THE REAMS OF PAPER ARCHITECTURE

In 1982, Peter Eisenman and Christopher Alexander met at the Harvard Graduate School of Design to debate in front of an audience of students and faculty. What conspired was one of the most influential physical debates on architecture as we now recognize it. Eisenman [b. 1932], who started his career as a 'paper architect', had only managed to realize two of his series of experimental houses by the time he turned fifty, and with no significant commissions in sight, was at the moment best confined to the intellectual and proverbial paper. On the other hand, Alexander [b. 1936], just four years younger than Eisenman, had started his career at an architectural firm right out of Cambridge, and by 1982 he had intervened significantly in the world of architecture. However, there was no question that both figures were, at the time, immensely influential in the architectural fraternity, and the debate was akin to the Victorian 'Battle of the Styles' — a fight for the fundamental essence of architecture.[1]

Architecture had had a rocky start with this incarnation of modernity. The Art Deco and other inherently classicizing forms of architecture were done away for a new idiom which was supposed to be international and instantly canonical in the post-Great War period. The best example of this was articulated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson [who later went on to become a prominent architect in the postmodern tradition], who put together an exhibition in 1932 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, to commemorate and simultaneously consecrate the burgeoning influence of the modernist movement in architecture. In their exhibition catalogue, they argued that:

> "Before the War modern architecture was the creation of great individualists. Since the War an international style has grown up throughout Europe, not the invention of one genius but the coordinated result of many parallel experiments. Engineering was at last not only joined closely with architecture but made its basis."[2]

Johnson and Hitchcock were both engaging with what was deemed to be a new *language* — the language of modernity. The linguistic tricks they employed were a hat tip to one of the most prominent architects in the exhibition, the Frenchman Le Corbusier, who had taken the world of architecture by storm with his provocative plans [think Plan Voisin] and his claim to being "historian, critic, discoverer, and prophet" at the same time.[3] The development of the international style — a harkening back to the International Gothic, which was the first of truly international movements.[4]

The language of modernism claimed to be different from its precursors. Corbusier's colleague, the Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius, argued in *On the Bauhaus* that "we have remained content to borrow our styles from antiquity and perpetuate historic prototypes in decoration", but the time

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[1] In this paper, I argue that the failures of modernism and consequently postmodernism arise from the removal of the human condition from the built scape and the willful and wanton destruction of historicity.

[2] Johnson, Philip and Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. "Historical Note." *Modern Architecture*, Museum of Modern Art, 1932, pg 19.

[3] "Introduction" by Cohen, Jean-Louis in Corbusier, Le. *Toward an Architecture*, translated by John Goodman. Getty Research Institute, 2007.

[4] The International Gothic was international insofar as the known, civilized world at the time was primarily Eurocentric. This was a 14th and 15th century style that predated the discovery of the New World and the Age of Discovery, and as such, was international but not global.

for that was gone and that architecture would existentially need to adopt what Gropius terms the 'New Architecture.'[5]

It advertised itself as a break from the past tempered by the discontinuity of the rupture caused by the Great War — both as a mechanism for coping and as a path forward in a world that had foundationally changed since the advent of this particular incarnation of post *La Bellé Époque* modernity. Corbusier went to the extent of titling his debut book *Toward an Architecture* to signify that he was writing with the expressed purpose of creating a true, honest architecture, the likes of which had never been seen or built before. He argued that in its entirety, the practice of architecture had "nothing to do with the "styles";"[6] as such, it was an "austere abstraction", the essence of which was lost "a hundred years ago."[7] The world, for Corbusier and many of his fellow modernists, reflected a heightened sense of the "cultural discontinuity of post-Enlightenment reflexivity and the extraordinary circulation and mobility of capitalist society [, which] fed off of and intensified each other."[8] The culprit here was not the notion of architecture in itself but the grand arc of history which pushed those who inhabited it to the limits of human artifice. What, then, was the *idée fixe* for the modern human condition?

Corbusier and the modernists proposed a creation of an architecture, an idea that has captivated the minds of architects since his polemic declaration of independence from the forces of history and time. Corbusier was a prominent architect in the middle of his career when he came into contact and conversation with the Modern Artists Research Group {MARG}, the Indian articulation of architectural modernity headed by Mulk Anand Raj and included the Pritzker Prize winning architect B.V. Doshi. The eponymous magazine that the group spawned produced many polemic declarations, including the reproduction of 'The Great Adventure' in the October 1950 number by Erich Mendelsohn.

