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'The unacceptability of the erasures': John Hejduk's texts for the 'Berlin Masque'

Abstract:

Engaging Hejduk's compelling project, 'Berlin Masque' (1981), this paper looks into writing's power to develop unforeseen possibilities of architectural program. In his 'Berlin Masque' proposal, unlike his earlier 'Masques'*,* Hejduk clearly prioritizes his prose – not his small accompanying sketches – as the place where the architectural proposition is primarily portrayed. Unpacking these texts in detail will indicate how language represents spatial elements and allow one to imagine moments of spatial appropriation, thus creating original architectural images of cultural significance.

Furthermore, the paper demonstrates how Hejduk's texts and new programmatic possibilities aspire to reconcile Berlin with the trauma of the Second World War. His proposal intends to remind the city's inhabitants that history is not something that is limited to the past, but a development that involves new, everyday happenings and their interaction with memory. Expanding on the rituals of inhabitation for each suggested structure, as narrated in the texts, the paper outlines how the new stories proposed by the architect acknowledge the city's existing narratives while creating the necessary space for new ones to appear.

The conclusion extracts the significance and uniqueness of the 'Berlin Masque' as an architectural project, as well as the significance of language for Hejduk as an architect. It discusses briefly the noted interest in architecture and language nowadays, reminding us of the value of literary imagination.

Biographical note:

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Keywords:

Creative writing – John Hedjuk – Masque – poetic language – rituals of inhabitation – text – architectural program

'I always believed in architecture of a loving nature.'

John Hejduk, *Architectures in love*, 1995

The Competitions

In the years between 1979 and 1987, the International Building Exhibition Berlin (IBA) 'realized a multitude of new building projects in the context of international competitions' (IBA 2013: 12). The organizers aimed to bring to Berlin the architectural 'protagonists of different theories' and let them 'get to grips with the history of the city, the requirements of modern life, and the social, technical and economic conditions of the urban context' (Kleihues & Klotz 1986: 10). The central theme of these competitions was 'the rediscovery of the historic city centre' and its 'critical reconstruction,' so that Berlin – which had 'been destroyed … through war and the building of the Wall' – was reactivated (IBA 2013: 12). The southern part of Berlin-Friedrichstadt, a centrally situated district in the well-known Kreuzberg area, was one of the competitions' foci. The area was totally destroyed by the air-raids of February 1945 and the final battle for the erstwhile capital of the Reich. By the time of the competitions it looked like 'a bizarre "collage d'histoire"' as architect Joseph Paul Kleihues – director of the IBA at the time – would characterize it. 'Cleared sites and stark fireproof walls, relics of the architecture of two centuries and isolated new buildings, the Angel of Peace and Checkpoint Charlie,' were some of the elements *in situ* constituting this surreal urban amalgam (Kleihues & Klotz 1986: 128).

John Hejduk (in collaboration with Gregory Palestri) submitted a proposal in 1981 for two city blocks in Friedrichstadt area – blocks 19 and 20, roughly a triangular- and a rectangular-looking one – as part of a Restricted International Competition (Kleihues & Klotz 1986: 220-224). The competition's call opened with a passage from Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*, the short text on the city of Maurilia. Maurilia, a metropolis that maintains little of its provincial charm after the radical changes it has undergone, offers 'the added attraction that, through what it has become, one can look back with nostalgia at what it was' (Calvino 1972: 30). The decision to incite the competition with Calvino made a strong impression on Hejduk, who, after 'pondering this act for a long time,' decided to submit a proposal. Participating, he detected an opportunity for 'a deep search into the "nature" of program' in architecture, a program in accordance with the spirit of the times and a 'search towards the possibility of renewal' (Hejduk 1985: 138). The proposal, titled 'Berlin Masque; a Contemporary Masque with Structures,' won a special prize, and four years later it was published 'in its most comprehensive form in Hejduk's book *Mask of Medusa*' (Singh 2016: 120). This article will examine this last version of the project.

The Texts

In the *Mask of Medusa* – which gathers Hejduk's work over the span of almost forty years – the project is discussed over a number of pages interspersed throughout the book. Poet David Shapiro – a close collaborator of the architect – explains that the 'Berlin Masque' belongs to Hejduk's 'period of narrative projects in which the idea of masque or ritual predominates' (Shapiro 1991: 6). Indeed, between 1974 and 1989, Hejduk 'produced a series of works he came to refer to as "Masques", drawing their name from the theatrical masque, the dramatic form popular in the royal courts of Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.' All these projects consisted of drawings, 'images, and texts of varying kinds' and as the architect radically asserted, they were

'full-fledged works of architecture in their own right' (Singh 2016: 3-4).

