REM Koolhaas uses Manhattan as a model to outline fundamental attributes of high-density, high-rise, urbanity. He draws Coney Island as the test-bed for Manhattan — a surreal environment to which New Yorkers are exposed from the congestion of their city to experience with alternative lifestyles within the same context of congestion. Entrepreneurially, Manhattan's skyline became multi-layered fields with each layer providing the opportunity for living not independent — even opposed — lifestyles. This promise of metropolization — a totally fabricated world within which any number of opposing views could co-exist — needlessly failed, he observes, due to a profound lack of nerve. The work of OMA attempts a recovery of that nerve.

Somewhere in the 19th century certain parts of the globe — negligible in terms of surface — developed an unprecedented condition: through the simultaneous explosion of modern technologies and human population on their limited territories, they found themselves supporting the mutant form of human coexistence that is known as Metropolis. The Metropolis invalidates all the previous systems of articulation and differentiation that have traditionally guided the design of cities. The Metropolis unmingles the previous history of architecture.

But if the Metropolis is a true mutation, it can be assumed that it has also generated its own urbanism: an architecture that is exclusively concerned with the 'splinters of minute' of the Metropolis Condition as architecture with its own theoress, laws, methods, breakthroughs and achievements that has remained largely outside the field of vision of official architecture and criticism, too often unable to admit a fundamental rupture that would make their own existence precarious.

Manhattan

By an unspoken consensus, Manhattan, (I), is considered the archetype of the Metropolis Condition, to the point where the two are often interchangeable. Manhattan's spectacular growth coincided exactly with the definition of the
Coney Island

Coney Island is a clifftop annex at the mouth of New York harbor. (2) discovered one day before Manhattan itself.

From 1600 to 1800 the shape of the peninsula changed under the combined impact of natural forces — (shifting sands) — and human intervention (the carving of a canal that turned Coney into an island). These modifications were followed by a design that turned the canal into a hike along an island.

The view from the mid-19th century, the obstacle that had to be crossed for any real relative inaccessibility to the island, was one by one the encounter with the 20th-century transportation systems.

In 1863 the Brooklyn Bridge removed the last link that had kept Manhattan's inhabitants from the beach. From then on, they escaped to the "beach" in a workable route that connected more than one million people to the metrop- olitan island on a good day.

The vision that is the destination of this frantic migration, disappeared under the onslaught of congestion and over-intensity. As compensation for this loss of fun, a battery of new technologies was developed to provide equivalent sensations on a scale that was commensurate with the size of the island.

Coney Island became a laboratory of the "beach" phenomenon: the themes and tactics of its experimentation were later to reappear in Manhattan.

**Architectural Design**

Cow

The first natural element to be converted was the cow. (3) Since no amount of real cows could rival the meaty thrust of steer of the million, a machine was designed and built: the Inexhaustible Cow. Its milk is valuable to the natural product in terms of quantity, quality, frequency of flow, hygiene, and controllable temperature.

Bathtub

Similar conversions follow in rapid succession. Since the total surface of the beaches and the total length of the surfline were finite and given, it followed with mathematical certainty that no more than hundreds of thousands of hours could find a space to open out in the sand, let alone succeed in reaching the water within the limits of a single day.

Towards 1890, the introduction of electricity, in this case made it possible to create a second dayuse — intense electric lights were placed at regular intervals along the surfline, so that the sea could be enjoyed as a truly Metropolitan shift system. These usable-to-travel the wazier in the day, were given a 12-hour extension. What is known as the "area of Coney Island" of the Nineteenth Century is the zone of the Metropolitan Surfline system, the "surf" in the case of the Metropolitan hotels. (4) It is the Metropolis island that is not seen as a second-rate experience, but that its very artificiality was admired as an attraction in itself: Electric Bathing.

Horses

The preferred activity of the happy few who had enjoyed the island as its virgin state, had been horseback riding. Of course, that experience was unique in the scale of the new beach. In the era of horses, no adequate numbers would require a separate infrastructure as big as the island itself.

Also, the ability to ride a horse was a form of "beach" not available to the proletariat that had made the island its playground.

In the mid-1950s George Tyler laid out a mech-

antial track, (5) that leads through Coney's natural lands, a stretch across a number of man-made obstacles. He named it "the roller coaster." Its motion is supplemented with gravity as its motive power, . . . its horses turn a crank that is the key in the New York Manhattan Steamship's head, they are at a certain extent under the control of the operator, but the rhythm of the ride is by the manner in which he utilizes his weight and his position on the ascending and descending grades.

Steamship combined in a single attraction the processes of entertainment and exercise. A form of emancipation through machinery — the extreme experience of a horseback ride camouflaged through technology.

Low

Two years later, even the most intense processes of human culture were converted. The"cultural" process is the Metropolis converts loneliness and alienation. Coney Island responded to this problem with the "Open Space," (6) a continuous horizontal gyrations — mounted in line — revolving in opposite directions. At either a can of coffee or a can of beer, a man or a woman feeds himself in the apparatus, the other woman. It is impossible to remain standing in the machine, millions and millions are thrown on top of each other. The unisoning rotation then creates a specific synthetic intimacy between couples who would never have met without its creation.

If necessary, this intimacy could be further processed in the "sanctuary of love," an artificial mountain next to the couple-forming machine. The newly formed pair would board a small boat that disappeared into the earth up to the neck in the complete obscurity of earth — or at least — visual privy.

The rocking movement of the boat on the shaking water was required to increase sensuality.

**Conclusion**

The sequence of Cow, Electric Bathing, Steamship and Barrels of Love, all the natural elements that had once defined the attraction of the island, were systematically replaced by a new kind of machinery that converted the original nature into an intricate simulacrum of nature, a compulsory technical service.

This technology is not the agent of objective and quantifiable improvements — such as raising the levels of illumination, controlling temperature, etc. — it is the surrogation for the "natural" reality that is being deprived by the sheer density of human consumers.

Together, this apparatus constitutes an alterna-


tive reality that is invented and designed, instead of accidental and arbitrary.

Since this "instrumentation" of true modernity creates states and situations that have never existed before, it can never accept its part of fabrication of the real human factor.

The Metropolis is irreversibly the resultant of such ideologically manipulated structures, and that is source of its fundamental "difference" from all previous "Urbanisms."

Elevator

In 1895, Manhattan's first World's Fair, the invention that would, more than any other, become the "sign" of the Metropolitan Condition, was introduced to the public in a singularly theatrical fashion.

Ellis Otis, the inventor of the elevator, (7) mounts a platform. The platform ascends. When it has reached its highest level, an assistant presents Otis with a dagger on a velvet cushion. The invention takes the knife and attacks what appears to be a cut-out of a man's face, the model of his invention: the chapel that has piled the platform upward and that now prevents its fall. Otis cuts the knife; nothing happens. The invisible safety-catch prevents the platform from falling. It is by this visual trompe-l'oeil that was called Skylcraper, prime instrument of the architecture of density.

Theorem

In 1909 the "blurring" of the world's surface through the action of the elevator, was posed in the form of a visual phenomenon that appeared in the popular press, (8)

The elevator is not a free-standing elevator, but supports 84 horizontal platforms, all the size of the original plot. Each of these artificial levels is a raised stage to establish a private domain around a single country house and its attendant facilities such as stables, servants' cottages, garages, etc., all implanted in an artificial mountainscape.

Emphatic reproductions of the styles of the villas suggested that each of the elevators stairs corresponded to a different lifestyle — an implied ideological value — all of them equipped with complete accessibility by the steel staircase.

