of a ‘case study’. Towards the end of the publication period reviewed here, the editors of *The Journal* aware perhaps of a certain disregard, chose to address the genre obliquely in a new initiative during 2011.⁴ This aimed to foster ‘critical reviews’ of buildings and projects in re-examining the legacy of the 1980’s, a categorization that avoided the connotation of a typically pragmatic or empirical account of a building, its process of design, procurement, construction and realisation. Untainted by too direct an appeal to theory, criticism or history, the case study tends to be a self-contained exercise of a professional orientation,⁵ or to be associated in collective form with establishing a trajectory of modernism.⁶ *The Journal* itself occupies a parallel grey area, indebted to practice and support from the RIBA, but responsive to the fluctuations of the research culture it embodies.

How should *The Journal* editors’ initiative be viewed in relation to the content of the building studies published? What are the implications of the ‘review’ model?

‘Viewing’ the building in a revised perspective or placing it within a broader overview? But in adopting a ‘critical’ purchase they locate the study somewhere between an essay and the conventions of an academic research paper.⁷ That is to say, distinct from the more exclusive, or moderated, accounts of buildings typically

published in, or as, architectural monographs identified with a particular architect or their practice.⁸

Setting out

The building studies included in the earlier anthology⁹ selected from first ten years of *The Journal's* publication, included several representing an orthodox and detailed approach to modern architecture: acted out for example in the relationship between tectonic rhetoric and realism in Berlage's *Beurs* or the exigencies of the relationship between slab and column, informing the structure of Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax office building.¹⁰ If these researched the structural constitution of canonical modernist buildings, Isabel Allen's 'construction' of a fictional Regency House consolidated, at the other extreme, an inventive approach to a 'reading' of type in architecture.¹¹ This characteristic informs Jing Xie's recent examination (JoA 18:2 2013), republished here, of the Cang Lang Pavilion in Suzhou, seen to complement the typology of the 'hall' or 'gallery' integral to the form of the prototypical Chinese courtyard house. Applied philosophical reflections ascribe a 'literary construction' to the building where: 'the legibility of architecture is largely acquired from reading the life and meanings inherent in and beyond physical form'. The architecture of the pavilion is viewed as representative of the consistent set of formal types underpinning the historical continuum of traditional Chinese architecture.¹² This study was exceptional in demonstrating how an apparently limited subject may unexpectedly register, or stand in for, a greatly expanded cultural context.

The Journal editors' deliberations mentioned earlier were made with the 1980s in mind, but also addressed the nature of building analysis. Their call for abstracts

sought ‘the perspective or range of angles’ by which a building or project might be examined as a ‘cultural statement’ (not as icons or ‘technological achievements’). This perspective was set polemically against ‘the market driven production of images’ and the terms of sustainability limited to functional ‘problem solving’. The impact of specialization was noted in relation to the sophistication of contemporary architectural production, but also in a tendency towards obscurity in academic debate. A familiar trope in architectural discourse; the so-called ‘gap’ between theory and practice was to be addressed in the model of the ‘critical review’. Alan Colquhoun’s view of criticism and by implication his dual status as architect and academic was seen to mediate this schism.¹³

The editors’ interest in ‘theoretical practice’; focus on ‘context’; identification with operative process rather than procedural design; and concern for the status of tradition and the European city,¹⁴ co-opted the concerns of the 1980s, yet their premise for the ‘critical review’ emphasized the interaction between different agencies involved in the production of architecture. Conceived as a twilight zone the 1980’s were not yet ‘history’ but appeared remote in relation the habitual ‘presence of the past’ engrained in the architectural culture of the period. Something of this predicament characterizes Martin Delbeke’s study (*JoA* 11:3 2006) of Robbrecht and Daem’s concert hall in Bruges, selected here. Given the contradictions explored between the city’s historical identity and tourist reality; examining the play of myth and counter-myth evident in the background to the competition for the building; the plausibility of the architect’s intentions, in ‘formulating an architectural answer to the dormant ambiguities of the site’, come to be questioned.

