

METROPOLIS AND POST-MODERN METROPOLIS AS A CRITICAL FIELD OF MODERN MIMICRY

A B S T R A C T

Hegel's analysis and definition of the work of art in the Esthetic foretold transformation in visual communication and perception of arts in the advertising age. During the transformative period of economy into money economy fundamental social and cultural ruptures introduced new methods of transgression in forms expression and conception of meaning in arts, and by implication, in architecture. Aesthetic radically departed from the norms of figuration in the classical art into symbolic reading. These exigencies in style and conception reflected the new consciousness that was impinged on by the age of sciences and mechanical reproduction.

KEY WORDS

MIMETIC
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TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS
AVANT-GARDE
AESTHETIC
ABSTRACTIONS

DEFINITION OF MIMICRY:

an instance of mimicking something

Mimicry¹ is the similarity of one species to another which protects one or both.² This similarity can be in appearance, behavior, sound, scent and even location, with the mimics found in similar places to their models.³

Mimicry occurs when a group of organisms,⁴ the mimics, evolve to share common perceived characteristics with another group, the models.⁵ The evolution is driven by the selective action of a signal-receiver, or dupe.⁶

HEGEL: SYMBOLIC FORM

In seminal work of Georg Simmel the art, in his view, becomes the commodification of the economic means of the exchange in which the object and subject are separated from each other. On the other hand, the symbolic, the value of the artifact in Hegelian terms can be defined as general and abstract. Initially the artistic idea cannot formulate a concrete form but it rather assumes sublimation as the method of the exterior representation of a *sign*. In a process of establishing a relationship between meaning and expression, an artifact becomes an arbitrary object in this relationship. Expression is based on perceptual senses, and consequently, artwork exists directly through the observation and affect of a subject. A Symbol is a sign and this element in the artworks is considered in a boarder and general sense of the context it is placed into. Hegel describes duality of an artistic object: “a meaning which is a performance of an essence or an object with content, and an expression which represents perceptual sensors of a spectator or simply any kind of representation.”⁷

The meaning of the symbol is defined as an object with any kind of content and an expression of a symbol is defined by a perceptual existence of an image in our own senses. Hegel conflates the representation of the symbol and its content by focusing on the nature of this ambiguity. The form of a symbol can posses several meanings that are sometimes conflicting. There are many forms of shapes and representations to denote the symbol of God in the example he provides. In essence, this presents the notion of ambiguity in a symbol as symbol can assume many shapes. Thus, a symbol cannot attain specific code of definition in the visual form since it can attain several meanings. Any kind of visual form in itself conveys a direct representation of some kind of existence. Thus, in essence, it is sufficient to see a visual representation that cannot necessarily be interpreted with

additional meanings other than its visceral qualities. Accordingly, the only way uncertainty will cease in the reading of a symbolic form or the visual representation of any manifestation of the specific meaning is if we establish a metonymic relationship between its devices: the shape and the meaning. Through interrelated comparison between the physical representation of a meaning and the visual existence we can establish a symbolic link. The true symbol can also lose its ambiguity, if through constant use and repetition, it becomes a conventional sign. Hegel brings up this uncertainty in interpretations of symbolic value of the form in the classical art, because subjectivity is an essential quality of its representation and does not need symbolic form to communicate with viewer's faculties of perception. Uncertainty of understanding a meaning in works of art can also stem from unfamiliarity with cognitive values of visceral sign in the symbolic form. In the art of the oriental cultures such as the Persian or the Egyptian, we encounter different shapes of symbolic representation that are to an uneducated, unfamiliar eye nothing more than a puzzle. Generality in interpretation of a symbolic form also purports to indefiniteness in the reading of symbolic meaning. So the division of art ideals into three categories – symbolic, classic and romantic seems appropriate to Hegel for interpreting the visual meaning in artworks.