Life inside this building is facilitated to the extent that it could not conceivably be part of a single scenario: on the 81st floor a donkey starts back from the void, on the 81st a cosmonaut would have a plate. The privacy and isolation of each of the navel plots seemingly conflict with the fact that, together, they form a single building. In fact, the diagram implies that the structure is successional exactly to the extent that the individuality of each plot is respected. The structure "frames" their coexistence without interrupting with their contents.

The building is an accretion of predates. Only 3 of the 84 floors are visible on the drawing. Hidden in the clouds other activities occupy other plots; the use of each platform can be known to be an 'advance of its construction, Villas go up and collapse, other facilities replace them, but that does not affect the framework.

100 Storey Building

In 1914 a project for a 100 Storey Building was

7 Otis presents the elevator on the 1852 World's Fair in New York. Cable system, nothing happens; the invisible safety-catch prevents the elevator from falling. It is by this visual trompe-l'oeil that was called Skylcraper, prime instrument of the architecture of density.

8 "Meatball Aloft!": 1899: 484 superimposed plat- forms hover above the 'old' city of skyscrapers. The Metropolis is an accumulation of evered disasters.

"Vendome Aloft!:" 1949: 484 superimposed plat- forms hover above the 'old' city of skyscrapers. The Metropolis is an accumulation of evered disasters.
evolved that incorporated many of the breakthroughs—which, only two years earlier, seemed entirely theoretical. The building was a straightforward extension of the block it occupies multiplied by 105.

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North wall of the structure. The plan is of primary importance, because on the floor are performed all the activities of the human occupants . . . that is how Raymond Hood (the most theoretical of Manhattan’s architects) defined Manhattan’s interpretation of functionalism: each plan as a collage of functions that describes on the synthetic platforms an episode of Metropolitan ritual. Each of the rectangles of the Downtown Athletic Club is such a scenario with a highly suggestive— if abstract—plot.

Each floor is a separate installment of a complex instigator—its sequence as random as only the elevator man can make them—this form of architecture is a form of Modernistic writing: the planning of choreography of mankind through experiential psycho-spatial apparatus designed by themselves to celebrate their own sedes. The lower 15 floors of the building, (10), are accessible only to men. Their sequence from the ground to the top corresponds to an increasing refinement and affluence. From the 17th to the 18th floor, the men, perfected in the lower floors, are allowed to communicate with the opposite sex in the dining room, the roof terrace and the dance floor. The final 20 floors are devoted to hotel accommodation.

Floors 7, 9, 11 and 12 reserve special analysis for their extreme design. Emerging from the elevator on the 9th floor,(11), the visitor—probably a Wall Street stockbroker—finds himself in a vestibule that leads directly to a locker-room at the corner of the floor (where there is no daylight). There he undresses, puts on gloves and enters an adjoining space that is equipped for boxing and wrestling. But on the southern side, the locker-room is also served by a small nursery, eating system with housing gloves, naked, on the 9th floor—such is the plot of this floor—the 20th century in action.

The 10th floor, (12), is devoted to preventive medicine. On one side of a large dressing room and lounge an array of body manipulations—sections for massage and rubbing, an isolated station for artificial bathing (open to the river), a 19-bed rest area—is arranged around a Turkish bath. The southeast corner of the floor is a modern facility capable of treating five patients at once. A doctor is charged with the process of "colonic irrigation"—the patient is dressed in a cap, fed a milk and milkinated bacteria that modify and accelerate the natural metabolism of the human body.

This final step completes the sequence of rational intervention and voluntary self-experimentation initiated by such apparently innocent attractions.

On the 12th floor, a swimming pool, (13), occupies the full extent of the floor. At night, it is illuminated by an underwater lighting system, so that the entire slab of water with its benedictine swimmer, appears to flow in space, between the electric scintillation of the Wall Street skyline.
15 Radio City Music Hall

The application of technology at therescia of
metaphor, occurs at a still more explicit level and
on a larger scale than the Atlantie Club in Radio
City Music Hall, a theater for 2,620, (15).

It is a prototype of a strictly interior archi-
tecture interiorized in the netwrol of Rockefeller
Centers. Its official architect was not its own
official architect, but by their client, the impres-
sario Samuel Rothfield, known as Rѹy.

In the early 30s a group of architects — among
them Wallace Harrison — took to Rѹy on
an European tour — to the move to Manhanttn —
in an attempt to convert him to Modern Architecture.

But Rѹy remained indifferent to the anti-
sceptic accommodations which modern architects
had been making to the fundamental formal and
functional culture of the theatre. On is return to
New York, he let a rivendation when he watched a
movie of the Atlantic one. "I didn't conceive of the idea.
I dreamed it," he said. (16a). I believe in creative dreams.
The picture of Radio City Music Hall was complete
and practically perfect in my mind before architects
and artists put pen on paper. . . . His theatre is to be
a spectator of the spectacle he is creating rather
than a spectator of it. of the picture of the
playhouse. Rѹy's architect diligently executed the
temperature that could not exist from the time of the
plats 'rays' that extem from the entire theatre, embracing the audience like a
familiar. The curtain is made of an especially
developed synthetic fibre — so glittering that it
continues the real sun. When the lights are slowly
dimmed, the impression of a sunset is inscope.
And the lights have to go on again. And so on.
There are three or four such cycles for each
perforrnance, and the Worldey's Fairiness or Manhanttn.
And between these, the audience lives through there
or four more performances.

Then Rѹy discovered that the airconditioning
mechanism had not been made for most of its purpose
than simple cooling and heating — i.e., to increase
the winter temperature in the autumn. For he
considered adding lashing gas to its atmosphere,
so that by 5:00 p.m. would be trans-
port to 'another world' where they would be
more responsive to the impact of the emergency.
However, he desired after urgent pleading by his
lawyers, but only after substituting health-giving
Ozone for the N2O. Now his theatre combines
'Superman' with 'Superhealth', a vision that
is taught perfectly in his advertisement. 'A visit to
Radio City Music Hall is good as a month in the
country
.

Conclusion: 3

As in the example of Radio City Music Hall,
planning in Manhattan consists of the imposition
on the exploitive substance of the Metropolitain
metaphors of the Metropolitain models — at some
principles and efficient — that replace ritual
planning — impossible in any case — with a form of
corporate control.

Such hyper-saturated and highly emotional
scenery to the demonetized Metropolitain
metaphors, ideal worlds reformed in time and
space, protected against the corruption of every
man in their interior locations. These
sub-division fragments are all the more convincing
for having no territorial ambitions beyond occupying
the space of a theatrical set in a predetermined
density of symbolised and localized perversion of
the picturesque. Together, such moments form a
matrix of liveness, a system of poetic formulas
that regional traditional quantitative planning in
favour of metaphorical planning.

Movement, the metropolitan becomes ideological
navigation between the conflicting claims and
promises of 'islands' of metaphorical architecture.

Postscript

The episodes above present a provisional tri-
angularity of a truly Metropolitain architecture.
If Metropolitain architecture is not only a sign of the normlessness of our architectural
framework, it is to offer us a relief to admit that a funda-
mental break has occurred between traditional and
modern Urbanism.

These 'stories' describe a tradition of modernity
that insists on epitaphically exploiting all avail-
able apparatus and all the fresh infrastructures of
the age to establish fantastic realities as realities in
the world. The cumulative effect of such scattered
episodes — and as in the scene of the capacities
they inspire — is that they discredit the idee of
reality as unrealizable and indiscernible
reality — of reality as an ultimate potential
under our flawed acoustical performance.

Instead, the 'structure' of the Metropolitain
replaces the scene in the space of human
imagination, a fall with unpredictable outcome,
not even the certainty that it will end on
the ground.