The argumentation in Michael Cadwell's book *Strange Details* (2007)¹⁵ presents an idiosyncratic contrast. Propelled by a poetic literary impulse each chapter or essay (coincident in principle with *The Journal's* editorial initiative) revisits canonical buildings in the tradition of modern architecture.¹⁶ Skirting the received view, and incorporating a matrix of salient history, biography, 'on site' description and detailed constructional (or tectonic) investigation, a discursive narrative evolves in his text (contrary to a prescribed logic).¹⁷ Pursued in depth his inquisitive and at points formal, analysis assiduously cultivates the attentive reader.¹⁸ A prospective slant constructs a series of salient insights reminiscent of passages in Evans' *The Projective Cast*¹⁹ or Kent Kleinman and Leslie van Duzer's nuanced study of Mies' Krefeld Villas.²⁰

Building, ideology and critique

Alan Colquhoun's timely advice, in 1978, 'to get behind the work's apparent originality and expose its ideological framework without turning it into a mere tautology', joined his observation that criticism 'can never grasp the essence of the work it discusses'.²¹ Together they might be taken to refute phenomenological tendencies and mark his ability, then, to register the changing face of theory in the contemporary practice of post-structuralism. Certainly they question the chimera of a definitive understanding of any building, close though Eisenman came to that in his self-referential (but ultimately inconclusive) analytical abstraction of Giuseppe Terragni's Casa del Fascio.²² Founded on an arguably problematic linguistic analogy, his singular identification with both persona and building lacked a requisite objectivity. Colquhoun's key critique of the Centre Pompidou (1977)²³ on the other hand represented his own contentions unusually directly, and may be contrasted with

the more overtly political approaches adopted by others at the time.²⁴ Traces of a prescriptive formalist criticism associated with the concepts deployed in his earlier writing, and later identified with the Neo-rationalist conception of architecture as a ‘discipline’, had faded by the onset of the 1990s. The postmodernism and deconstruction of the previous decade, with the notable exception of Michael Benedikt’s *Deconstructing the Kimbell*, tended to avoid the literal, and instead assert the metaphorical parameters of architectural form (and with it the imbrications of meaning).

In the present context, two perceptive papers well-grounded in terms ideological import, concern different building complexes: the 1960s air-rights scheme of Washington Bridge Apartments in the New York chronicled by David Gissen (JoA 12:4 2007),²⁵ and Douglas Spencer’s contrasting polemical examination of Zaha Hadid’s Central Building within BMW’s Leipzig production complex completed in 2005 (JoA 15:2 2010).²⁶ Gissen outlines, in very thorough social, political, economic and regulatory terms, the development and aftermath of what turns out to be a highly problematic housing complex. Spencer’s approach, in contrast, is more critically discursive, referring to the film *Blade Runner*, the persistence of Fordism and the significance of Marx’s ‘Fragment on Machines’. Post-Marxist explanations of the ongoing ideological and economic transformations of neoliberalism, unpick the social and economic consequences for the labour force of Hadid’s spatial fluidity and proto-urban production line interiors.²⁷

Gissen unpacks the illogic of urban infrastructural transformation in the New York of the 1960’s; its displacement, regulation, redevelopment and attempted remediation;

which is reminiscent in its compelling range of insights to those marshalled in the wider context of T. J. Clark's general account of the Haussmannization of central Paris a century earlier.²⁸ The evacuation of Parisian *quartiers* enabled their dissection by a matrix of boulevards, which for Clark contextualizes his study of Impressionist painting. In expanding the territory of the individual building Gissen identifies the complex socio-economic and political consequences of a later phase of capitalist development.

Spencer's analysis follows in the footsteps of Kenneth Frampton's essay 'The Volvo Case' (1976)²⁹ where Jurgen Habermas' political critique of rationalization; expressed in his 'Science and Technology as Ideology'; was employed to conceptualize the limits of organised labour's attempt, in the context of Swedish social democracy, to ameliorate the logic of cybernetic production. This was established in the practice of teamwork and the form of breakout spaces.³⁰ Spencer, four decades later, confronts the flexible contracting and spatial fluidity that transposes, he argues, the no longer futuristic urban realm of the twenty-first-century into the space of production at BMW. Spatial complexity morphs the angular geometry of the Volvo building into Hadid's hyper-static vectors. The abstract linkages, 'masked by the opportunism of their dislocation', that Frampton viewed as exploitative, have in Leipzig mutated into a frenetic and simulated urbanity that Spencer critiques. Lefebvre's bureaucratic society of controlled consumption has transformed into the flexible accumulation of neo-liberalism. If the Volvo venture proposed an ideal social model (and factory typology); castigated by Frampton with reference to Fourier; Spencer argues latterly that the 'replicants' of *Bladerunner* provide the model for the paradigm shift of a

‘second-order’ aesthetic form, endemic to the publicity provided by, and the flexible contracting organized in, Hadid’s Central Building.