The notion of individuality is sufficient according to Hegel to express a spiritual and perceptual being of the subject, its *essence*. Abstract interpretation is a reaffirmation of individuality of the subject in which a meaning of the *essence* does not possess any other form or a phenomenon other than itself. I find this notion of subjective manifestation of symbols in A. Loos's reaction towards falseness of the ornament as stylistic form. He holds that decorative arts are simply attributes of romantic pastiche, cultural constructs devoid of any purposeful meaning. His evolution of the culture resembles the consciousness of modernity in which decorative forms have no utilitarian value in the representation of everyday life (see *Ornament and Crime*, Adolf Loos). Decorations are formal symbols in which past cultural habits are encapsulated. Aesthetic of the classic art form is obsolete and superfluous to the logic of modern life and cannot recover the authenticity in its representation. He introduces modern ways of the city dweller to the bourgeois Vienna through a system of behavioral codes. *Zeitgeist* is the domain of imagination which an artist inhabits; moment '*creates craftsman, and craftsman creates button*'.⁸ Aesthetic forms are borne out of an authentic spirit of time in which processes of reality inform upon artistic expression. The breaking asunder of the organic character of architectural forms is the result of the revision of formal principles. This, however did not lead to a revolution of meaning but rather exposed the

crisis of values. The city became an open structure as Tafuri states.⁹ Intrinsic characteristic of architectural ideology and urban planning is reflection rather than challenge of reality. Architectural theory arises from the dialectical relationship to architectural ideology. It is rather through engagement of empirical knowledge and faculties of precepts that we can build a theory based on the production of social sense.

For the nineteenth-century architects the eclecticism and plurality of a form seemed the appropriate response against the disintegrative face of mechanical reproduction that was registered in city centers of old metropolises. The reality of urban structure was radically altered by the technological progress and the city became an open structure in which radical utopias were taking place. In all necessity, architects were adopting a new approach to resolving complex planning issues and finding professional equilibrium in new ways of production. Traditionally architecture seeks stability and order of the form which brings about lasting permanence and authenticity of the urban morphology. Instead, architecture became a link in the production chain that regarded old city cores as laboratories for new technological interventions. Piranesi's foretelling of bourgeois cities as 'absurd machines' was finally realized in metropolises of the nineteenth century in which the spatial and formal organization were based on requirements of capitalist economy. If we look at the Victorian architectural style we can notice the similarity with a romantic eclecticism in all its contradictions to the new order of consumption and organized production. It is precisely the same force that made Piranesi's leap into the realm of sublime that pushed the romanticism into defining aesthetic norms in human environment. Conditions of ambiguity replete with an unrestrained desire for nostalgia and formulate false cultural constructs at the beginning of the transformation of the old Baroque cities into modern metropolises. A sense of loss and irrationality present in Piranesi's prints exists as much in an eclectic style of grand pavilions of early industrial exhibitions and new city blocks. In the face of reality cities became vast collections of false stylistic expressions with an inability of architects to cope with a lack of authenticity. Tafuri entices this crisis to an effort of overcoming the late romantic mythology with new ideological instruments of the rational utopias which offered cognitive faculties to deal with the reality of mass production and the degeneration in traditional spatial organization. The second response was the rise of an artistic avant-garde that developed new methods of creativity to satisfy the needs of individualization, which then, allowed objective utopias with clear ideological ideals to come. Lastly, the architectural ideology mustered up a series of initiatives that included the *ideology of the plan*, which in turn, was

functionally rendered obsolete with the international reorganization of capital and launching of the First Five-Year Plan, in Russia.¹⁰

AVANT-GARDE AND THE ART OF SPECTACLE

Grand Expos and expositions were places where urban crowds and citizens of different nations engage in sublimation of art constructs that celebrated ideology of consumption. This engagement has in no way defined art or architectural construct as a commodity, but rather these were the places of spectacle created in itself for the purpose of self-education and pretense of prestige from the point of view of the capital.¹¹ The spatial and visual means of this daring structures in the form of grand palaces, created a public dialogue in which art, or architecture itself by implication is transient and ephemeral. Here we can discern two types of forms in the production of the technological spectacle in models of national or thematic pavilions: the one created on architectural types as recreational-pedagogical instruments, smaller, separated, and devoted to a singular theme,¹² and the other type, the grand pavilions, such as the Crystal Palace at the London Expo in 1851, in which large crowds congregate to look at the works of industrial production, and cultural artifacts of different sovereign nations.