Zubin Singh, in his work 'Inoculations: The Masques of John Hejduk' points out that the 'Berlin Masque' 'marks a shift in the locus and role of written elements'; 'they appear in numerous parts of the project, rather than merely at the outset, … placed alongside the drawings of the structures with which they are associated' (Singh 2016: 122-123). A table of contents – listing and naming the proposal's elements and structures – constitutes the project's opening page. In the next few pages, one finds the short texts for each of these elements/structures with one, or sometimes a few, small drawings placed on their right-hand side. The drawings are free-hand orthographic-projections (plans, sections or elevations) which sometimes include the structures' basic dimensions and materials, providing mostly technical information. The texts on the other hand routinely describe rituals and ways of appropriation of these structures, spatial atmospheres and experiences. Lily Chi, in her article, '"The problem of the architect as writer…"' pointedly observes that these 'narrative texts make explicit an ignominious task inscribed in the very heart of the modern architectural project.' 'The program of life is to be rewritten with every new design proposition' (Chi 1994: 216-217). The characteristics Chi describes render the project a compelling case for the study of the fascinating relation between text and architecture.

This article looks into the texts of the 'Berlin Masque' in detail. Written in a seemingly 'objective' manner and avoiding subjective emotional qualifications, as theoretician Alberto Pérez-Gómez notes, 'they generate poetic images and above all the experience of attunement between environments and task, action and habit' (Pérez-Gómez, 2016: 396). Hejduk prioritizes language to represent spatial elements and rituals, creating original architectural images of place-specific significance. The 'Berlin Masque' texts portray programmatic possibilities of inhabitation that address the particularities of the city and its painfully traumatic history.

The Towers

The first structures Hejduk proposes are seven towers. Six of them are placed on corners and edges of the two city-blocks. The last one, the Observation Tower, is located closer to the Berlin Wall, which, in 1981, was still a paramount element of the city's urban reality. Moving from the Wind Tower to the Watch Tower and then to the Bell Tower, the architect starts by describing each tower's structure, role and way of appropriation. He then abruptly breaks his narrative in order to insert a definition of the word *tower* itself. It is both a technical and poetic definition evoking spatial possibilities for the perspective users:

> Tower: Tall, usually equilateral (esp. square) or circular structure, often forming part of church; place of defence, protector. Reach high; be poised aloft (of wounded bird). Rage, passion. (Hejduk 1985: 141)

The basic characteristics of a tower are delineated in the beginning. The definition invokes height, shape and form, while also addressing function (with its conventional program as a place of defence and protection) and the tower's association with a particular building typology, that of a religious architecture. The second part of the definition, though, shifts to a less typical understanding of the word, touching more on our active embodied experience with a tower. The definition starts with a verb, the verb *reach*, and describes an action, more than a number of characteristics. Hejduk reminds readers that a tower in our tangible, actual interaction with it allows us to *reach high*

and be *poised aloft* – allowing us to ascend vertically and then be balanced or suspended up in or into the air. In the case of the proposal's towers, the architect actually subtly suggests – by putting the words into a parenthesis – that we are poised aloft, a wounded bird. The city of Berlin, which lies below, is described as a hurt animal, a painful truth given that the city still carried the scars of the Second World War bombing over thirty years later. Metaphorically, the competition's site was a still open wound, bleeding into the urban net, and the towers allow us to sense and survey feelings that may overwhelm us without the proper overlook.