There is, then, a building understood as a manifestation of ideologies, and there is ideological criticism. The distinction between the two is necessarily blurred, as in Haim Jacubi’s caustic study of the Israeli Supreme Court building in Jerusalem (*JoA* 9:2 2004).³¹ Politically and sociologically acute in unpicking the conflation of the national politics and religious belief; the limitations of the architects’ justifications; the misleading tourist narrative, and the polarized political and architectural debate; are all seen to have enveloped the building. This contentious subject area, explored in Lawrence Vale’s wide ranging *Architecture, Power and National Identity*,³² is one where a preconceived argument tends to be deployed to castigate architects’ expediency. The architects of the Court building were given to gratuitous declamations about the symbolism of architectural form, dismantled in Jacubi’s well informed ‘critical discourse analysis’. This tends to act, however, as something of a blunt instrument with which to club the architecture into submission. The accumulative critique flags in relation to a partial visual documentation of the building, which gives only a limited sense of the formal and spatial narrative around which the argument for, and against, revolves. An ‘ideological platform’ tautologically constructed by the architects and their building, is held responsible for the ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ ambiguities inherent in its constitution. In conclusion a subdued denouement concerning the previous history of the Palestinian village on the site, provides more effective closure than the extended summary that follows.

Jonathan Massey’s examination of Buckminster Fuller’s pavilion at EXPO 67 (*JoA*

11:4 2006) confronts an architecture also freighted with ideology. His analysis addresses the promise of an American Eden set in the adversarial culture of the Cold War, where Fuller's ambivalent conflation of technocracy and utopian idealism, conceptualized an environmental homeostasis. A timely moment now, fifty years on, to consider the environmental failings addressed in Massey's detailed account of the building's construction; a structure seeking the validation of a global manifesto yet undercut by the propaganda attached to its non-conforming interior fit-out. It is disturbing to reflect now on the currency of Fuller's thinking: the anthropomorphism claimed for the pavilion's 'skin' as epidermis; the organic materialism associated with its structure; the populist figure of 'spaceship earth', and the ambivalence towards the military industrial complex ('killingry' mutated into 'livingry'), each spiced with the confrontational politics of the Cold War. The pseudo democracy and responsive environment promised by cybernetic systems then, is now fifty years later, paralleled in the digital systems controlling financial and data flows, and the distributive flux of the neoliberal global economy.

Building narratives

Within the timeframe of 2004–2013 and following the editorial initiative of 2011, only Florian Urban's subsequent paper (2013)³³ examining the extended genesis of Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall³⁴ was directly identified, in its conclusion, with the 1980's. In retrospect, however, a key issue of *The Journal* in 2010 had published complementary building studies of Hagia Sofia and the Chapel of Reconciliation in Berlin,³⁵ which were contrasted in the same issue with a study of the development of China's Grand National Theatre in Beijing. The latter was traced through five decades of a rapidly a changing political landscape, one more highly charged than in the

Glasgow experience. Adam Sharr's broadly phenomenological study of the Berlin chapel, engaged a very different political and historical perspective grounded in a divided Berlin, where the material embodiment of historical memory was held to be manifest in the detailed nature of the building's construction. This narrative dimension successfully negotiated a tightrope between identification and conditionality.

A less well known history is brought to light in the final 'building study' selected for this supplement, focused on the transformation of a 'building type' (as an institution). Amy Thomas' chronological history of the London Stock Exchange (*JoA* 17:6 2012) stands out in the scrutiny given to the changing configuration of the Exchange's accommodation which was subject, at times more or less directly, to the prevailing logic of the prevailing financial economy. Her research reminds us of the dual role of the 'building study': to re-examine the building lost to view, overlooked, written out of the historical record; and conversely the 'iconic' building which has become too familiar. An exemplary example, albeit in another context altogether, is Alice Friedman's *Women and the Making of the Modern House* (1998),³⁶ which brought to the surface a latent but largely unaddressed issue in revisiting selected modernist houses. Research encapsulated in series of individual studies opened up a (then) timely debate about the gendered relationship between prototypical modern architect and female client, relocating the proprieties of modern architecture.

Description and prescription

The overall range and varied approach of building studies published in *The Journal* attest to a diversity of interpretation, but words are one thing and effective visual

documentation another. Arguably, its restrained visual culture encourages modes of formal analysis or conceptualization best described in words, over those engaged in a material, tectonic or representational focus explored in association with visual documentation or explanation. Words struggle to substitute for visual affect and building ‘studies’ with their necessarily selective focus, are often best read together with a monograph providing information lacking in a journal paper. This problem is endemic to academic publications on architecture, where habitually grey low-resolution images all too often compromise the quality of the text.