The initial history can be closely tied to the technological innovations and socio-cultural transformations following the industrial revolution. The exhibitions appeared parallel with the development of modern industries since the industry provided real processes, technical and financial means for construction of a new reality and human relations. These grand halls and pavilions presented places for mimetic performances attempted to recreate industrial processes, achievements and technological feats: the numerous methods of serial production, products of machines, and implements together with works of arts represent the totality of experience (see Hegel, “Esthetic”).¹³

New modes of construction and, in general, industrial production predicted transformation of social norms of the early bourgeois society and systems of public control and exchanges into a new economic realm of the machine age. The start was made at the Paris exhibition in 1789 with the display of luxury articles for daily use. Festive atmosphere similar to the aura of *Enlightenment* impregnated this event and proclaimed *la liberté du travail* that gave every citizen the right to follow whatever trade he desired.¹⁴ According to newly found liberties of mechanical reproduction the social progress and the well-being were insured by the inventions and dominance of sciences. It was a bold period.

The second period is marked by national exhibitions based on the principles of free trade, and international prestige. In this period exhibitions were products of free trade, free communication, and improvements in production and the international mercantilism reminiscent of colonial conquests. Based on the model of liberal economies architectural accomplishments were achieved through new methods of construction, the experimental use of materials and new rapid systems of erection. The spirit of rivalry and competitiveness of the liberal economies induced great labors on part of engineers and architects to come up with most daring solutions. Evolution of building technologies called upon the creation of a new aesthetic approach.¹⁵ The exhibition had a practical goal to fulfill by assembling in a short time all human activity in a single place and to attract professional representatives from all over the world. Spectacle and awe was the framework of the scene of ‘all sorts of congresses – of science, industry, finance and labor.’¹⁶ The most prominent buildings of these periods were the Crystal Palace of 1851 and the *Galerie des Machines* of 1889 of which none survived. Ominous fate of these exuberant structures were marked in Kantian terms by the conflict between the faculties of a subject and faculties to ‘present’ something, a *flight of reality*. Modernity could not be ushered without shattering the old molds and symbols of reality and replacing these realities with new ones. The objects and thoughts which are based on scientific knowledge and capitalist economy must effectively convey rules that effectively support the possibility of their existence. When capital enters the realm of art, there is no little consequence. As J. Lyotoard¹⁷ professes: Modernism as a recurrent historical occurrence “*cannot exist without a shattering belief and without discovery of the ‘lack of reality.’*” In this sense, lays the Kantian theme of sublime that avant-garde always evokes as equivocal emotion which carries both sensibilities of pain and pleasure. It can also be described in terms of death of art or what Nitché equates to nihilism.

Here we can discuss spatial conquest similar to the analysis of Siegfried Kraucer of German film from the 1920 – *From Caligari to Hitler*. Interestingly he constructs his critical reading of the film genre through spatial metaphors. Art, he argues, can shape the collective unconsciousness and as such can serve as a stasis of collective conditions through which a critic/analyst can understand historical and social developments.

In the course of their spatial conquests, films of fictions and films of fact alike capture innumerable components of the world they mirror: huge mass displays, casual configurations of human bodies and inanimate objects, and an endless succession of unobtrusive phenomena. As a matter of fact, the screen shows

*itself particularly concerned with the unobtrusive, the normally neglected [...] Films seem to fulfill and innate mission in ferreting out minutiae.*¹⁸

The work of Kraucer, as well as his Weimer contemporary Walter Benjamin, has been crucial to the subsequent theorization of film and urban space which are stated in terms of mass spectacle and everyday urban life. Kraucer's work in particular reflects collective physiognomies and a consciousness of the mass through a complex analysis of psychological experiences and controlling social systems. Likewise, the metaphor of a spatial conquest reflects Weimar Germany's imperial desire and subconscious extension of this ambition. In essence the visual culture more generally was profoundly drawn in by material and imaginative projects of the state conquest outside the borders of Germany.