Indeed, Hejduk finishes his definition with the words *rage* and *passion*. Although in their connotations these emotional states seem contradictory – we tend to associate passion with a positive, exciting feeling and rage mainly with anger – a closer look into their definitions points to the opposite. Rage can also mean vehement passion or frenzy, while passion refers to strong emotions that oppose thought and reason as the true activity of the human mind (OED). In short, both these emotional conditions can overtake the body and hush or blind rational thought, making us act almost against our own will in unforeseeable ways. Associations are easily evoked by the pairing of these words: The passion and rage that led to the Second World War, the passion and rage that the Second World War provoked, the passion and rage that the War still evokes – as one sees the wounds in the city of Berlin and around the globe – wait for us at the very top of the Berlin Masque towers. Hejduk places them at the end of his tower-description and at the precipice of the towers themselves, hoping that he will make us stop and contemplate them, as we overlook the city. 'We seldom look at the real meanings of certain pairings of words; if we did they might still stop us,' the architect always believed (Hejduk 1995: unpaginated). Aware of the emotional reality of the city, we can partake of the shared feelings, releasing hopefully our own passion and rage. The towers seem like an appropriate place for that to happen, as their role might also be to protect us from our own overwhelming emotions – 'place of defence, protector' as the definition says – and from the atrocities these kinds of feelings, when overtaking the masses, can lead to again. Seven towers that remind, protect and heal.

The specific role of each tower, as portrayed in their respective texts, seems to reinforce remedial impression. All the towers appear to call for pause and a deeper, more thoughtful and appreciative look into the present moment. The short texts demonstrate how they intend to make visible elements that are present in the city—elements that in our hurried living we tend to take for granted and forget to notice. The Wind Tower stands at the south far corner of the whole complex, indicating 'the presence of the wind' (Hejduk 1985: 140). It pays homage to this energy, the momentum of invisible air. The Water Tower, with no functional role at all, reminds us of the presence and importance of the element of water for the city. The Bell Tower harkens us to the possibility of musical notes in a noisy urban setting. Hejduk clearly refrains from making any religious associations and points indirectly to the fact that the primary definition of the word *bell* simply invokes a metallic object that when struck sounds a clear musical note by the sonorous vibration of its entire circumference (OED). The Guest Towers are there to host foreign people who may be in the city 'for varying lengths of time,' whether the city inhabitants are aware of their presence or not. They can actually be called 'The Towers of Unknown Guests' as Hejduk clarifies (Hejduk 1985: 142). They are a reminder of the city's capacity for hospitality, particularly a city that became renowned as a nest for robust Nazi ideology. The Clock Tower does not solely stand for time; it also offers 'a way of seeing time,' of making time visible, or even invisible:

> A square blank surface travels over time. For example, when it is five oclock [*sic*] the square blank surface covers the number five: blocking it out so to speak, or we can not see fixed time, or feel the present, we are simply in motion. (Hejduk 1985: 141)

It reminds us that we tend to forget 'the opacity of the present' moment as we are constantly moving (Malmquist 2000: 17). Or maybe it draws our attention to the fact that 'sometimes time disappears, and at one time stops altogether.' 'It is all right if we can remember stilled time, a paradox, for we cannot really remember still time; we can only remember the time before still time, and, if we are fortunate the time after still time,' as Hejduk once posited (Hejduk 1995: unpaginated).[1]

The Observation Tower, the one placed near the Berlin Wall, is a tower that one can visit alone and stay as long as one wishes. It acts as a reminder of the division, the boundary, the pain and the loneliness caused by the erection of the Wall in the heart of the city. Hejduk insists it is 'a public tower … open 24 hours a day (around the clock)' just like history (Hejduk 1985: 142). The experience of inhabiting it is uncomfortable, as Leah Ray explains: 'The architect forces people to see that the place in which they dwell has been cut in two, suffering from an amputation profoundly affected by the War' (Ray 1998: 302).

In a similar vein, the Watch Tower, acts once again 'as an observatory'[2] but provides for distant views. The single inhabitant, for which it is designed, is 'contained in a capsule with a telescope'; thus, he can look way further than the naked eye can reach, as the capsule moves 'on a 180 degree vertical arc and on a 360 degree horizontal arc.' A panoramic view of the city is made possible and this is maybe the reason why Hejduk suggests that 'the observer or watchman can also be considered for a dual position. He can act as a caretaker of the Berlin Masque' (Hejduk 1985: 140).

The Towers talk about the War, the human pain, the loss, the division and the Wall, but also about what is so readily present in our everyday life and we tend to forget: the air we breathe, the water we need, the time we live in, the music around us, the sense of an international belonging through the city-visitors: things simple, familiar, and overlooked, but also paramount.