Mendelsohn derived his piece from his address to the Oakland Public School Art Teacher's Association, California, and used the three "great civilizations" of Ancient Greece, Ancient Egypt, and the Middle Ages to craft a framework that puts modernism into perspective as a progressive mode of viewing architecture and redefining architecture as a utopian and global mode of "vital explorations."[9] Mendelsohn pleads with teachers to "not...feed their young brains with the stale bread of past notions invented by, and sufficient for different conditions and surroundings," and begs teachers to avoid "incoherent details" which "waste half of our lifetime."[10] Mendelsohn's attitude toward history is structurally and ideologically similar to what Corbusier was postulating, and represented the thrust of the modernist movement in its prime.

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[5] Gropius, Walter. *On the Bauhaus*. Selections drawn from Class Reading.

[6] Corbusier, Le. *Toward an Architecture*, translated by John Goodman. Getty Research Institute, 2007, pg 109.

[7] It is unclear what Corbusier references with his hundred-year paradigm — a harkening to 1824. Corbusier, Le. *Toward an Architecture*, translated by John Goodman. Getty Research Institute, 2007, pg 119–20.

[8] Singer, Ben. *Melodrama and Modernity*. Columbia University Press, 2005, pg 29.

[9] Mendelsohn in Dalvi, Mustansir. *20th Century Compulsions: Modern Indian Architecture from the Marg Archives*. Marg, 2016.

[10] Mendelsohn in Dalvi, Mustansir. *20th Century Compulsions: Modern Indian Architecture from the Marg Archives*. Marg, 2016.

From the get-go, modernism in architecture was a movement that had "an official status" that accompanied "its canonisation in the museum and the academy, as the high culture of the modern capitalist world."[11] The academy welcomed the modernists with open arms and instantly engaged in the process of consecration, as expressed by Pierre Bourdieu in *The Field of Cultural Production*. The upstart style soon become the style of choice for the new paradigm that was created as the built manifestation of post-Great War modernity — a new paradigmatic style for a new age. The return to the basics, the primordial, seemed rational after the intervention of mechanisation and technology on the battlefield that had produced machines for killing at a scale and magnitude never seen before. It was only fitting that the rehabilitation of a society tainted by the machinisation of death was to be attained by the machinisation of the house — Corbusier positions "the house" as "machine for living in" that would culminate in the mass production of housing;[12] while Gropius calls for the "rationalisation of industry" that would result in the "systemic application of standardisation to housing [that] would effect enormous economies."[13] However, as Corbusier's biographer, Nicholas Fox Weber, points out in *Le Corbusier: A Life* :

> "for all his genius, Le Corbusier remained completely insensitive to certain aspects of human existence .... His fervent faith in his own way of seeing blinded him to the wish of people to retain what they most cherish (including traditional buildings) in their everyday lives."[14]

Clearly, modernist architecture had its shortcomings. One of these was that for all the hope and exuberance of the modernist movement, it slowly turned from philosophy to ideology and then turned to dogma. Even in 1932, Johnson and Hitchcock point out that:

> "... in the most advanced work of the last decade there is a decided convergence. This converging tendency which contrasts so strongly with the chaos of the nineteenth century and the individualism of the last generation suggests the existence of an international style. Though many architects and critics question the desirability or even the possibility of style fixation, it is true that consciously or unconsciously a considerable number of architects throughout the world accept parallel technical and aesthetic disciplines
> ...
> The leaders of pre-War architecture such as Peter Behrens, Hans Poelzig, and Bruno Paul are now working in the style initiated by their juniors, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. Erich Mendelsohn, Otto Bartning and the other Expressionists, whose extravagant fantasies dominated the scene just after the War, are restraining their work in conformity with the new way of building. The extreme functionalists, like Hannes Meyer, Hans Witwer and Arthur Korn, who form a distinct group, are divergent in theory but differ little in practice."[15]

The modernist movement, which was a reaction against the hegemony of the Classical Greco-Roman inspired school of architecture proceeded to become the very thing that they were in active rebellion against — *the* paradigm.

REBELLION OR ADOPTION?

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[11] Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. Pearson Longman, 2009, pg 182.

[12] Corbusier, Le. *Toward an Architecture*, translated by John Goodman. Getty Research Institute, 2007, pg 87–88.