The role of grand expositions is one form of the extension of state power, and its implied projection of cultural control and interlocution. In Kraucer's research of minutiae laid a *signifier* of state ambitions represented in different forms of esthetic. The conquest of space through visual culture, thus, involved exploration of the marginal and the shock of alienation which became an everyday norm and impacted deeply the role of art. As detective-like Kraucer uncovers spaces of the visual culture of spectacle; places, as W. Benjamin stated, represented by the commodity of fetishism, such as a contrived outfits of the Parisian prostitutes. This only signified troubled limits of a modern culture through the symbolic myth of progress of the machine age. The centrality of the marginal in Kraucer's work was echoed in that of Benjamin. Both have largely recognized the ways in which practices of marginalization, the containment and transitory nature of heterogeneity of the capital limited cultural tropes of operation were done – everything was a commodity with the prices set by the market, valuable one day, just to be worthless the next. The narrative of progress elicited in advertised constructs of grand expositions showed the ways the sustained growth of capitalist expansion degenerated and regenerated.

The grand buildings of an ephemeral quality at these international expos became advertisements within themselves and were of such size that they became palaces of modern times. The Main gallery from the 1889 Gallery Expo had a length of 420 m and the width of 115 m while its height was 43 m. The roof of the main pavilion hall at the Expo 70 in Osaka measured 292m in length and had a width of 108m while it was supported only by 6 pillars. These were temples of the machine age and commerce that extolled visceral qualities of the mass production and consciousness of a mass spectacle. The "loss"

foretold in the drawings of Piranesi has finally been materialized in architectural performances of grand pavilions of 1800's. The experience of "loss" is similar to the experience of *flaneur* in Baudelaire who finds in interactions of the crowd the awareness of irreversible *'dynamic interconnectedness existing between uniformity and diversity.'*¹⁹

W. Benjamin closely relates the decline of skill and practice in industrial work to the experience of shock that a user of the city is subjected through the immanence of real relationships of production in the behavior of public:

"The non-specialized worker is the one most severely degraded by the apprenticeship of the machine. His work is impervious to his experience. Skill no longer has any place here. What amusement park realizes in its flying cages and other similar diversions is only a taste apprenticeship of which the non-specialized worker is subjected to [...] Poe's take makes evident the relationship between unrestrained behavior and discipline. His passerby behave as if having become like automations, they can no longer express themselves except automatically [...]"²⁰

In many ways both Benjamin and Kraucer were writing in the horizon of an early sociological orientation towards modernity, one which was fundamentally concerned with the notion of fragmentation and the issue of social order. These issues emerged in the 19th and the 20th century thorough the emergence of social studies and sociological texts. It was a fear and apprehension over the effects of capitalist, urban, industrial society and in particular the alienating forces that were shaping modern experiences and the ways of controls of knowledge and the semiotic of cultural exchanges that gave rise to social disruptions. The most influential essay about this phenomenological development in the sphere of knowledge and public conscience was the 'Metropolis and Mental Life' which developed a highly nuanced reading of the relationships between the urban experience and psychological orientations. The framework of the essay is built around struggles against the nature or traditional norms in the social order. Dichotomy in cultural exchange in public realm, both conscious and unconscious, Simmel argued, was impinged on by transformation of the primal human struggle against nature into a struggle of men against men.²¹

The human body was reconfigured to signify this struggle in the industrial production chain that was altering a collective sense of culture. The fear of often racialized feminine sexuality just like in Baudelaire which emerges in a sociological critique, serves to block critical practice. Marginality in these early critiques focuses on analyses of the workings of industrial labor, money,