The Theatres and the Masque

The seven towers are followed by three theatres in the table of contents: the Pantomime Theater, the Reading Theater and the Public Theater.[3] The Pantomime Theater, placed just north of the Wind Tower, actually incorporates four theatres: two exterior and two interior brass theatres. Hejduk imagines four very specific ways for using these spaces. Nothing is particularly innovative or unique in their architectural form, but the performances – which are described succinctly in the text – have to be executed in the following ways: In the first exterior theatre only 'a single player (mime)' should perform in front of 'a full audience.' In the second open-air theatre 'many players (mimes)' are meant to perform in front of just 'a single audience.' Similarly, in the interior brass theatres, the number of players and audience is defined: 'many brass players to a single audience' for the first one, 'a single brass player' to 'a many audience' for the other (Hejduk 1985: 142). The words *mime* and *brass player* point to the fact that the performances are not based on words and speech. The interior theatres are reserved for music alone. The exterior ones are for pantomime, where performers express meanings and feelings through often exaggerated gestures that at times can be accompanied by music. In the case that there is no music at all, the described

performances in the two open-air theatres, save sound to be expressed by the city around them.

The Reading Theater is a place for both public and private readings, aiming to flood the site with poetry. Embedded in the ground, the theatre hides almost completely from sight: 'Stepped seating sunk into the earth culminating and facing a long tunnel at the end of which is the reader's stand.' The image of the reader's recitation is projected upon a life-size screen above ground, and his voice is projected by sound amplifiers. Hejduk imagines flooding the site with poetry through additional amplifiers installed in the theatre's roof, which 'can be raised at 90 degrees' and open up to the public space (Hejduk 1985: 143). One can envision soundwaves of lyrics travelling in the air, amidst the hustle of the noisy metropolis, the voices of the Masque's visitors, and the conversations of the venue's regular users entering and exiting the city block's existing buildings.[4] One can also envision the image of somebody reading and communicating poetry standing – on the screen – amidst all these elements. The screen does not project an elevated speaker communicating political messages, propaganda, the news or the weather, as a usual television screen would do. It projects the image of poetry-recitation. It captures the movement of the lips, the expressions on the face, the gestures of the hands and body, as feelings and empirical imagery are communicated. The underground poetic readings become public events, shared and transmitted over the site and into the city.

The third and last theatre is what Hejduk calls the Public Theater, a structure that provides for three different stages and sets. An elevated, outdoor roof-seating hides underneath its two smaller theatres: a marionette and a puppet one. The outdoor seating area is located in front of a screen that is intermittently blank or showing images projected from the rear. Behind the screen, there is a vertically moving three-dimensional stage, which moves up and down by a hydraulic lift. If the screen is raised, the stage can either become a regular stage set for a performance or it can disappear, dropping to the ground. The lower position allows for a view over the site, revealing to the senses a 'real world situation' (Hejduk 1985: 143); the life of the site itself and the city around it become the raised spectacle. The marionette and puppet theatre below evoke strong sociopolitical associations, encouraged by the definitions of the words. A puppet is a movable figure (a person or animal) and is controlled or manipulated by a puppeteer. A marionette, also a puppet, but often considered a more complex one, is animated with the use of wires or strings (OED). In Hejduk's Public Theater, characters on stage are controlled and manipulated by some non-visible figure. The Public Theater acts as a strong reminder and critique that spectacles of public consumption are often manipulated and controlled in order to provoke specific reactions or feelings. Hejduk points us to this direction by finishing his short text with the following lines: 'The working (inside) of the marionette and the puppet can be viewed from the outside, their backs are seen' (Hejduk 1985: 143). He thus offers us a glimpse into the manipulations, a theatre display of the way things work.

In a project called Masque – thus strongly connected with the notion of dramatic art – the three theatres are of particular importance. Atmospheric spatial conditions, unconventional performances and unique audience experiences are only part of their role. The theatres entice the eye, the ear, the touch and the mind, provoking thoughts, reminding, informing and educating their audience. Similar possibilities are opened up by the element of the Masque that Hejduk includes in his list of suggested structures. This Masque is not to be confused with the overall 'Berlin Masque.' It is a separate structure in the overall proposal, a structure that provides a unique performance to an