[13] Gropius, Walter. *On the Bauhaus*. Selections drawn from Class Reading.

[14] Webber, Nicholas Fox. *Le Corbusier: A Life*. Alfred Knopf, 2008. Ebook.

[15] Johnson, Philip and Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. "The Extent of Modern Architecture." *Modern Architecture*, Museum of Modern Art, 1932, pg 21. This work of modernist dogma was instrumental in the consecration and eventual canonization of the modernist movement in architecture, and shows the same tendency to engage in a dogmatic and wholly teleological history where the existence of the history is contingent upon it leading to the birth of the modernist movement and its eventual adoption as the normative standard toward which *all* architecture would necessarily ascribe to and propagate.

Storey quotes Jameson as remarking that the postmodern was born from:

> "the shift from an oppositional to a hegemonic position of the classics of modernism, the latter's conquest of the university, the museum, the art gallery network and the foundations, the assimilation ... of the various high modernisms, into the 'canon' and the subsequent attenuation of everything in them felt by our grandparents to be shocking, scandalous, ugly, dissonant, immoral and antisocial."[16]

This general characterisation of the postmodern was framed by a rejection of the modern. In this section of my paper, I argue that the modernist tendencies within canonical postmodern architecture never truly disappeared. Structurally, much of what the postmodern posited in terms of architecture was never truly a departure from paradigmatic modernism.

One of the best examples of this is Peter Eisenman. Eisenman, in his essay entitled 'The End of the Classical', argued for the same reductivist tendencies in architectural history as Corbusier, and while including some critique of those that came before him, did not disavow or disengage with the lexis of modernism. He argued for the recognition of Western architectural history as a fiction, along with representation and architecture itself.[17] The disavowal of past architecture is precisely the thing that Corbusier engages in when in his Plan Voisin — a plan that entailed the destruction of two square miles in the West Bank of Paris, home to important interventions in architecture such as the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris.[18]

Image 1: A model for Plan Voisin by Le Corbusier, 1925. Image courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier.

Eisenman clubs Corbusier's destructive tendencies into the annals of History, which was purely a fiction in his eyes that together "had persisted in one form or another for five hundred years."[19] And with one stroke of the pen, Eisenman did to Corbusier and the modernist movement in architecture what Corbusier and the modernists had done to those that came before them: the

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[16] Jameson quoted in Storey, John. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. Pearson Longman, 2009, pg 183.

[17] Eisenman, Peter. "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End." *Perspecta*, vol. 21, 1984, pp. 155–173. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1567087.

[18] Corbusier, Le. "Plan Voisin, Paris, France, 1925." *Fondation Le Corbusier*, Fondation Le Corbusier, www.fondationlecorbusier.fr/corbuweb/morpheus.aspx?sysId=13&IrisObjectId=6159&sysLanguage=en-en.

[19] Eisenman, Peter. "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End." *Perspecta*, vol. 21, 1984, pp. 155–173. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1567087.

denial of existence.[20] When Eisenman argues for the implicit corruption of built architecture by calling the pure "not-classical", [21] he engages in the very same dialectic that Corbusier partakes in with his proclamation that "architecture suffocates in routine."[22] Even in his built architecture, despite his criticism and rejection of modernist forms, he adopts the same architectural lexis.
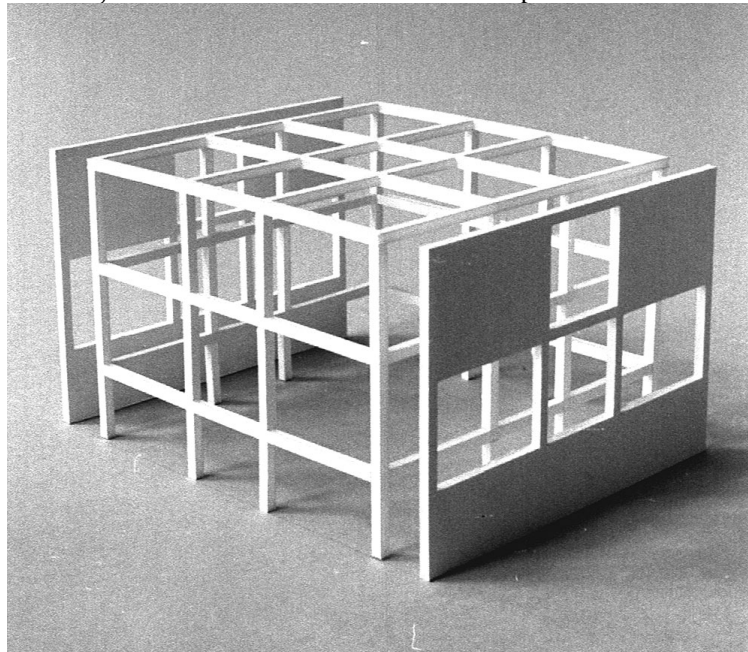