The conventional approach to a building study begins with an overall description of the building, before attempting analysis of the principles or elements of its formal constitution and spatial organization. This tends to attract criticism as an incipient formalism. Conversely a philosophical, theoretical or historical approach leads to a focus on partial aspects of a design.³⁷ Avoiding a prescriptive approach, as John Peponis notes in *The Journal*,³⁸ is by no means solved by recourse to ‘description’. This he contends is inherently retrospective and pre-conditioned by the intent inherent in any ‘design formulation’. Questioning the ‘formal structure of logical form’³⁹ and shifting through philosophical gears, he speculates on why theorists with an analytical bent towards diagramming and modelling⁴⁰ have not been taken more seriously. Inherent in the vexed question of the relationship between language and visibility, lies the ambivalent role of the diagram, in a ‘artefactual’ culture of building. Evans’ characteristic mode of investigation, initially circling established ‘textual’ interpretations in order to identify an unrequited line of enquiry, then shifting to rigorous ‘visual’ scrutiny of the building, its structure, composition or geometry, now subject to formal speculation—bridges the two cultures.

If architectural journalism tends, conversely, to reiterate the received view, the more iconic the building the more predictable the perspective; it remains one task of the building review to puncture this critical consensus. Why then is it that particular texts, or moments of formal analysis, are memorable for their insight, critical sleight of hand or professional acumen? All tend to focus, in one way or another, on the individual building as a critical 'subject'; viewed as a formal, social, ideological or theoretical proposition—one that privileges, reflects, contradicts or confounds the theories or beliefs that the author, the critic or the architect, bring to the work.

With the decline of formalism, as we may have known it, generic modernist categories: structure; type-form and functionality; the discipline of the route; orthogonal grids; dematerialization; space and transparency,⁴¹ have increasingly been displaced. Material tectonics; narrative configuration; vectors; void and field; flow and flux; temporality, and the sustainable and the connected; now find favour. The nomenclature of volumetric layering, spatiality and transparency remains however, unduly resistant to changes to the practice of design and building within a digital culture. Meanwhile the contrast between an analytical introversion, and an ulterior motivation brought to the building, presents a premature divide, since both formalism and an ideological critique involve the application of theory. The phenomenological predisposition to conflate abstract and concrete highlights how an experiential parlance and embodied (personal or collective) experience, tends to slip into an ambiguously 'grounded' conception of materiality, liminal thresholds and experience of existential archetypes. This ambiguity, and its limitations, emphasise the virtue of the turn towards the question of agency, which in asserting the primacy of a building's social constitution and occupation; its use and alteration over time;

emphasizes eventual ruin or sudden erasure.⁴² The conception of the ‘death of the building’ dramatizes the irrelevance of formalism and the pristine object conjectured in its ideal state as a model.

By the final decade of the twentieth century the ‘academic’ tradition of formal analysis associated with a lapidary ‘mannerist modernism’; initially established by Colin Rowe under Rudolf Wittkower’s tutelage, and later expanded in the ambit of linguistic structuralism and semiotic theory by Eisenman;⁴³ seemed conclusively consigned to history.⁴⁴ Aspects of this practice: its conceptualization, comprehension, language and methodology; however still lurk at the margins of subsequent architectural discourse, retaining an absent presence in the context of the Journal’s revival of the critical building review (2011). For what is a ‘building review’ if not an investigation of the artefact itself, and for all the habitual critic’s and architect’s self regard, is there not a trace in current preoccupations of the manner in which words return to manipulate the object of their concern. And of a sensibility that brings us back to essential dualities, if not between the literary and the visual, the ideological and the aesthetic, rhetoric and practicality, then between the essay and the research paper, and with them to the quiescent art of building analysis.⁴⁵

¹ R Evans, ‘In Front of Lines That Leave Nothing Behind’, *AA Files*, 6 (1984), p. 89.

² As his metaphor had it.

³ Formalism came to be associated with the methodology of comparative criticism, whether in literature, the visual arts or architecture, and the art-historical ‘slide beside

slide’ pre-digital mode of visual presentation. Comparative building studies have recently been revived in K. Frampton, *A Genealogy of Modern Architecture: Comparative Critical Analysis of Built Form* (Zurich, Lars Müller, 2015).