The true ambition of the Metropolitain is to create
a world totally transfigured by man, in its inside
fantasy. The responsibility of a specifically
Metropolitain architecture has increased
consequently: to design those mosaic eme-
ternal private realities — that comprise
the Metropolitain. Such an architecture not only creates
the 'real' of everyday life, but it also defines its
character with all the arts and sciences and
disciplines such as literature, psychology, etc.
Through the marginal arrangement of human activities on all
possible levels, it writes a scenario for the scripts
of the metropolitan Extrametropia.

If that appears a form of engagements, such
temporalities is tempered by the fact that its
expressions are always localized, since they address,
by definition, only a part of the total audience,
over the whole. Metropolitain architecture is
metapolitical on a modest scale.

Metropolitain architecture thus defined, implies a
2-fold potential: against those whose desire
that the world should not be like the Modern
age, the Metropolitain itself — through the artifical
landscape and resymbolized 'landscape',
the architecture of streets, plazas, boulevards, etc.,
and the scenes of fantasy, the framework of social
intercourse, to be enforced in the name of a
good taste . . . and to against that Modern architecture which — with its impolacal aversion to metaphor — has tried to exercise its fear of
chasing a field for the objective and
to regain control over the visibility of the Metropolitain
by dispensing its bulk, isolating its components, and
quantifying its functions, and under that predict-
able consequence . . . both squander the potential
of the Culture of Congestion.

The urbanism of the 3 episodes was subcon-
cious and spontaneous, not the result of an
explicit doctrine. It was followed by an interval
in which the architecture of the Metropolitain has
progressed, or at least fallen under the domination
of official architecture.

The New York projects of the Office for
Metropolitain Architecture attempt to negotiate
the transition from that early, deliberate sub-
conscious, constitutive architecture of a conscious stage.

This article is based on research for "Delicieux New York — A Retroactive Manifesto for
Manhattan", a book in the latter part of the current decade in New York University

15 Radio City Music Hall, 1933, exterior: "The picture of Radio City Music Hall was complete and
perfectly in my mind before architects and
artists put pen on paper."

16 Radio City Music Hall, interior: A theatre like a
wonder, with even cunning from the air-
view of "radio," music as good as a month in
the country."

17 Radio City Music Hall, the Rockettes: The true
inhabitants of the Metropolitain.
The only important thing about my house is the neighborhood it's in. The house isn't a significant example of period architecture. It was just a dumb little house with charm and I became interested in trying to make it more important. I became fascinated with creating a shell around it, one that allowed the old house to exist as an object, and, in a sense, defined the house by only showing parts. When you look through the new house you see featured parts of the old house in an edited fashion. It's very surreal, and I'm interested in surrealism. . . .

Working in this fashion is a way of learning. I wasn't trying to make a big or precious statement about architecture, or trying to do an important work. I was trying to build a lot of ideas, and when I got caught in the game of the old house, it became serious. I began to engage the house in a dialogue by cutting away from it, exposing some parts and covering up others. I found myself trying to create conflict and collision between the new and the old.

In using the rough carpentry and materials, I wanted to prove you could make an art-object out of anything. This is being done, of course, in sculpture, and I find myself influenced by artists such as Rauschenberg, Serra, Carl André, Donald Judd, Heizer. . . .

I was concerned with maintaining a "freshness" in the house. Often this freshness is lost—in our over-working details, in over-finishing them, their vitality is lost. I wanted to avoid this by emphasizing the feeling that the details are still in the process; that the "building" hasn't stopped. The very finished building has security and it's predictable. I wanted to try something different. I like playing at the edge of disaster.
Junkspace

REM KOOLHAAS

Logan Airport: A World-Class Upgrade for the Twenty-first Century
—Late-Twentieth Century Billboard