Image 2: House IV, built in 1971 in Falls Village, Connecticut. Peter Eisenman. Image courtesy of Eisenman Architects.
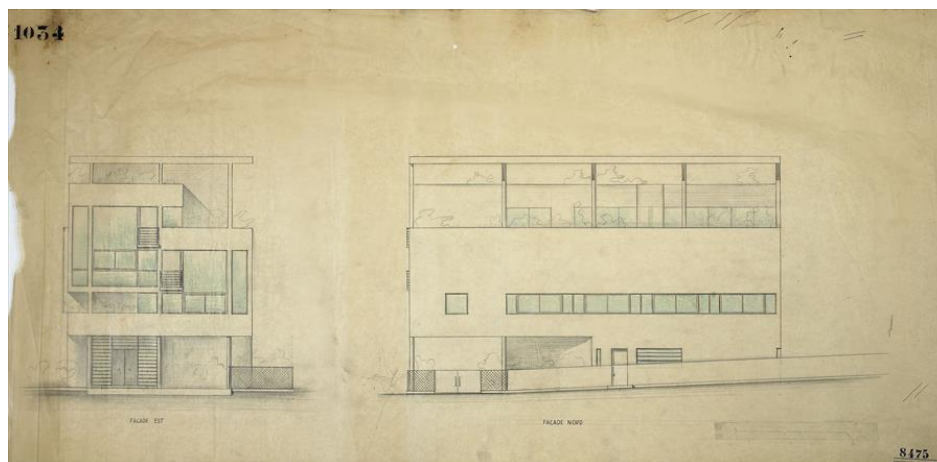

Image 3: Villa Baizeau, Carthage, Tunisia, 1928. Image courtesy of Fondation Le Corbusier.

The formal properties of both houses are remarkably similar. If, for instance, one removes any notion of authorship [or the onus of the architect's role in the creation of the house], one could

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[20] Corbusier, Le. *Toward an Architecture*, translated by John Goodman. Getty Research Institute, 2007, pg 198. Corbusier calls the Romans "good barbarians" who adopted the "more florid" Corinthian style instead of the basic Doric order. Corbusier also accuses the Romans of knowing "nothing about marble" (200). Consequently, the primarily Classical and subsequently Baroque Classical mode of thought that Gian Lorenzo Bernini and the popes that followed Julius II (della Rovere) were "wretches [that] ruined Saint Peter's inside and out" that turned out to be a "miserable failure" (211).

[21] Eisenman, Peter. "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End." *Perspecta*, vol. 21, 1984, pp. 155–173. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1567087.

[22] Corbusier, Le. *Toward an Architecture*, translated by John Goodman. Getty Research Institute, 2007, pg 86.

even argue that they are so remarkably similar in matters of form that they could be the work of the same architect. The lexis of sterile regulating lines manifests itself intensely throughout both structures. While both structures may have different meanings in and in themselves due to the intellectual processes that culminated in their creation, the 'thing-in-itself' is in formal terms remarkably the same. White walls are pervasive as regulating lines. Wide windows span the extent of the outer shell. Stilts, both inside and outside, create a flat roof — something that Gropius, too, argues for in *On the Bauhaus*. Modernist architecture had become so intensely paradigmatic that it was the only lexis that could be called upon. Like Corbusier and Gropius, Eisenman, too, claimed to be different — and he was in that he arrived at the same form through a different route.