⁴ ‘Critical reviews: buildings and projects—a new series of articles’, *The JoA*, 16 (2011), pp. iii–v.

⁵ *The Architects Journal* differentiated over the years between everyday ‘Building Features’; documentary ‘Building Studies’, and historical ‘Masters of Building’, which serve to identify different categories of the ‘case study’.

⁶ See, P. Blundell Jones and E. Canniffie, *Modern Architecture Through Case Studies 1945–1990* (Oxford, The Architectural Press, 2007), and D. Dunster, *Key Buildings of the 20th Century, Vol. I Houses 1900–1944* (London, Butterworths, 1985) and *Vol. II Houses 1945–1989* (London, The Architectural Press, 1990).

⁷ Typically in an architectural context that would identify a relatively short text focused on the detailed evidence of a building, which is subject to a ‘critical’ analysis informed by history or theory beyond the ambit of an essentially pragmatic or professional orientation. The journal’s main UK competitor, the *Architectural Research Quarterly*, categorises building studies as ‘criticism’.

⁸ Again, the distinction between building study, case study and building monograph, becomes blurred in the extensive ‘Architecture in Detail’ series launched in 1991 by Phaidon Press or, in a more academic context, the O’Neil Ford Monographs published since 2008 by the University of Texas at Austin. A particularly elegant example of the individual monograph is by John Pardey, *Two Houses in Majorca, Jørn Utzon Logbook Vol. III* (Hellerup, Edition Bløndal, 2004).

⁹ J. Madge, A. Peckham, eds, *Narrating Architecture: A Retrospective Anthology* (London/New York, Routledge, 2006).

¹⁰ J. Molema, 'Berlage's *Beurs* – concept and method', *The JoA*, 4, 2 (1999), pp. 199–225, and L. K. Eaton, 'Frank Lloyd Wright and the concrete slab and column', *The JoA*, 3, 4 (1998), pp. 315–346.

¹¹ I. Allen, 'Creating space out of text: perspectives on domestic Regency architecture or three essays on the Picturesque', *The JoA*, 2, 1 (1997), pp. 59–82.

¹² Pavilion, hall, studio and belvedere: undone by western influences.

¹³ As the title of his *Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism* suggests Colquhoun never published a *bona fide* research paper. He was always fastidious however in outlining his initial intellectual premises, to which he typically returned in a measured conclusion. Critical discursiveness always remained constrained; unlike Robin Evans who, while registering his debt to the existing literature, could approach his subject from 'the range of angles' (experiential and philosophical) sought here by the Journal editors.

¹⁴ There is also mention of the role of 'images and fictions'.

¹⁵ M. Cadwell, *Strange Details* (Cambridge, Mass./London, The MIT Press, 2007).

¹⁶ By Scarpa, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe and Kahn.

¹⁷ In essay mode: without separate introductions, subheadings or conclusions in each case.

¹⁸ Or one sympathetic to a literary prerogative.

¹⁹ See, in particular: R. Evans, *The Projective Cast* (Cambridge, Mass./London, The MIT Press, 2007), pp. 6–23, or his essay 'Mies van der Rohe's Paradoxical Symmetries', *AA Files*, 19 (1990), pp. 63/64.

²⁰ K. Kleinman and L. Van Duzer, *Mies van der Rohe: the Krefeld Villas* (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2005); following in the footsteps of their measured monograph on Adolf Loos' Villa Muller.

²¹ A. Colquhoun, 'From Bricolage to Myth, or How to Put Humpty-Dumpty Together Again', *Essays in Architectural Criticism: Modern Architecture and Historical Change* (Cambridge, Mass./London, The MIT Press, 1985), p. 169.

²² Stemming from his PhD of 1963 and subsequent texts published in the early 1970's, eventually consolidated in book form forty years later: P. Eisenman, Giuseppe Terragni *Transformations Decompositions Critiques* (New York, The Monacelli Press, 2003).

²³ Republished as 'Plateau Beaubourg' in A. Colquhoun, *Alan Colquhoun: Collected Essays in Architectural Criticism* (London, Black Dog Publishing, 2009), pp. 82–89, but best read in its original context, 'Critique', *Architectural Design*, 47, 2 (1977), pp. 96–102. Paul Vermeulen's 'After the Avant-garde', *OASE*, 87 (2012), pp. 115–119, is an incisive critique of Colquhoun's essay.