Rabbit is the new beef . . . Because we abhor the utilitarian, we have condemned ourselves to a lifelong immersion in the arbitrary . . . LAX: welcoming—possibly flesh-eating—orchids at the check-in counter . . . “Identity” is the new junk food for the dispossessed, globalization’s fodder for the disenfranchised . . . If space-junk is the human debris that litters the universe, Junk-Space is the residue mankind leaves on the planet. The built (more about that later) product of modernization is not modern architecture but Junkspace. Junkspace is what remains after modernization has run its course, or, more precisely, what coagulates while modernization is in progress, its fallout. Modernization had a rational program: to share the blessings of science, universally. Junkspace is its apotheosis, or meltdown . . . Although its individual parts are the outcome of brilliant inventions, lucidly planned by human intelligence, boosted by infinite computation, their sum spells the end of Enlightenment, its resurrection as farce, a low-grade purgatory . . . Junkspace is the sum total of our current achievement; we have built more than did all previous generations put together, but somehow we do not register on the same scales. We do not leave pyramids. According to a new gospel of ugliness, there is already more Junkspace under construction in the twenty-first century than has survived from the twentieth . . . It was a mistake to invent modern architecture for the twentieth century. Architecture disappeared in the twentieth century; we have been reading a footnote under a microscope hoping it would turn into a novel; our concern for the masses has blinded us to People’s Architecture. Junkspace seems an aberration, but it is the essence, the main thing . . . the product of an encounter between escalator and air-conditioning, conceived in an incubator of Sheetrock (all three missing from the history books). Continuity is the essence of Junkspace; it exploits any invention that enables expansion, deploys the infrastructure of seamlessness: escalator, air-conditioning, sprinkler, fire shutter, hot-air curtain . . . It is always interior, so extensive that you rarely perceive limits; it promotes disorientation by any means (mirror, polish, echo) . . . Junkspace is
sealed, held together not by structure but by skin, like a bubble. Gravity has remained constant, resisted by the same arsenal since the beginning of time; but air-conditioning—invisible medium, therefore unnoticed—has truly revolutionized architecture. Air-conditioning has launched the endless building. If architecture separates buildings, air-conditioning unites them. Air-conditioning has dictated mutant regimes of organization and coexistence that leave architecture behind. A single shopping center is now the work of generations of space planners, repairmen, and fixers, like in the Middle Ages; air-conditioning sustains our cathedrals. (All architects may unwittingly be working on the same building, so far separate, but with hidden receptors that will eventually make it cohere.) Because it costs money, is no longer free, conditioned space inevitably becomes conditional space; sooner or later all conditional space turns into Junkspace . . . When we think about space, we have only looked at its containers. As if space itself is invisible, all theory for the production of space is based on an obsessive preoccupation with its opposite: substance and objects, i.e., architecture. Architects could never explain space; Junkspace is our punishment for their mystifications. O.K., let's talk about space then. The beauty of airports, especially after each upgrade. The luster of renovations. The subtlety of the shopping center. Let's explore public space, discover casinos, spend time in theme parks . . . Junkspace is the body double of space, a territory of impaired vision, limited expectation, reduced earnestness. Junkspace is a Bermuda Triangle of concepts, an abandoned petri dish: it cancels distinctions, undermines resolve, confuses intention with realization. It replaces hierarchy with accumulation, composition with addition. More and more, more is more. Junkspace is overripe and undernourishing at the same time, a colossal security blanket that covers the earth in a stranglehold of seduction . . . Junkspace is like being condemned to a perpetual Jacuzzi with millions of your best friends . . . A fuzzy empire of blur, it fuses high and low, public and private, straight and bent, bloated and starved to offer a seamless patchwork of the permanently disjointed. Seemingly an apotheosis, spatially grandiose, the effect of its richness is a terminal hollowness, a vicious parody of ambition that systematically erodes the credibility of building, possibly forever . . . Space was created by piling matter on top of matter, cemented to form a solid new whole. Junkspace is additive, layered, and lightweight, not articulated in different parts but subdivided, quartered the way a carcass is torn apart—individual chunks severed from a universal condition. There are no walls, only partitions, shimmering membranes frequently covered in mirror or gold. Structure groans invisibly underneath decoration, or worse, has become ornamental; small, shiny, space frames support nominal loads, or huge beams deliver cyclopic burdens to unsuspecting destinations . . . The arch, once the workhorse of structures, has become the depleted emblem of “community,” welcoming an infinity of virtual populations to nonexistent theresa. Where it is absent, it is simply applied—mostly in stucco—as ornamental afterthought on hurriedly erected superblocks. Junkspace's iconography is 13 percent Roman, 8 percent Bauhaus and 7 percent Disney (neck and neck), 3 percent Art Nouveau, followed
closely by Mayan... Like a substance that could have condensed in any other form, Junkspace is a domain of feigned, simulated order, a kingdom of morphing. Its specific configuration is as fortuitous as the geometry of a snowflake. Patterns imply repetition or ultimately decipherable rules; Junkspace is beyond measure, beyond code... Because it cannot be grasped, Junkspace cannot be remembered. It is flamboyant yet unmemorable, like a screen saver; its refusal to freeze ensures instant amnesia. Junkspace does not pretend to create perfection, only interest. Its geometries are unimaginable, only makeable. Although strictly nonarchitectural, it tends to the vaulted, to the Dome. Some sections seem to be devoted to utter inerness, others in perpetual rhetorical turmoil: the deadest resides next to the most hysterical. Themes cast a pall of arrested development over interiors as big as the Pantheon, spawning stillbirths in every corner. The aesthetic is Byzantine, gorgeous, and dark, splintered into thousands of shards, all visible at the same time: a quasi-panoptical universe in which all contents rearrange themselves in split seconds around the dizzy eye of the beholder. Murals used to show idols; Junkspace's modules are dimensioned to carry brands; myths can be shared, brands husband aura at the mercy of focus groups. Brands in Junkspace perform the same role as black holes in the universe: they are essences through which meaning disappears... The shiniest surfaces in the history of mankind reflect humanity at its most casual. The more we inhabit the palatial, the more we seem to dress down. A stringent dress code—last spasm of etiquette?—governs access to Junkspace: shorts, sneakers, sandals, shell suit, fleece, jeans, parka, backpack. As if the People suddenly accessed the private quarters of a dictator, Junkspace is best enjoyed in a state of postrevolutionary gawking. Polarities have merged—there is nothing left between desolation and frenzy. Neon signifies both the old and the new; interiors refer to the Stone and Space Age at the same time. Like the deactivated virus in an inoculation, Modern architecture remains essential, but only in its most sterile manifestation, High Tech (it seemed so dead only a decade ago!). It exposes what previous generations kept under wraps: structures emerge like springs from a mattress; exit stairs dangle in a didactic trapeze; probes thrust into space to deliver laboriously what is in fact omnipresent, free air; acres of glass hang from spidery cables, tautly stretched skins enclose flaccid nonevents. Transparency only reveals everything in which you cannot partake. At the stroke of midnight it all may revert to Taiwanese Gothic; in three years it may segue into Nigerian Sixties, Norwegian Chalet, or default Christian. Earthlings now live in a kindergarten grotesque... Junkspace thrives on design, but design dies in Junkspace. There is no form, only proliferation... Regurgitation is the new creativity; instead of creation, we honor, cherish, and embrace manipulation... Superstrings of graphics, transplanted emblems of franchise and sparkling infrastructures of light, LEDs, and video describe an authorless world beyond anyone's claim, always unique, utterly unpredictable, yet intensely familiar. Junkspace is hot (or suddenly arctic), fluorescent walls, folded like melting stained glass, generate additional heat to raise the temperature of