The similarities between Corbusier and Eisenman don't end at the formalist view of their architecture. A large proportion of those so immensely taken with both strands of architecture expressed instantaneous and significant regret upon the expenditure of vast sums of money. Brianna Rennix and Nathan J. Robinson point out in *Current Affairs* that:

> "... one Eisenman-designed house so departed from the normal concept of a house that its owners actually wrote an entire book about the difficulties they experienced trying to live in it. For example, Eisenman split the master bedroom in two so the couple could not sleep together, installed a precarious staircase without a handrail, and initially refused to include bathrooms. In his violent opposition to the very idea that a real human being might actually attempt to live (and crap, and have sex) in one of his houses..."[23]

Similarly, Roger Kimball ascribes to Peter Eisenman a quote from Evelyn Waugh's 1928 novel, *Decline and Fall* [Robinson and Rennix do the same]: "The problem of architecture as I see it ... is the problem of all art — the elimination of the human element from the consideration of form."[24]

Eisenman strongly believed in the 'postfunctional' and 'antihumanist' strands of architecture, and this was its starkest manifestation. Eisenman wanted to outdo Corbusier, who, at the very least recognised the importance of the human condition and its perceived centrality despite the marked progress of technology. The postmodern intervention in architecture, as espoused by the immensely influential Eisenman, is one that makes humans subject to architecture instead of subjects of architecture. In his 1976 article for *Oppositions 6* entitled 'Postfunctionalism', Eisenman attacks the foundational essence of all modernity — humanism. "Functionalism", he argues, "is really no more than a late phase of humanism, rather than an alternative to it."[25] Analogous to this is the notion of 'antihumanism', which is " 'a term of absence' — 'the negation of humanism'."[26]

The negotiation of new spatial possibilities within the domain of architecture through the application of newer idioms of thought like the poststructuralists, which deeply inspired Eisenman, changed the way architecture was conceived in certain circles. However, what has and will possibly never change is the idea that a house must have the transcendental attributes that map onto a

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[23] Rennix, Brianna, and Nathan J. Robinson. "Why You Hate Contemporary Architecture." *Current Affairs*, Current Affairs, 31 Oct. 2017, www.currentaffairs.org/2017/10/why-you-hate-contemporary-architecture.

[24] Kimball, Roger. "Architecture & Ideology." *The New Criterion*, The New Criterion, Dec. 2002, www.newcriterion.com/issues/2002/12/architecture-ideology.

[25] Eisenman, Peter. "Post-Functionalism." *Monoskop*, Oppositions 6, 1976, monoskop.org/images/9/90/Eisenman_Peter_1976_1998_Post-Functionalism.pdf.

[26] Ioannidou, Ersi. "Humanist Machines" in Bandyopadhyay, Soumyen, et al., editors. *Humanities in Architectural Design: a Contemporary and Historical Perspective*. Routledge, 2010, pg 86.

home, and in and in itself the purposiveness of *any* residential architecture must be to optimize the focused perception and analysis of its base requirements. All the semantics of architecture and its lexical interventions both in the built and paper world are entirely meaningless if a house does not fulfill its base transcendentalism, which is no more than an objective goal of its existence. The home is for the *human*, not for the machine that Eisenman — or Corbusier, for that matter — perceives the masses of humanity to be. Particularly in the case of Eisenman's approach toward architecture, the push to remove the human basis of architecture only results in a deeply problematic overture to what was earlier seen with the aesthetic orientation of the fascist enterprise — that humans are subject *to* instead of subjects *of* architecture. The removal of the human from the equation that could be best used to sum up the nominal approach to architecture has been that the equation is simply imposed on the individual, the human. The "reduction of qualitative values to quantitative terms"[27] results in this process where the ethos and pathos of architectural praxes and thought are equally reductive.

This does nothing, however, to expose the second largest problem in Eisenman's mode of thought. His claim to postmodernism — and that of other architects like Robert Venturi — are inherently circular. The leitmotif of architectural practice now is that attempts must be made to use the very same conditions that created the perceived failure of modernism in architecture to produce a new paradigm for a constantly changing world. The past is only as good as pastiche, and while admirable work was done, no one ever truly attempted to go beyond the idiom of the modern.

Image 4: Venturi's Children's Museum of Houston shown with Jackson & Ryan extension. Image courtesy of Slate.

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[27] Simmel, Georg. *The Metropolis and Mental Life*. 1903.