audience of twelve people. An exterior seating area that is set on a hydraulic lift raises and allows the audience – who the architect imagines holding masks in shades of 'muted grey' – to look into the interior of a long rectangular building. This seating area, placed in the middle of the structure's longer side, provides a glimpse into both the structure's interior and the opposite wall. The masked people can see on the wall across from them a show of lights. In front of them they can see 'the earth floor' of the building's interior and part of a 'steel wood tied track' (Hejduk 1985: 151). The track is figuratively joining two 'sub-masques,' as Hejduk calls them, two smaller structures in the interior of the building: One 'for a single male inhabitant' and the other 'for a single female inhabitant,' both selected by the city of Berlin. The structures face each other and the track lies diagonally between them (Hejduk 1985: 152). A performance or a ritual can be imagined, one inspired by the eternal interactions between the two sexes, the *coming and going* of *Eros,* love, sexual desire, companionship, friendship, tenderness, hate, anger, and frustration. The Masque makes visible the space of male-female encounters, the space of desire, the space of intimate distances, passionate looks, secret kisses in quiet or busy city corners, bringing to light the invisible powers that keep the city alive, acknowledging their presence and their importance.

Hejduk concludes his text on the element of the Masque – which also constitutes the last paragraphs of the 'Berlin Masque' proposal in total – as follows:

> So completes the masque, which in a way composes into a masque in our time, for as it was necessary for the highly rational-pragmatic city of 15th century Venice to create masques, masks, masses for its time in order to function, it would appear that we of our time must create masques (programs ????) for our times. (Hejduk 1985: 152)

His conclusion is rendered less opaque if we look into Hejduk's understanding of masque and theatre. For Hejduk 'masque is theater, … and ritual theater has been intimately related to the historic regulation of the social structure.' He strongly believed that 'theater is a manifestation, which is capable of keeping society balanced and in which, we can begin to undertake an investigation of the phenomena on which our present society stands'. In the theatre, we can actually ask, embody and answer questions such as: '"Is a hospital good, an acceptable instrument, as we conceive it today…?" "Is a school acceptable?" "Is a high rise?"' Questions and studies like that touch and transform architecture and thus are 'inextricably connected to it' (Hejduk quoted in Schulze 1981: 11).

The Residencies

Another group of structures is that of the residencies. Hejduk proposes the creation of the Waiting House, the Caretakers [*sic*] House, the House for the Eldest and the House Units A and B. The Caretakers House seems to be the most explicit in its description and programmatic suggestions. Placed at the very centre of the two blocks, it is the dwelling place for the person who takes 'care of <u>all</u> facilities.' 'The upper part of his house can move up' so that he can better observe the site. The caretaker, who 'is respected,' is given 'a bed, a chair and a T.V. set' and is 'required to be there at <u>all</u> times' (Hejduk 1985: 146). This instance is one of the very few times in the text of the 'Berlin Masque' that the architect draws additional emphasis. In the case of the caretaker, the underlinings seem to make it imperative that he be constantly present on site and in charge of every single facility. The text for his structure, although under the title Caretakers House, is a hybrid among all the texts, as it discusses both the structure of the house, the life-style of its inhabitant and his obligations.

The Waiting House, on the other hand, has an elusive description, one that connects the 'Berlin Masque' with some past Hejduk projects. It is not yet placed among the rest of the structures as it 'stands before the 13 Watch Towers of Cannaregio' in Venice, where 'still remains The Inhabitant Who Refused to Participate.' These two projects were conceived by the architect for the city of Venice between 1974 and 1979, a few years before the Berlin Competitions. The 13 Watch Towers, 'placed in a row four feet apart,' are inhabited by 13 men respectively. 'Eleven of the towers are painted grey in the inside,' one black and one white, and 'each of the thirteen tower men is pledged not to reveal his interior coloration' (Hejduk 1985: 82). As Franz Schulze suggests, the project is 'a metaphor for alienation, psychic imprisonment and spiritual entropy … remarking on the isolation of man not only from the modern community but from himself' (Schulze 1981: 9). Like many of Hejduk's late works, this project is 'symbolizing or addressing issues of political nature. The loneliness and tormenting spiritual incarceration spoken by the Towers of Cannaregio refer clearly to a social condition, from which it is but a short step in thought to a political condition' (Schulze 1981: 10). Issues of a similar nature are addressed by the Inhabitant Who Refused to Participate. A 'lone inhabitant' dwells in twelve separate very small units, all suspended by a wall. The inhabitant, without knowing it, can be observed by any citizen who chooses to climb up the tower opposite the units (Hejduk 1985: 355). Through its absence, the Waiting House in the 'Berlin Masque,' can be seen as a reminder that society still waits for architecture to address conditions of isolation and loneliness that characterize the contemporary metropolis.