urban forms and capitalism in general. Art follows different dictum than conception of knowledge. Simmel characterized art as the process in which human beings introduced the permanence into transient materials. Indeed, Simmel regards art in many ways as the antithesis of the web of relations associated with the money economy. The artist engages in an act of production that involves the whole of his *essential being*. (See Hegel) The object that emerges is the one in which 'typical' is integrated into the 'fortuitous'. The successful work of art is such that subject and object are mediated through the vehicle of form. In short, art embodies a set of qualitative values that are incommensurable with quantitative values of the money economy. The response of avant-garde is based on the subject of the city, in which systems of reproduction are in a productive unity in the cycle of production-distribution-consumption. Far from an isolated incident in the empiricist conception of the knowledge the ideology of consumption is offered as the correct way of behavior and the directive for navigation through the reality of modern city. Moreover, at this juncture linguistic revolution of the contemporary art offers a new reading of reality through abstraction between the subject and the object. Codes of advertising, the accelerated tempo of use, the increase in communication all contributed to reducing the artistic operation to a pure object. Tafuri rightly points out that all avant-garde movements have one thing in common whether it was the art of protest or the formal critique of built environment (Constructivist) was concerned. They all shared the same operational values built on the typical *laws of technical revolution*,²² for all avant-garde movements used *assemblage* as the concept of reproduction. The *Metropolitan Man* in Simmel illustrates a behavioral pattern of the mass in the city, which now is the seat of money economy dominated by 'the internal flow of things' and continuous 'development.' Permanence that is present in the classical art and architecture dissolves into 'motion.' The 'intensification of nervous stimulation' provoked by the 'rapid crowding of changing images' and 'unexpectedness of onrushing impressions' were described by Simmel as the new conditions that generate *blasé* attitude of the individual of metropolis. It is in the private field of an interaction where we find a "*man without qualities*".

*This does not mean that the objects are not perceived, as is the case with the half-wit, but rather, that the meaning and differing values of things, and thereby the things themselves, are experienced as insubstantial. They appear to the blasé person in an evenly flat and grey tone; no one object deserves preference over any other. This mood is the faithful subjective reflection of a completely internalized money economy.*²³

His argument is not really about the fact that art is a commodity, an object of monetary exchange. What he is doing is setting up a contrast between two polar opposites so as to be able to highlight two radically different forms of sociality. The modern economy is marked by ever-increasing division between subject and object; there is less and less correspondence between inner life of the personality and the increasing objective forms taken by culture. Culture, in other words, starts to approximate the condition of money which in itself is abstraction. On the other hand, through the 'abstraction' of artistic form, art is able to keep the subject and object in touch one with another. In his short essay on the Berlin Trade Fair in 1896 Simmel also has less oppositional, a more nuanced view of the relationship between money and art.

In this essay Simmel began to explore how art might be affected by the ethos associated with money economy. What happens if art, too, starts to resemble the form of money? His primary concern is more about the ways social relationships in art would get restructured according to the principles of money economy than about the commodification of the artwork. His impression of Berlin's first 'universal exhibition' becomes a touchstone for this revised view on the relationship between art and money.

There is much that is common between 'trade fairs' of the 19th century and contemporary art biennales. Both are attempts to condense into a single time and space a 'representative sample' of contents. Some common characteristics are: competitiveness among different objects on display, both stress observation over purchase, and finally both reproduce the split between 'technical' insiders and 'general' visitor. There are four aesthetic tendencies at work that appear at these events all of which are the result of generalization of the social template of money economy: transience, show-window aesthetic, stylistic relativity or eclectic stylistic expression and amusement.

What has struck Simmel was the impermanence as a new definition of an aesthetic form. It runs contrary to his notion of art definition as an impartation of permanence of form to transient materials. The grand pavilions and exhibition halls constructed to house industrial exhibits were dominated by structures of 'an entirely new proportion between permanence and transience' as well as in the aesthetic criteria which they obey. Ambiguity of style reflects an echo of loss presented in Piranesi's work. Architecture, and by implication art in general, now have a style to match the 'flow of things' in money economy. The transient found its style in the eclectic nature of elements in the mechanical reproduction. Consequence of the temporary nature of the buildings is a symbolic play

of signs in which semiology of capital economy is celebrated in transient architectural forms. Technology and engineering genius informs shapes of these constructs in very precise and controlling manner and organizes their looks and both materials from which they are made.