The columns at the front are simply pop parodies of the hypostyle columns of Ancient Egypt — there is no remarkable sense of respect for the past or reverence for the future that will inhabit this built space. Eisenman describes all of the above as "ducks" — but, if all postmodernists are solely interested in the pursuit of the elusive duck, then what is architecture?[28]

The resetting of architectural goalposts to accommodate each successive intervention in the postmodern aesthetic as inherently new and innovative is contingent upon a reductive view of the past guided by the teleology of personal greatness and success — the dictionary definition of megalomania, which the *OED* defines as "obsession with the exercise of power" and "delusion about one's own power or importance."[29] Part of this megalomania is a rightful recognition of the true place of architecture in the every day lives of people all around the world. Neither the postmodern nor the modern has gone beyond the bare and often the sterile. Bare, sterile spaces in nature are symbolic of only one thing — death. It is the perverse opposite of what precisely the classical idiom propagates through implicit recognition — the primacy of the fractal in the aesthetic of the everyday. The fractal is dynamic, alive, and can support the lives of others, unlike the straight, sterile lines, the likes of which we see in Corbusier's Villa Savoye [1929] and Eisenman's House II [1970], but most jarringly in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin [2005].

Image 5: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Germany. 2005. Peter Eisenman | Photo: Giulia Gasperini / Unsplash.

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[28] Eisenman, Peter. "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End." *Perspecta*, vol. 21, 1984, pp. 155–173. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1567087.

[29] "megalomania, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2019, oed.com/view/Entry/115883. Accessed 15 May 2019.

A vast expanse of nothingness is premeditated on filling up space to commemorate the murder of 6 million Jews in Germany between 1933–45. What is there save for the title — imposed upon the memorial and in no manner a conscious choice by Eisenman — to mark this as a memorial? What, precisely, does it memorialise? There is an air of vicious ambiguity that surrounds the symbolic, and that layer, too, is denied to the viewer because Eisenman decried the characterisations of the blocks as representative of gravestones. Yet, for some inexplicable reason, the non-memorial was deemed to be virtually canonical in its supposed greatness — including by the architectural critic at *The New York Times* — and universally panned in Germany, particularly in *Der Spiegel*:

> "One part of the memorial, however, will remain largely free from the eye of the critics: the underground 'Information Center' below the field of stele. It is, in fact, these exhibition rooms, realized against Eisenman's will, that make the memorial into a memorial."[30]

The poor state of the supposed memorial is evidenced through the reaction that Avner Shapira creates in *Haaretz*:

> "The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, as the site in the heart of the German capital is officially known, has drawn more than just streams of urine from inebriated revelers. The controversy and disagreement began even before its construction, starting with the memorial's location, its form and who it should honor. Since its dedication, the focus of the discussion has largely shifted to what constitutes appropriate behavior at the site. Because the site is so sprawling — comprising 2,711 concrete blocks spread over an area the size of two soccer fields — the memorial is not just a site for activities commemorating the Holocaust; it is perceived as a public park and a great place for hide-and-seek, taking selfies, making out, sunbathing, picnicking and napping."[31]

Eisenman can claim the mantle of being one of the most celebrated architects in the world today, but what he cannot claim to understand is the human relation to architecture. Any sense of history that exists in the built scape is *imposed* against the will of the architect, Eisenman, and continuously re-emphasises the 'fiction' of history — the same argument used by those who intentionally deny the very existence of the Holocaust.[32]

In 1982, however, the cerebral British architect Christopher Alexander decided to intervene [with remarkable and unsurprising futility] in the form of a debate at Harvard, the day after Alexander had delivered his seminal lecture entitled 'The Nature of Order.' Alexander calls this a "new and fanciful language" that includes "vague references to the history of architecture but transformed into cunning fears and quaint mannerisms."[33] Later in the debate, the following exchange takes place:

> "**CA**: I'm not even sure whether we work in the same way. That's why I would like to check out a couple of examples, buildings. Now, I will pick a building, let's take Chartres for example. We probably don't disagree that it's a great building.

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[30] Emcke, Carolin, et al. "Remembering the Holocaust: Extracting Meaning from Concrete." *Spiegel Online*, Der Spiegel, 1 May 2005, www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/remembering-the-holocaust-extracting-meaning-from-concrete-blocks-a-354837.html.

[31] Shapira, Avner. "The Holocaust Memorial That Became a Refuge for Drunks and Sunbathers." *Haaretz*, Haaretz, 28 Apr. 2014, www.haaretz.com/life/books/what-not-to-do-at-the-holocaust-memorial-1.5246533.