The House for the Eldest and the House Units A and B are programmatic novelties, which like other elements in the proposal address conditions in a city we usually tend to ignore. For the first one Hejduk writes:

> The city of Berlin offers to the eldest Berlin inhabitant (resident) a house, all expenses paid. The elder can accept the house or not accept the house. The choice is optional. None the less, it is the elder's house until his or her death. Only upon the death of the eldest will the house be offered to the next eldest. The house has a flower garden and a vegetable garden, it is considered a very special place. (Hejduk 1985: 147)

A celebration of prolonged life in a city that has suffered the unfair, unaccounted and mainly early loss of innumerable civilian lives is manifested in space. The house does not only host the elderly but urges them to cultivate flowers and vegetables, to keep cultivating living organisms, sources of life themselves.

House Units A and B are two types of movable units. Each of the two types – which bear minimal differences – is meant for one person: a 'single female, single male from the age group 12 to 80'. Hejduk designs these units for 'the single person who wishes to remain single and private, who wishes to inhabit his or her own place.' He does not think of these possible inhabitants as recluses of the society but as individuals who wish 'to live alone in a city, in a metropolis.' The architect notes that this is a housing need that is seldom addressed, acknowledging in that way the changing social conditions in Europe and its urban centers. Inspired most likely by the mobility that characterizes life in a metropolis, the units 'are on wheels and can be moved from place to place' by a city transport truck (Hejduk 1985: 148). This way, everyday life is in constant motion, the neighbourhood and the urban context of each individual can change on a daily basis and the individual can be next to different and new people every so often. Only in extreme cases does the architect imagine these units set into fixed foundations. None of the patterns of movement is specified, as the text moves on explaining how the units can be arranged into configurations, how they can be connected into a service grid or

even be self-sufficient. In any case though, the units have to be moved by a public conveyance (which makes them different from a typical private mobile house moved by a private car, as Hejduk argues) and 'are to be placed as integral within the city fabric' (Hejduk 1985: 149). The units are allocated by lottery to specific inhabitants, possibly a reminder of the random and unexpected circumstances that control our lives.

The Characters

Characters, like the structures, appear as well in the table of contents. The texts that accompany them 'often read like scenes from a play rather than presenting circumstances one might encounter in everyday life, describing improbable activities and interactions more akin to ritual and performance' (Singh 2016: 6). The Lottery Woman, for example, sells the aforementioned lottery tickets for the Units A and B, tickets that cannot be returned, and randomly define whether you can live in an A or B unit. She 'travels over the sites within a box,' a fascinating machine full of tubes. To pay, 'one puts the money in one of the tubes, it sucks in the money, then a ticket is blown out from the tube'. The Lottery Woman not only works and moves in this machine but also sleeps in a machine; she sleeps 'in the truck which brings the living units [A and B] to the site' (Hejduk 1985: 146). As David Shapiro reminds us, Hejduk's machines are always precise analyses of the nomadic nature of architecture today' (Shapiro 1991: 7).

The Neighborhood Physician is yet another fascinating character. Although the respective text describes elements of the dispensary building, its more unconventional emphasis is on the doctor himself: 'The neighborhood physician or the so-called general physician recently has been placed on the endangered species list. His foretold future disappearance has caused some alarm.' Hejduk imagines the only character in the complex that can heal traumas as a species forebodingly facing extinction and clearly states that his position should 'be reinstated' (Hejduk 1985: 147). The healing possibilities that architecture provides in the 'Berlin Masque' are manifested in the structures themselves but also the responsibilities and roles of the characters that inhabit it. The last character is the Conciliator. 'She attempts,' as Hejduk simply puts it. (Hejduk 1985: 148). Nothing more is explained or added in this one sentence, the shortest text in the whole proposal. In a way, it acts as a reminder that trying to reconcile arguments and disputes is all we can do sometimes, and regardless of the result, we should keep trying.