²⁴ Colquhoun's view of the implications of technological form and flexible space as an ideology, contrasts with a more direct engagement with the political, social and economic background to the project by the Parti Socialist Unifié; as also with Baudrillard's use of the project as a rhetorical springboard for his own theories. PSU, 'Beaubourg: The Containing of Culture in France', *Studio International*, 194, 988 (January 1978), pp. 27–36, and J. Baudrillard, 'The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence', in his *Simulacra and Simulation* (Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 61–73.

²⁵ D. Gissen, 'Exhaust and territorialisation at the Washington Bridge Apartments, New York city, 1963–1973', *The JoA* 12, 4 (2007), pp. 449–461.

²⁶ D. Spencer, 'Replicant urbanism: the architecture of Hadid's Central Building at BMW, Leipzig', *The JoA*, 15, 2 (2010), pp. 181–207.

²⁷ Expanded in his forthcoming: D. Spencer, *The Architecture of Neoliberalism: How Contemporary Architecture Became an Instrument of Control and Compliance* (London, Bloomsbury, 2016).

²⁸ T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1990), pp. 23–78.

²⁹ K. Frampton, ‘The Volvo Case’, *Lotus*, 12 (1976), pp. 16–41.

³⁰ Reduced to viewing the surrounding ‘non-place urban realm’.

³¹ H. Jacobi, ‘Form follows metaphors: a critical discourse analysis of the construction of the Israeli Supreme Court building in Jerusalem’, *The JoA*, 9, 2 (2004), pp. 219–239.

³² L. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1992).

³³ F. Urban, ‘Glasgow’s Royal Concert Hall and the invention of the post-modern city’, *The JoA*, 18, 2 (2013), pp. 254–296.

³⁴ Completed in 1990.

³⁵ M. Lozanovska, Hagia Sofia (532–537AD): a study of centrality, interiority and transcendence in architecture’, *The JoA*, 15, 4 (2010), pp. 425–448, and A. Sharr, ‘The sedimentation of memory’, *The JoA*, 15, 4 (2010), pp. 499–515.

³⁶ A. T. Friedman, *Women and the Making of the Modern House: A Social and Architectural History* (New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1998).

³⁷ For Michael Benedikt in *Deconstructing the Kimbell* (New York, Lumen, 1991), this involved reasoning with the theoretical discourse of Deconstruction before recourse to formal characteristics of Louis Kahn’s art museum.

³⁸ In his introduction to four papers in *The Journal on the Spatial Construction of Meaning*: J. Peponis, ‘Formulation’, *The JoA*, 10, 2 (2005), pp. 119–133.

³⁹ That shibboleth of rational architecture.

⁴⁰ Hillier and March in particular.

⁴¹ Expressed in Colquhoun's displacement of concepts: of form and function, of volume and surface, and of typology and design method. And similarly, in Eisenman's transformations: of plane (façade) and volume; of wall and frame; of addition and subtraction, and between conceptual and perceptual. Benedikt avoided similar dualities since his deconstructionist concern focused instead on 'difference'; hierarchy reversal; marginality and centrality, and 'iterability' and meaning. He nonetheless moved conventionally from the plan to the site, to the structure and its elements, and to threshold conditions.

⁴² This is part of a larger subject discussed as 'Architectural Agency' in J. Till, *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge Mass./London, The MIT Press, 2009), pp. 153–170.

⁴³ Eisenman's conception of architecture as text was unhinged by paradoxical aspects of Terragni's architecture, which coincided with the perspective of post-structuralism.

⁴⁴ This break with formalism was well expressed in D. Ghirardo, ed., *Out of Site: A Social Criticism of Architecture* (Seattle, Bay Press, 1991). The nuance of Anthony Vidler's: *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 2008); is more subtle. His comprehensive chapter on Rowe, and Eisenman's 'Foreword', are particularly relevant to the discussion here.

⁴⁵ Vidler's conclusion to 'Reckoning with Art History' takes a balanced view of Rowe's approach to the building as object, emphasising his conviction that '...this very status...might be unpacked through the detective faculty of vision...to reveal a complex...argument that it at once constitutes and is constituted by...' A. Vidler,

'Reckoning with Art History', E. Petit, ed., *Reckoning with Colin Rowe*

(New York/London, Routledge, 2015), p. 52.

Andrew Peckham (2016) Beyond formalism: the quiescent art of formal analysis in architecture, *The Journal of Architecture*, 21:5, 679-689, DOI: 10.1080/13602365.2016.1207441

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13602365.2016.1207441>