Within the form of the exhibition the visitor encounters a high level of 'concurrent diversification' amongst the objects on display. In his observation he notices cultivation of an 'aesthetic superadditum' and he describes it in the following way:

The production of goods under the regime of free competition and the normal predominance of supply over demand leads to goods having to show a tempting exterior as well as a utility. Where competition no longer operates in matters of usefulness and intrinsic properties, the interest of the buyer has to be aroused by the external stimulus of the object, even the manner of its representation.²⁵

Perhaps this is an early version of the idea of commodity spectacle that echoes the processes W. Benjamin later analyzed. The effects upon art specifically designed for Biennale might be profitably looked at through his ideas on the competition between 'tempting exteriors'.

It is no more evident than in the situation of contemporary styling, or rather styles that the implications of modern economy enter an aesthetic field. The modern individual's love of change can be seen in the way in which at any point in time and space a multiplicity of styles can be found one next to another. In fact, Simmel reveals similarity between modern universal exhibition space and the modern domestic interior. This comparison can be traced to nowadays contemporary pavilions such as the one shown at the Shanghai Expo or the Venice Biennale. These trades put out stylistic variety that sometimes can be impregnated with a meaning other than obvious ideas of shock and attraction present in *production of knowledge* in money economy. Simmel states that there has to be a degree of cosmopolitanism; in the consumer in the first place for this to be effective. I believe, Simmel thinks of the abilities of the observer, based on his education and learnt habits to interpret the object (Hegel presents this perceptual aspect of the artwork in his thesis on the symbolic form).

*Only where variety of given styles exists will one detach itself from its content so that its independence and specific significance gives us the freedom to choose between the one or the other.*²⁵ The stylist 'detachment' enables both styles and consumer to be exchanged more easily. The most appropriate emotion for the modern consumer is that of amusement.

Simmel argues that the most appropriate emotion at the moment of consumption by the blasé character is that of amusement. Simply the heterogeneity of the place and diversity of the crowd encroach on the consciousness of individual mind of blasé character. This is an individual who subscribes to the idea that there is nothing that is price-less. While Simmel strolled around the Berlin Trade fair he encountered that this unifying colorful factor of the mass did not lie in the codes of cultural exchange, but in simple interaction of entertainment. This *lasé-faire* interactivity induces perceptible emotions and it is transferable from one object or situation to another. It requires minimal effort from diverse pool of subjects by drawing in semiotic structure of cultural process. Finally, the exchange is situated in a place of disengagement and neutrality. These mimetic codes of interaction reflect the essential nature of exhibition construct. In all unbridled form of the repressions the relationship between the subject and the object is based on the idea of shock, as explained in Baudelaire. The ambiguous relationship between percepts of the subject and *signifier* that is represented in an object is far more important than the shape of objective form.

Case Study:

THE BEAUBOURG THE GEORGES POMPIDOU NATIONAL CENTER FOR ART AND CULTURE, AND THE ROCKEFELLER CENTER

G. Pompidou Center is the final realization of architectural utopias of Archigram's machine city. The result was unpredictable as the building became paradoxical physical representation of theoretical metaphors of machine esthetic. Initial potential of the structure was reflected in the spatial concept, its freedom of infinite rearrangement of public domain. In symbolic terms its aesthetic assumed a form of perfect machine for housing and protecting works of arts. Although the high-tech reached its height in the late 70's there was no building or a physical construct that presents more powerful material concretization of complexity of radical programs reminiscent of Situations; transparent, always moving, transforming, and appealing to human association through metaphor of open spatial continuum. These were perhaps fantasies of power, evanescent culture of the postindustrial world, an embodiment of exuberant esthetic of ephemeral pavilions of industrial expositions which are built around human interaction. No longer limited to its traditional language, advertising organizes the architecture or super objects, like Beaubourg, which became in the meantime a monument, as it proposes massive movements, social flux and operation of culture and commodities. No other building risked more to represent the vision of radical cultural future (machine city; walking city) in recoding the restrictive nature of technological devices. Structural impermanence

and lightness of the symbolic form was lost to conventional interventions and infinite adaptations in interior spaces. It is interesting to see a gap between original intentions of the concept and the reality of building, as it is subjected to alternative uses and the passage of time. Beaubourgh provides a meaning through its architectural analogies of the program that reach beyond the limited scope formalistic interpretations.