The Walk-through Structures

This reading of Hejduk's texts will conclude with a number of structures which do not immediately seem to belong to a group or category. Looking at their descriptions more thoroughly though, one realizes that these structures invite possible users to walk through them; otherwise they will not fully experience or understand them. The Cross Over Bridge is the first one, crossing over Wilhelmstrasse and 'connecting sites #19 and #20' through 'two one-way passages' (Hejduk 1985: 143). Following the text of the Bridge, the reader runs into the Silo Passage, a square passage that encloses an area with two silos. The silos cannot be reached. They can only be observed as one walks around them, following the passage, the interior wall of which is made of clear glass. A silo, as the definition of the word explains, can be either a tower or a pit (OED). In architectural terms, it is quite fascinating that the exact same word can describe two

opposite spatial conditions: either a structure that extrudes from the earth towards the sky or one that dives into the earth and disappears from sight. Hejduk poetically places both these architectural possibilités next to each other and allows the visitor to walk around them and gaze through the glass at one silo cylinder rising 'above the earth datum plane' and one 'penetrating below.' In the case of the rising silo, the visitor can only see its external façade: 'a concrete circle structure clad in steel.' The architect writes that the interior is just empty; although this is something the visitor cannot know in the actual embodied experience of the Passage. Someone would have to look down into the silo from an elevated position, maybe the towers, to be able to see this emptiness. 'The below ground silo is made of a concrete circle structure. The interior enclosed space is empty,' an emptiness that in this case can be perceived slightly through the glass. Once again, the visitor can never be sure of what is to be found at the deep bottom of this silo. The two silos 'touch at one point' as 'there is no foundation under the above ground silo' (Hejduk 1985: 144). They remind us of the contradictory possibilities of the same element, of the opposing conditions that life and even ourselves carry within us at all times, a paramount reality of the human condition.

Following the Silo Passage, one reads about the Book Market. Once again it is in the text that the specific character and atmosphere of this place is captured. Hejduk does not provide any details about the structure, beyond the fact that it is made of steel and glass. The accompanying sketch does not provide many details either. It shows a long, linear roofed structure with bookstands running along the middle. Hejduk envisions a very specific experience for those who will be walking by the stands though. The market is dedicated to 'old and used books' only (Hejduk 1985: 144). No new books are to populate the premises of the market, a place, one can imagine, saturated by the smell of old paper, full of pages carrying traces and stories of previous lives and ownerships, celebrating the used, the past and the possibilities of re-use and renewal.

The last 'Berlin Masque' structure Hejduk designed to be experienced and understood by walking through it is that of the Maze. It is a maze made of hedges, and the architect's description is limited to just the following: 'Sometimes mistaken for a labyrinth. See definition under maze. See definition under labyrinth. Film maker Kubrick knows about both' (Hejduk 1985: 144). The renowned maze-scene from Kubrick's 1980's movie *The Shining* (1980) comes readily to mind. The text about this structure has a unique characteristic. It contradicts the accompanying drawing. Hejduk's plan on the side of the text is that of a labyrinth – a unicursal path towards the structure's center – and not a maze, which is more complex in nature incorporating choices for different paths and directions along the way. A very compelling association with the initial, ancient Greek labyrinth comes to mind. Penelope Reed Doob, in her book *The Idea of the Labyrinth*, indicates how a maze is confused with a labyrinth in the story of the Minotaur. Although a design without branching or dead ends became associated with the labyrinth (on coins as early as 430 BC) both logic and literary descriptions make it clear that the Minotaur was trapped in a complex branching maze (Doob 1990: 40-46). Either to remind people of this discrepancy, challenge the reader's attention or create some tension between text and drawing, Hejduk invites the visitors to enter a structure that has been associated with a symbol of life itself. Reminding the way life unfolds, the various possibilities along the way, the choices we have to make, and that there is in fact, an unavoidable end, nothing, besides the maze, is more architecturally appropriate to symbolize life as such in this architectural proposal.

The End

The old gods have gone and new ones have settled over the city, in Berlin (for Hejduk) as well as Maurilia (for Calvino). Calvino's city poetically urges us to think: it is not a matter of better or worse gods, of a better or worse state of the city in relation to its older states. 'Cities follow one another on the same site and under the same name, born and dying without knowing one another, without communicating among themselves' (Calvino 1972: 30). Hejduk, does not question, criticize or judge the state of Berlin in 1981. He encompasses the city's previous states, dives into the current ones, and strongly believing in the 'unacceptability of the erasures' (Hejduk 1986: unpaginated) attempts to make one feel protected and grounded in the city. As historically the architect used to do, he intensifies a sense of purpose and belonging in public, through the rituals and institutions he proposes to frame daily life (Perez-Gomez 2016: 3). The structures, characters and rituals of the 'Berlin Masque' aim to heal the citizens from the trauma of the War and reconcile them with the urban reality around them. Hejduk places his structures and characters in between the city's existing buildings and activities. His architecture, as a masque does, adds the drama to the routine of everyday life, reminding one of paramount existential questions.