Junkspace to levels at which you could cultivate orchids. Pretending histories left and right, its contents are dynamic yet stagnant, recycled or multiplied as in cloning; forms search for function like hermit crabs looking for a vacant shell... Junkspace sheds architectures like a reptile sheds skins, is reborn every Monday morning. In previous building, materiality was based on a final state that could only be modified at the expense of partial destruction. At the exact moment that our culture has abandoned repetition and regularity as repressive, building materials have become more and more modular, unitary, and standardized; substance now comes predigitized... As the module becomes smaller and smaller, its status become that of a crypto-pixel. With enormous difficulty—budget, argument, negotiation, deformation—irregularity and uniqueness are constructed from identical elements. Instead of trying to wrest order from chaos, the picturesque is now wrested from the homogenized, the singular liberated from the standardized... Architects thought of Junkspace first and named it Megastructure, the final solution to transcend their huge impasse. Like multiple Babels, huge superstructures would last through eternity, teeming with impermanent subsystems that would mutate over time, beyond their control. In Junkspace, the tables are turned: it is subsystem only, without superstructure, orphaned particles in search of a framework or pattern. All materialization is provisional: cutting, bending, tearing, coating; construction has acquired a new softness, like tailoring... The joint is no longer a problem, an intellectual issue: transitional moments are defined by stapling and taping, wrinkly brown bands barely maintain the illusion of an unbroken surface; verbs unknown and unthinkable in architectural history—clamp, stick, fold, dump, glue, shoot, double, fuse—have become indispensable. Each element performs its task in negotiated isolation. Where as detailing once suggested the coming together, possibly forever, of disparate materials, it is now a transient coupling, waiting to be undone, unscrewed, a temporary embrace with a high probability of separation; no longer the orchestrated encounter of difference, but the abrupt end of a system, a stalemate. Only the blind, reading its fault lines with their fingertips, will ever understand Junkspace's histories... While whole millennia worked in favor of permanence, axialities, relationships, and proportion, the program of Junkspace is escalation. Instead of development, it offers entropy. Because it is endless, it always leaks somewhere in Junkspace; in the worst case, monumental ashtrays catch intermittent drops in a gray broth... When did time stop moving forward, begin to spool in every direction, like a tape spinning out of control? Since the introduction of Real Time™ Change has been divorced from the idea of improvement. There is no progress; like a crab on LSD, culture staggers endlessly sideways... The average contemporary lunch box is a micro-cosmos of Junkspace: a fervent semantics of health—slabs of eggplant, topped by thick layers of goat cheese—canceled by a colossal cookie at the bottom... Junkspace is draining and is drained in return. Everywhere in Junkspace there are seating arrangements, ranges of modular chairs, even couches, as if the experience Junkspace offers its consumers is significantly more exhausting than any previous
spatial sensation; in its most abandoned stretches, you find buffets: utilitarian tables draped in white or black sheets, perfunctory assemblies of caffeine and calories—cottage cheese, muffins, unripe grapes—notional representations of plenty, without horn and without plenty. Each Junkspace is connected, sooner or later, to bodily functions: wedged between stainless-steel partitions sit rows of groaning Romans, denim togs bunched around their huge sneakers... Because it is so intensely consumed, Junkspace is fanatically maintained, the night shift undoing the damage of the day shift in an endless Sisyphean replay. As you recover from Junkspace, Junkspace recovers from you: between 2 and 5 A.M., yet another population, this one heartlessly casual and appreciably darker, is mopping, hovering, sweeping, toweling, resupplying...Junkspace does not inspire loyalty in its cleaners...Dedicated to instant gratification, Junkspace accommodates seeds of future perfection; a language of apology is woven through its texture of canned euphoria; “pardon our appearance” signs or miniature yellow “sorry” billboards mark ongoing patches of wetness, announce momentary discomfort in return for imminent shine, the allure of improvement. Somewhere, workers sink on their knees to repair faded sections, as if in a prayer, or half-disappear in ceiling voids to negotiate elusive malfunctions, as if in confession. All surfaces are archaeological, superpositions of different “periods” (what do you call the moment a particular type of wall-to-wall carpet was current?)—as you note when they’re torn... Traditionally, typology implies demarcation, the definition of a singular model that excludes other arrangements. Junkspace represents a reverse typology of cumulative, approximative identity, less about kind than about quantity. But formlessness is still form, the formless also a typology... Take the dump, where successive trucks discharge their loads to form a heap, whole in spite of the randomness of its contents and its fundamental shapelessness, or that of the tent-envelope that assumes different shapes to accommodate variable interior volumes. Or the vague crotches of the new generation. Junkspace can either be absolutely chaotic or frighteningly aseptic—like a best-seller—overdetermined and indeterminate at the same time. There is something strange about ballrooms, for instance: huge wastelands kept column-free for ultimate flexibility. Because you’ve never been invited to that kind of event, you have never seen them in use; you’ve only seen them being prepared with chilling precision: a relentless grid of circular tables, extending toward a distant horizon, their diameters preempting communication; a dais big enough for the politburo of a totalitarian state, wings announcing as yet unimagined surprises—acres of organization to support future drunkenness, disarray, and disorder. Or car shows...Junkspace is often described as a space of flows, but that is a misnomer; flows depend on disciplined movement, bodies that cohere. Junkspace is a web without a spider; although it is an architecture of the masses, each trajectory is strictly unique. Its anarchy is one of the last tangible ways in which we experience freedom. It is a space of collision, a container of atoms, busy, not dense... There is a special way of moving in Junkspace, at the same time aimless and purposeful. It is an acquired culture.
Junkspace features the tyranny of the oblivious: sometimes an entire Junkspace comes unstuck through the nonconformity of one of its members; a single citizen of another culture—a refugee, a mother—can destabilize an entire Junkspace, hold it to a rustic’s ransom, leaving an invisible swath of obstruction in his/her wake, a deregulation eventually communicated to its furthest extremities. Where movement becomes synchronized, it curdles: on escalators, near exits, parking machines, automated tellers. Sometimes, under duress, individuals are channeled in a flow, pushed through a single door or forced to negotiate the gap between two temporary obstacles (an invalid’s beeping chariot and a Christmas tree): the manifest ill will such narrowing provokes mocks the notion of flows. Flows in Junkspace lead to disaster: department stores at the beginning of sales; the stampedes triggered by warring compartments of soccer fans; dead bodies piling up in front of the locked emergency doors of a disco—evidence of the awkward fit between the portals of Junkspace and the narrow calibrations of the old world. The young instinctively avoid the Dante-esque manipulations/containers to which Junkspace has condemned their elders in perpetuity. Within the meta-playground of Junkspace exist smaller playgrounds, Junkspace for children (usually in the least desirable square footage): sections of sudden miniaturization—often underneath staircases, always near dead ends—and assemblies of underdimensioned plastic structures—slides, seesaws, swings—shunned by their intended audience are turned into a Junkniche for the old, the lost, the forgotten, the insane . . . the last hiccup of humanism . . . Traffic is Junkspace, from airspace to the subway; the entire highway system is Junkspace, a vast potential utopia clogged by its users, as you notice when they’ve finally disappeared on vacation . . . Like radioactive waste, Junkspace has an insidious half-life. Aging in Junkspace is nonexistent or catastrophic; sometimes an entire Junkspace—a department store, a nightclub, a bachelor pad—turns into a slum overnight without warning; wattage diminishes imperceptibly, letters drop out of signs, air-conditioning units start dripping, cracks appear as if from otherwise unregistered earthquakes; sections rot, are no longer viable, but remain joined to the flesh of the main body via gangrenous passages. Judging the built presumed a static condition; now each architecture embodies opposite conditions simultaneously: old and new, permanent and temporary, flourishing and at risk . . . Sections undergo an Alzheimer’s-like deterioration as others are upgraded. Because Junkspace is endless, it is never closed . . . Renovation and restoration were procedures that took place in your absence; now you’re a witness, a reluctant participant . . . Seeing Junkspace in conversion is like inspecting an unmade bed, someone else’s. Say an airport needs more space. In the past, new terminals were added, each more or less characteristic of its own age, leaving the old ones as a readable record, evidence of progress. Since passengers have definitively demonstrated their infinite malleability, the idea of rebuilding on the spot has gained currency. Travelers are thrown into reverse, signs taped, potted palms (or very large corpses) covered in body bags. Screens of taped Sheetrock segregate two populations: one wet, one dry, one