[32] For a review of the arguments made by Holocaust deniers, see: Lasson, Kenneth. "Defending Truth: Legal and Psychological Aspects of Holocaust Denial." *Current Psychology*, vol. 26, no. 3-4, 2007, pp. 223–266., DOI:10.1007/s12144-007-9013-7.

[33] Alexander, Christopher, and Peter Eisenman. " Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture: The 1982 Debate Between Christopher Alexander and Peter Eisenman." *Katarxis № 3*, Katarxis, Sept. 2004, www.katarxis3.com/Alexander_Eisenman_Debate.htm.

> **PE**: Well, we do actually, I think it is a boring building. Chartres, for me, is one of the least interesting cathedrals. In fact, I have gone to Chartres a number of times to eat in the restaurant across the street — had a 1934 red Mersault wine, which was exquisite — I never went into the cathedral. The cathedral was done *en passant*. Once you've seen one Gothic cathedral, you have seen them all."[34]

From the get-go, it is clear that Eisenman has no regard for the past — for *any* of it, for that matter. Alexander pushes the boundaries of what Eisenman believes and adopts to his benefit the Socratic method that pushes Eisenman's [mis]understandings of the historic and the intellectual to its extremes. Eisenman's fundamental flaw, as Alexander posits, is that he forgets the aesthetic and purposive nature of architecture and replaces it with a deeply flawed equivalence to linguistic claims of the syntactical order, which results in Alexander expressing regret over Eisenman's own condition. Alexander says that "I find that incomprehensible. I find it very irresponsible. I find it nutty. I feel sorry for the man. I also feel incredibly angry because he is fucking up the world."[35]

Alexander pushes back against the postmodern label, refusing to term himself an architect in the postmodern style due to the alienation of the human condition from the essence of what is built around its very existence. At this point, it becomes essential to note the stance taken by the editors of *Katarxis* in their editorial note:

> "Remember that Eisenman has now, for forty years, been turning from one fashionable pretext to another in an effort to justify his architecture of disjunction, rapidly quitting them when they get too stale, or too prone to debunking. His friend Charles Jencks has described his progress thus:
>> "His early designs in the Cardboard Corbu vocabulary were derived from processes based loosely on the transformational grammar of Noam Chomsky. In the seventies, however, Eisenman turned towards post-structuralism and has since 1980 picked up on one *nuova scienza* after another."[36]

On the flip side, Alexander's seminal work in the four-volume magnum opus *The Nature of Order* is characterized as:

> "The books offer a view of a human-centered universe, a view of order, in which the soul, or human feeling and the soul, play a central role. Here, experiments are not only conceivable in the abstract Cartesian mode, but a new class of experiments relying on human feeling as a form of measurement, show us definitively the foundation of all architecture as something which resides in human beings. Whether this "something," which is demonstrated and discussed throughout the four books, is to be regarded as a new entity underlying matter, or what used to be called the "soul," is left for the reader to decide."[37]

It is clear that the postmodern and the modern age both posed fundamental and existential attacks to the mode of Neoplatonist humanism that was revived in the 15th century in the majestic hallways of the Palazzo Medici in Florence, Italy — a mode of thought that came to take over the world as we see it. Perhaps the starkest reminder of this is the field in which all that this concerns is situated

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[34] Alexander, Christopher, and Peter Eisenman. " Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture: The 1982 Debate Between Christopher Alexander and Peter Eisenman." *Katarxis № 3*, Katarxis, Sept. 2004, www.katarxis3.com/Alexander_Eisenman_Debate.htm.

[35] Alexander, Christopher, and Peter Eisenman. " Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture: The 1982 Debate Between Christopher Alexander and Peter Eisenman." *Katarxis № 3*, Katarxis, Sept. 2004, www.katarxis3.com/Alexander_Eisenman_Debate.htm.

[36] Alexander, Christopher, and Peter Eisenman. " Contrasting Concepts of Harmony in Architecture: The 1982 Debate Between Christopher Alexander and Peter Eisenman." *Katarxis № 3*, Katarxis, Sept. 2004, www.katarxis3.com/Alexander_Eisenman_Debate.htm.

[37] Alexander, Christopher. "Overview of The Nature of Order." *The Nature of Order*, Christopher Alexander, 2002, www.natureoforder.com/overview.htm.

— the humanities — which remind one constantly of the centrality of the human condition to the very mode of study we all partake in.

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