The 'Berlin Masque' is not a memorial or a monument for the post WWII city, but an architecture to be lived and experienced daily. For this reason, Hejduk's work cannot be read as part of the important memorialization work proposed for, or realized in Berlin, from the postmodernist onwards. His approach does not fit the general categorizations about trauma and architectural language – particularly as language seen from a postmodern and deconstructive point of view. An interesting contextualization of his contribution seems to align more with the most recent thoughts of the architect Peter Zumthor. In his conversation with historian Mari Lending, Zumthor talks about ways of evoking a feeling of history as he himself was working in Berlin on a building to mark the former Gestapo headquarters. He elaborates on how the history of a place can go beyond scientific texts and didactic explanations, based primarily on emotions rather than the intellect. Zumthor calls this 'emotional learning' and argues for an architecture that can excite emotion, memory, and associations in the beholder, making the absent present or the invisible visible (Zumthor & Lending 2018: 25-29). Hejduk's approach to trauma, history and place follows the exact same principles.

What is unique and notable in Hejduk's case though is that he accomplishes that through writing, through his short texts, his narratives of imagined worlds, spaces, rituals and programs. He perfectly corroborates the importance of language and text for architecture in his own response to the question 'Whom do you specifically admire among the architects of today?' Hejduk forthrightly argues in favour of writers:

> Writers, American writers particularly, of the generations in their 30s, 40s, 50s. Poets like John Ashbery, writers like Jay Fellows and John Hawkes. There is a density about the work of these men; that is some kind of opacity moves from their depths to the observer. There is a quality of light from behind that comes through a non-transparent surface or tableau. (Schulze 1981: 10)

Hejduk does not fear to venture into other means of representation in order to capture the density or the quality of darkness and light that the 'Berlin Masque' needs to communicate. Architect Rafael Moneo – renowned around the world as an exceptional practitioner – endorses Hejduk and the paramount importance of written language for architectural creations, writing: 'When someone with as clear a vocation for architecture as Hejduk has chosen not to concern his work with creating actual

buildings, it is because he believes that his presence in the world of architecture can be felt through his drawings and words alone' (Moneo 1987: unpaginated).

Since the 1980s, when Hejduk submitted his 'Berlin Masque,' language-based architectural projects, as well as conferences and publications on the topic of architecture and language have become more and more common (Sioli & Jung 2018: 1-5). This academic discourse – while touching on significant historical precedents – discusses the importance of texts and words, poetic language, literature and literary means for the fields of teaching, practicing and research in architecture. Moreover, part of the research reminds us that texts have the capacity to provoke the architect's literary imagination, an imagination evoked by new meanings in the sphere of language, which, as argued by philosopher Paul Ricoeur, can lead to the productive creation of images that may be both new and culturally significant (Ricoeur 1979: 127). The 'Berlin Masque' texts, indeed, touch on our literary imagination and through the creation of new meanings in the sphere of language – and subsequently in the sphere of architecture – offer us new possible ways of navigating the mazes of our lives.

Notes

1. Although this mediation on time comes almost ten years after the 'Berlin Masque' publication, I think it is particularly interesting for this study. It shows a continuity in the architect's thinking but, most importantly, it comes at a moment of his life following a major trauma to both body and soul, as Hejduk writes in *Architectures in Love* in 1995. Given the major trauma of Berlin itself, this understanding of time is of significant relevance.

2. To avoid referencing the same source multiple times, quotations without direct reference at the end of the sentence are all from the reference quoted at the end of the paragraph or the reference quoted after a number of sentences.

3. Spelling throughout the paper is in Australian/New Zealand English, except when there is a citation or a term written in American English by Hejduk himself, like Pantomime Theater or Neighborhood Physician for example, in which case the first letter of the word is capitalized.

4. The two city blocks for which the Berlin Masque is conceived are not blank. A number of robust and big-scale public buildings were located on them in 1981. In a site plan he submitted for the competition, the existing buildings are represented as black masses; though in *the Masque of Medusa* some years later, he only provides a small site plan which does not include the buildings. In the same book, a photograph of the proposal's models does depict the existing buildings. Given the article's focus on the texts of the 'Berlin Masque', the existing edifices are not part of a closer examination.

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