hard, one flabby, one cold, one overheated. Half the population produces new space; the more affluent half consumes old space. To accommodate a nether world of manual labor, the concourse suddenly turns into Casbah: improvised locker rooms, coffee breaks, smoking, even real campfires... The ceiling is a crumpled plate like the Alps; grids of unstable tiles alternate with monogrammed sheets of black plastic, improbably punctured by grids of crystal chandeliers... Metal ducts are replaced by breathing textiles. Gaping joints reveal vast ceiling voids (former canyons of asbestos?), beams, ducting, rope, cable, insulation, fireproofing, string; tangled arrangements suddenly exposed to daylight. Impure, tortured, and complex, they exist only because they were never consciously plotted. The floor is a patchwork: different textures—concrete, hairy, heavy, shiny, plastic, metallic, muddy—alternate randomly, as if dedicated to different species... The ground is no more. There are too many raw needs to be realized on only one plane. The absolute horizontal has been abandoned. Transparency has disappeared, to be replaced by a dense crust of provisional occupation: kiosks, carts, strollers, palms, fountains, bars, sofas, trolleys... Corridors no longer simply link A to B, but have become “destinations.” Their tenant life tends to be short: the most stagnant windows, the most perfunctory dresses, the most implausible flowers. All perspective is gone, as in a rainforest (itself disappearing, they keep saying...). The formerly straight is coiled into evermore complex configurations. Only a perverse modernist choreography can explain the twists and turns, the ascents and descents, the sudden reversals that comprise the typical path from check-in (misleading name) to the apron of the average contemporary airport. Because we never reconstruct or question the absurdity of these enforced dérives, we meekly submit to grotesque journeys past perfume, asylum-seekers, building site, underwear, oysters, pornography, cell phone—incredible adventures for the brain, the eye, the nose, the tongue, the womb, the testicles... There was once a polemic about the right angle and the straight line; now the ninetieth degree has become one among many. In fact, remnants of former geometries create ever new havoc, offering forlorn nodes of resistance that create unstable eddies in newly opportunistic flows... Who would dare claim responsibility for this sequence? The idea that a profession once dictated, or at least presumed to predict, people's movements now seems laughable, or worse: unthinkable. Instead of design, there is calculation: the more erratic the path, eccentric the loops, hidden the blueprint, efficient the exposure, the more inevitable the transaction. In this war, graphic designers are the great turncoats: Where once signage promised to deliver you to where you wanted to be, it now obfuscates and entangles you in a thicket of cuteness that forces you past unwanted detours, turns you back when you're lost. Postmodernism adds a crumple-zone of viral poché that fractures and multiplies the endless front line of display, a peristaltic shrink-wrap crucial to all commercial exchange. Trajectories are launched as ramp, turn horizontal without any warning, intersect, fold down, suddenly emerge on a vertiginous balcony above a large void. Fascism minus dictator. From the sudden dead end where you were
dropped by a monumental, granite staircase, an escalator takes you to an invisible destination, facing a provisional vista made of plaster, inspired by forgettable sources. (There is no datum level; you always inhabit a sandwich. "Space" is scooped out of Junkspace as from a soggy block of ice cream that has languished too long in the freezer: cylindrical, cone-shaped, more or less spherical, whatever . . . ) Toilet groups mutate into Disney Stores then morph to become meditation centers: Successive transformations mock the word "plan." The plan is a radar screen where individual pulses survive for unpredictable periods of time in a Bacchanalian free-for-all . . . In this standoff between the redundant and the inevitable, a plan would actually make matters worse, would drive you to instant despair. Only the diagram gives a bearable version. There is zero loyalty—and zero tolerance—toward configuration, no "original" condition; architecture has turned into a time-lapse sequence to reveal a "permanent evolution." . . . The only certainty is conversion—continuous—followed, in rare cases, by "restoration," the process that claims ever new sections of history as extensions of Junkspace. History corrupts, absolute history corrupts absolutely. Color and matter are eliminated from these bloodless grafts: the bland has become the only meeting ground for the old and the new . . . Can the bland be amplified? The featureless be exaggerated? Through height? Depth? Length? Variation? Repetition? Sometimes not overload but its opposite, an absolute absence of detail, generates Junkspace. A voided condition of frightening sparseness, shocking proof that so much can be organized by so little. Laughable emptiness infuses the respectful distance or tentative embrace that starchitects maintain in the presence of the past, authentic or not. Invariably, the primordial decision is to leave the original intact; the formerly residual is declared the new essence, the focus of the intervention. As a first step, the substance to be preserved is wrapped in a thick pack of commerce and catering—like a reluctant skier pushed downhill by responsible minders. To show respect, symmetries are maintained and helplessly exaggerated; ancient building techniques are resurrected and honed to irrelevant shine, quarries reopened to excavate the "same" stone, indiscreet donor names chiseled prominently in the meekest of typefaces; the courtyard covered by a masterful, structural "filigree"—emphatically uncompetitive—so that continuity may be established with the "rest" of Junkspace (abandoned galleries, display slums, Jurassic concepts . . . ). Conditioning is applied; filtered daylight reveals vast, antiseptic expanses of monumental reticence and makes them come alive, vibrant as a computer rendering . . . The curse of public space: latent fascism safely smothered in signage, stools, sympathy . . . Junkspace is postexistential; it makes you uncertain where you are, obscures where you go, undoes where you were. Who do you think you are? Who do you want to be? (Note to architects: You thought that you could ignore Junkspace, visit it surreptitiously, treat it with condescending contempt or enjoy it vicariously . . . because you could not understand it, you've thrown away the keys . . . But now your own architecture is infected, has become equally smooth, all-inclusive, continuous, warped, busy, atrium-ridden . . . ) JunkSignature™ is the new architec-
ture: the former megalomania of a profession contracted to manageable size, Junkspace minus its saving vulgarity. Anything stretched—limousines, body parts, planes—turns into Junkspace, its original concept abused. Restore, rearrange, reassemble, revamp, renovate, revise, recover, redesign, return—the Parthenon marbles—redo, respect, rent: verbs that start with re-produce Junkspace... Junkspace will be our tomb. Half of mankind pollutes to produce, the other pollutes to consume. The combined pollution of all Third World cars, motorbikes, trucks, buses, sweatshops pales into insignificance compared to the heat generated by Junkspace. Junkspace is political: It depends on the central removal of the critical faculty in the name of comfort and pleasure. Politics has become manifesto by Photoshop, seamless blueprints of the mutually exclusive, arbitrated by opaque NGOs. Comfort is the new Justice. Entire miniature states now adopt Junkspace as political program, establish regimes of engineered disorientation, instigate a politics of systematic disarray. Not exactly “anything goes”; in fact, the secret of Junkspace is that it is both promiscuous and repressive: as the formless proliferates, the formal withers, and with it all rules, regulations, recourse... Babel has been misunderstood. Language is not the problem, just the new frontier of Junkspace. Mankind, torn by eternal dilemmas, the impasse of seemingly endless debates, has launched a new language that straddles unbridgeable divides like a fragile designer’s footbridge... coined a proactive wave of new oxymorons to suspend former incompatibility: life/style, reality/TV, world/music, museum/store, food/court, health/care, waiting/lounge. Naming has replaced class struggle, sonorous amalgamations of status, high-concept, and history. Through acronym, unusual importation, suppressing letters, or fabrication of nonexistent plurals, they aim to shed meaning in return for a spacious new roominess... Junkspace knows all your emotions, all your desires. It is the interior of Big Brother’s belly. It preempts people’s sensations. It comes with a sound track, smell, captions; it blatantly proclaims how it wants to be read: rich, stunning, cool, huge, abstract, “minimal,” historical. It sponsors a collective of brooding consumers in surly anticipation of their next spend, a mass of refractory periods caught in a Thousand Year Reign of Razzmatazz, a paroxysm of prosperity. The subject is stripped of privacy in return for access to a credit nirvana. You are complicit in the tracing of the fingerprints each of your transactions leaves; they know everything about you, except who you are. Emissaries of Junkspace pursue you in the formerly impervious privacy of the bedroom: the minibar, private fax machines, pay-TV offering compromised pornography, fresh plastic veils wrapping toilets, seats, courtesy condoms: miniature profit centers coexist with your bedside bible... Junkspace pretends to unite, but it actually splinters. It creates communities not out of shared interest or free association, but out of identical statistics and unavoidable demographics, an opportunistic weave of vested interests. Each man, woman, and child is individually targeted, tracked, split off from the rest... Fragments come together at “security” only, where a grid of video screens disappointingly reassembles individual frames into a banalized, utilitarian cubism