One example of permanent presence of a symbolic form in an urban context is the Rockefeller Center. The regular geometric matrices create building morphologies, further manipulated by the grading of scales. One is more taken by vertical perspective views of the building block than by horizontal ones which are reminiscent of the city scapes from the Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, a film reminiscent of cultural aporias in the Weimer republic.

The prominence of the main axis is accented by abutting buildings lower in hierarchy which reinforce a strong bilateral symmetry. On the edges of buildings secondary axes control the layering of the secondary promenade along which a functional segregation of shops establishes the logic of subsidiary spatial sequences. The main stenographic vista is stratified by vertical control of the void, open court (skating ring), at the concourse level which emphasizes figure/ground juxtaposition and at the same time anchors armature to vertical layers. The secondary axis forms a horizontal layering of private and business spaces that follow a hierarchical organization between different building blocks. The sequences show a complete organizational control similar to the repetitive standardization of machine productions - a ritualized and hierarchical choreography. The emphasis on the perspectival reading of the enclave reinforces the monumental character of the Rockefeller Center. As a significant landmark the whole complex could be treated as a city node of collective cultural past of metropolis. It is a large object with dominant position and extravagant vistas of the avenues which reinforce a monolithic quality of the object. As Kevin Lynch suggests the object autonomy of the Rockefeller Center makes it identifiable at any time of day. The coding and block matrices point out conceptually to the roles of square in the fabric of the old European city. The complex system of blocks becomes independent field with its own structuring logic which defines interior spatial layers – junctions (see Kevin Lynch, *The Image*, pg 87-120).

In relationship to Aldo Rossi's urban imagination, the Rockefeller Center constitutes an urban fragment which contains its own urban code. It has a role that purports Rossi's idea of the urban imagination because of the ways it puts

an important and evolving political mark on the urban memory of the New York City which fuses the machine-city of Modernists and semiological city of Post-Modernist. This relationship grew naturally, I believe, completely out of changing urban fabric as the metropolis changed through time. The Rockefeller Center can be viewed both as a public building and a monumental building block on the larger scale, as the celebration of individuality – the homage to the industrial magnate. This also could be interpreted as a feat of singularity over the collective memory.

In analysis, the Rockefeller Center's coding schema reflects a regular Beaux-Art compositional method. It is based on self-regulating generative rules reflected in an axial space layering. As it is laid out in the Gaudet's doctrine the enclave is found on the rigid geometrical pattern, which promotes a strong center. A metaphor of power and the centrality of control of production comes immediately to one's mind. The clear logic of functional pockets layered along the sequence of axes implies a sense of rationality in the city planning process. Also, the codification is dependent upon hierarchies (building blocks, vertical layers of armature; pedestrian walk; subway; street; car level; shopping concourse) between axes along which armatures run parallel. One of the significant elements in the organization of building blocks is the formation of the stenographic armature that is completed with an ornate tower. The opposite visual point is a communication artery of the Fifth avenue. In addition the enclave follows Gaudet's organizational system of time/space compression – dual axes, main and cross. The main axis directs the stenographic armature and crosses the secondary artery of enclave along which business and semi-private pocket of space are layered. The change of the scale shows topological variation on the grid plan of Modernist implying a new code of identification. Through visual manipulations the Rockefeller center becomes an autonomous object within the existing urban grid. It contains its own armature and 'sister' buildings guard the perimeter of the three occupied blocks by maintaining inherent proportional ratios and its own hierarchies. As it is the case in the early industrial cities, the combination of public and private or business spaces creates visual dynamism which allows for monumentality.

NOTES

- 1 Less commonly known as *mimetism*.
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- 4 This 'group' is often a species, but can also be a subgroup such as one particular sex or morph
- 5 In its broadest definition mimicry can include non-living models.
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- 24 Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life,' in *on Individuality and Social Forms*, Chicago:
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