that reveals Junkspace’s overall coherence to the dispassionate glare of barely trained guards: video-ethnography in its brute form. Just as Junkspace is unstable, its actual ownership is forever being passed on in parallel disloyalty. Junkspace happens spontaneously through natural corporate exuberance—the unfettered play of the market—or is generated through the combined actions of temporary “czars” with long records of three-dimensional philanthropy, bureaucrats (often former leftists) that optimistically sell off vast tracts of waterfront, former hippodromes, military bases and abandoned airfields to developers or real-estate moguls who can accommodate any deficit in futuristic balances, or through Default Preservation™ (the maintenance of historical complexes that nobody wants but that the Zeitgeist has declared sacrosanct). As its scale mushrooms—rivals and even exceeds that of the Public—it’s economy becomes more inscrutable. Its financing is a deliberate haze, clouding opaque deals, dubious tax breaks, unusual incentives, exemptions, tenuous legalities, transferred air rights, joined properties, special zoning districts, public-private complicity. Funded by bonds, lottery, subsidy, charity, grant: An erratic flow of yen, Euros, and dollars creates financial envelopes that are as fragile as their contents. Because of a structural shortfall, a fundamental deficit, a contingent bankruptcy, each square inch becomes a grasping, needy surface dependent on covert or overt support, discount, compensation and fund-raising. For culture, “engraved donor bricks”; for everything else: cash, rentals, leases, franchises, the underpinning of brands. Junkspace expands with the economy but its footprint cannot contract—when it is no longer needed, it thins. Because of its tenuous viability, Junkspace has to swallow more and more program to survive; soon, we will be able to do anything anywhere. We will have conquered place. At the end of Junkspace, the Universal? Through Junkspace, old aura is transfused with new luster to spawn sudden commercial viability. Barcelona amalgamated with the Olympics, Bilbao with the Guggenheim, Forty-second Street with Disney. God is dead, the author is dead, history is dead, only the architect is left standing...an insulting evolutionary joke... A shortage of masters has not stopped a proliferation of masterpieces. “Masterpiece” has become a definitive sanction, a semantic space that saves the object from criticism, leaves its qualities unproven, its performance untested, its motives unquestioned. Masterpiece is no longer an inexplicable fluke, a roll of the dice, but a consistent typology: its mission to intimidate, most of its exterior surfaces bent, huge percentages of its square footage dysfunctional, its centrifugal components barely held together by the pull of the atrium, dreading the imminent arrival of forensic accounting...The more indeterminate the city, the more specific its Junkspace; all of Junkspace’s prototypes are urban—the Roman Forum, the Metropolis; it is only their reverse synergy that makes them suburban, simultaneously swollen and shrunk. Junkspace reduces what is urban to urbanty... Instead of public life, Public Space™: what remains of the city once the unpredictable has been removed... Space for “honoring,” “sharing,” “caring,” “grieving,” and “healing”...civility imposed by an overdose of serif... In the third
Millennium, Junkspace will assume responsibility for pleasure and religion, exposure and intimacy, public life and privacy. Inevitably, the death of God (and the author) has spawned orphaned space; Junkspace is authorless, yet surprisingly authoritarian... At the moment of its greatest emancipation, humankind is subjected to the most dictatorial scripts: from the pushy oration of the waiter to the answering gulags on the other end of the telephone, the safety instructions on the airplane, more and more insistent perfumes, mankind is browbeaten into submitting to the most harshly engineered plotline... The chosen theater of megalomania—the dictatorial—is no longer politics, but entertainment. Through Junkspace, entertainment organizes hermetic regimes of ultimate exclusion and concentration: concentration gambling, concentration golf, concentration convention, concentration movie, concentration culture, concentration holiday. Entertainment is like watching a once-hot planet cool off; its major inventions are ancient: the moving image, the roller coaster, recorded sound, cartoons, clowns, dinosaurs, news, war. Except for celebrities—of which there is a dramatic shortage—we have added nothing, just reconfigured. Corpotainment is a galaxy in contraction, forced to go through the motions by ruthless Copernican laws. The secret of corporate aesthetics was the power of elimination, the celebration of the efficient, the eradication of excess: abstraction as camouflage, the search for a Corporate Sublime. On popular demand, organized beauty has become warm, humanist, inclusivist, arbitrary, poetic, and unthreatening: water is pressurized through very small holes, then forced into rigorous hoops; straight palms are bent into grotesque poses, air is burdened with added oxygen—as if only forcing malleable substances into the most drastic contortions maintains control, satisfies the drive to get rid of surprise. Not canned laughter, but canned euphoria... Color has disappeared to dampen the resulting cacophony, and is used only as cue: relax, enjoy, be well, we’re united in sedation... Why can’t we tolerate stronger sensations? Dissonance? Awkwardness? Genius? Anarchy?... Junkspace heals, or at least that is the assumption of many hospitals. We thought the hospital was unique—a universe that identified by its smell—but now that we are used to universal conditioning we recognize it was merely a prototype; all Junkspace is defined by its smell. Often heroic in size, planned with the last adrenaline of modernism’s grand inspiration, we have made them (too) human; life or death decisions are taken in spaces that are relentlessly friendly, littered with fading bouquets, empty coffee cups, and yesterday’s papers. You used to face death in appropriate cells; now your nearest are huddled together in atriums. A bold datum line is established on every vertical surface, dividing the infirmary in two: above an endless humanist scroll of “color,” loved ones, children’s sunsets, signage, and art... below a utilitarian zone for defacement and disinfectant, anticipated collision, scratch, spill, and smudge... Junkspace is space as vacation; there once was a relationship between leisure and work, a biblical dictate that divided our weeks, organized public life. Now we work harder, marooned in a never-ending casual Friday... The office is the next frontier of Junkspace. Since you can work at
home, the office aspires to the domestic; because you still need a life, it simulates the city. Junkspace features the office as the urban home, a meeting-boudoir: desks become sculptures, the work-floor is lit by intimate downlights. Monumental partitions, kiosks, mini-Starbucks on interior plazas: a Post-it universe: "team memory," "information persistence"; futile hedges against the universal forgetting of the unmemorable, the oxymoron as mission statement. Witness corporate agit-prop: the CEO's suite becomes "leadership collective," wired to all the world's other Junkspace, real or imagined. Espace becomes E-space. The twenty-first century will bring "intelligent" Junkspace: on a big digital "dashboard": sales, CNNNYSENASDAQ-SPAN, anything that goes up or down, from good to bad, presented in real time like the automotive-theory course that complements driving lessons . . . Globalization turns language into Junkspace. We are stuck in a speech-doldrums. The ubiquity of English is Pyrrhic: now that we all speak it, nobody remembers its use. The collective bastardization of English is our most impressive achievement; we have broken its back with ignorance, accent, slang, jargon, tourism, outsourcing, and multitasking . . . we can make it say anything we want, like a speech dummy . . . Through the retrofitting of language, there are too few plausible words left: our most creative hypotheses will never be formulated, discoveries will remain unmade, concepts unlaunched, philosophies muffled, nuances miscarried . . . We inhabit sumptuous Potemkin suburbs of weasel terminologies. Aberrant linguistic ecologies sustain virtual subjects in their claim to legitimacy, help them survive . . . Language is no longer used to explore, define, express, or to confront but to fudge, blur, obfuscate, apologize, and comfort . . . It stakes claims, assigns victimhood, preempts debate, admits guilt, fosters consensus. Entire organizations and/or professions impose a descent into the linguistic equivalent of hell: condemned to a word-limbo, inmates wrestle with words in ever-descending spirals of pleading, lying, bargaining, flattering . . . a Satanic orchestration of the meaningless . . . Intended for the interior, Junkspace can easily engulf a whole city. First, it escapes from its containers—semantic orchids that needed hothouse protection emerging with surprising robustness—then the outdoors itself is converted: the street is paved more luxuriously, shelters proliferate carrying increasingly dictatorial messages, traffic is calmed, crime eliminated. Then Junkspace spreads like a forest fire in L.A. . . . The global progress of Junkspace represents a final Manifest Destiny: the World as public space . . . All of the resurrected emblems and recycled arumbers of the formerly public need new pastures. A new vegetal is corralled for its thematic efficiency. The outing of Junkspace has triggered the professionalization of denaturing, a benign eco-fascism that positions a rare surviving Siberian tiger in a forest of slot machines, near Armani, amid a twisted arboreal Baroque . . . Outside, between the casinos, fountains project entire Stalinist buildings of liquid, ejaculated in a split second, hovering momentarily, then withdrawing with an amnesiac competency . . . Air, water, wood: All are enhanced to produce Hyperecology™, a parallel Walden, a new rainforest. Landscape has become Junkspace, foliage as spoilage: Trees are
tortured, lawns cover human manipulations like thick pelts, or even toupees, sprinklers water according to mathematical timetables... Seemingly at the opposite end of Junkspace, the golf course is, in fact, its conceptual double: empty, serene, free of commercial debris. The relative evaporation of the golf course is achieved by the further charging of Junkspace. The methods of their design and realization are similar: erasure, tabula rasa, reconfiguration. Junkspace turns into biojunk; ecology turns into ecospace. Ecology and economy have bonded in Junkspace as ecology. The economy has become Faustian; hyperdevelopment depends on artificial underdevelopment; a huge global bureaucracy is in the making to settle, in a colossal yin/yang, the balance between Junkspace and golf, between the scraped and the 'scaped, trading the right to despoil for the obligation to create steroid rainforests in Costa Rica. Oxygen banks, Fort Knoxes of chlorophyll, eco-reserves as a blank check for further pollution. Junkspace is rewriting the apocalypse; we may die of oxygen poisoning... In the past, the complexities of Junkspace were compensated for by the stark rawness of its adjunct infrastructures: parking garages, filling stations, distribution centers routinely displaying a monumental purity that was the original aim of modernism. Now, massive injections of lyricism have enabled an infrastructure—the one domain previously immune to design, taste, or the marketplace—to join the world of Junkspace, and for Junkspace to extend its manifestations under the sky. Railway stations unfold like iron butterflies, airports glisten like cyclopean dewdrops, bridges span often negligible banks like grotesquely enlarged versions of the harp. To each rivulet its own Calatrava. (Sometimes when there is a strong wind, this new generation of instruments shakes as if being played by a giant, or maybe a God, and mankind shudders...) Junkspace can be airborne, bring malaria to Sussex; 300 anopheline mosquitoes arrive each day at GDG and GTW with ability, theoretically, to infect eight to twenty locals in a three-mile radius, a hazard exacerbated by the average passenger's reluctance, in a misplaced gasp of quasi-autonomy, to be disinfected once he or she has buckled up for the return journey from the dead end of the tourist destination. Airports, provisional accommodation for those going elsewhere, inhabited by assemblies united only by the imminence of their dissolution, have turned into consumption gulags, democratically distributed across the globe to give every citizen an equal chance of admission... MXP looks as if all of the leftovers of East Germany's reconstruction—whatever was needed to undo the deprivations of Communism—have been hurriedly bulldozed together according to a vaguely rectangular blueprint to form a botched sequence of deformed, inadequate spaces (apparently willed into being by the current rulers of Europe, who extort limitless Euros from the community's regional funds, causing endless delays for its duped taxpayers too busy on cell phones to notice). DFW is composed of three elements only, repeated ad infinitum, nothing else: one kind of beam, one kind of brick, one kind of tile, all coated in the same color—is it teal? Rust? Tobacco? With symmetries scaled beyond any possibility of recognition, the endless curve of its terminals forces its
users to enact relativity theory in their quest for the gate. Its dropoff is the seemingly harmless beginning of a journey to the heart of unmitigated nothingness, beyond the animation provided by Pizza Hut, Dairy Queen. . . Valley cultures were thought to be the most resistant to Junktown; at GVZ you can still see a universe of rules, order, hierarchy, neatness, coordination, poised moments before its implosion, but at ZHR huge "timepieces" hover in front of interior waterfalls as an essay in Regionaljunk. Duty-free is Junkspace: Junkspace is duty-free space. Where culture was thinnest, will it be the first to run out? Is emptiness local? Do wide open spaces demand wide open Junkspace? Sunbelt: huge populations where there was nothing; PHX: warpaint on every terminal, dead Indian outlines on every surface—carpet, wallpaper, napkins—like frogs flattened by car tires. Public Art distributed across LAX: the fish that have disappeared from our rivers return as public art in the concourse; only what is dead can be resurrected. Memory itself may have turned into Junkspace; only those murdered will be remembered . . . Deprivation can be caused by overdose or shortage; both conditions happen in Junkspace (often at the same time). Minimum is the ultimate ornament, a self-righteous crime, the contemporary Baroque. It does not signify beauty, but guilt. Its demonstrative earnestness drives whole civilizations into the welcoming arms of camp and kitsch. Ostensibly a relief from constant sensorial onslaught, minimum is maximum in drag, a stealth laundering of luxury: the stricter the lines, the more irresistible the seductions. Its role is not to approximate the sublime, but to minimize the shame of consumption, drain embarrassment, to lower what is higher. The minimum now exists in a state of parasitic codependency with the overdose: to have and not to have, craving and owning, finally collapsed in a single signifier . . . Museums are sanctimonious Junkspace; there is no sturdier aura than holiness. To accommodate the converts they have attracted by default, museums massively turn "bad" space into "good" space; the more untreated the oak, the larger the profit center. Monasteries inflated to the scale of department stores: expansion is the Third Millennium's entropy, dilute or die. Dedicated to mostly respecting the dead, no cemetery would dare to reshuffle corpses as casually in the name of current expediency; curators plot hangings and unexpected encounters in a donor-plate labyrinth with the finesse of the retailer: lingerie becomes "Nude, Action, Body," cosmetics "History, Memory, Society." All paintings based on black grids are heaped together in a single white room. Large spiders in the humongous conversion offer delirium for the masses . . . Narrative reflexes that have enabled us from the beginning of time to connect dots, fill in blanks, are now turned against us: we cannot stop noticing—no sequence is too absurd, trivial, meaningless, insulting . . . Through our ancient evolutionary equipment, our irressistible attention span, we helplessly register, provide insight, squeeze meaning, read intention; we cannot stop making sense out of the utterly senseless . . . On its triumphal march as content provider, art extends far beyond the museum's ever-increasing boundaries. Outside, in the real world, the "art planner" spreads Junkspace's fundamental incoherence by assigning defunct
mythologies to residual surfaces and plotting three-dimensional works in leftover emptiness. Scouting for authenticity, his or her touch seals the fate of what was real, caps it for incorporation in Junkspace. Art galleries move en masse to “edgy” locations, then convert raw space into white cubes . . . The only legitimate discourse is loss; art replenishes Junkspace in direct proportion to its own morbidity. We used to renew what was depleted; now we try to resurrect what is gone . . . Outside, the architect’s footbridge is rocked to the breaking point by a stampede of enthusiastic pedestrians; the designer’s initial audacity now awaits the engineer’s application of dampers. Junkspace is a look-no-hands world . . . The constant threat of virtuality in Junkspace is no longer exorcized by petrochemical products, plastic, vinyl or rubber; the synthetic cheapens. Junkspace has to exaggerate its claims to the authentic. Junkspace is like a womb that organizes the transition of endless quantities of the Real—stone, trees, goods, daylight, people—into the unreal. Entire mountains are dismembered to provide ever-greater quantities of authenticity, suspended on precarious brackets, polished to a blinding state of flash that renders the intended earnestness instantly elusive. Stone only comes in light yellow, flesh, a violent beige, a soaplike green, the colors of Communist plastics in the 1950s. Forests are felled, their wood all pale: maybe the origins of Junkspace go back to the kindergarten . . . (“Origins” is a mint shampoo that stings the anal region.) Color in the real world looks increasingly unreal, drained. Color in virtual space is luminous, therefore irresistible. A surfeit of reality-TV has made us into amateur guards monitoring a Junkuniverse . . . From the lively breasts of the classical violinist to the designer stubble of the Big Brother outcast, the contextual pedophilia of the former revolutionary, the routine addictions of the stars, the runny makeup of the evangelist, the robotic body language of the conductor, the dubious benefits of the fund-raising marathon, the futile explanations of the politician: the swooping movement of the TV camera suspended from its boom—an eagle without beak or claws, just an optical stomach—swallows images and confessions indiscriminately, like a trash bag, to propel them as cybers-vomit in space. TV-studio sets—garishly monumental—are both the culmination and the end of perspectival space as we’ve known it: angular geometric remnants invading starry infinites; real space edited for smooth transmission in virtual space, crucial hinge in an infernal feedback loop . . . the vastness of Junkspace extended to the edges of the Big Bang. Because we spend our life indoors—like animals in a zoo—we are obsessed with the weather: 40 percent of all TV consists of presenters of lesser attractiveness gesturing helplessly in front of windswept formations, through which you recognize, sometimes, your own destination/current position. Conceptually, each monitor, each TV screen is a substitute for a window; real life is inside, while cyberspace has become the great outdoors . . . Mankind is always going on about architecture. What if space started looking at mankind? Will Junkspace invade the body? Through the vibes of the cell phone? Has it already? Through Botox injections? Collagen? Silicone implants? Liposuction? Penis enlargements? Does gene therapy announce a total reengineering according to
Junkspace? Is each of us a mini-construction site? Is mankind the sum of three to five billion individual upgrades? Is it a repertoire of reconfiguration that facilitates the intromission of a new species into its self-made Junksphere? The cosmetic is the new cosmic . . .