

Start with Kant. The proclamation on space and time in the early pages of the first Critique demands a response.

'...it is therefore not merely possible  
 ..or probable  
 ..but indubitably certain'

(You cannot deny the force of these words).

'... that space and time, as the necessary conditions of all inner and outer experience..'

(You can no longer take these terms space and time for granted).

'...are merely subjective conditions of all our intuition.'<sup>1</sup>

And here starts the epistemological revolution. Kant has argued that space and time are not properties of objects, but are conditions of the mind. You have them as pure forms of a priori intuition - and in relation to the conditions of space and time 'all objects are mere appearances'.

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Start with Kant. Lots have, and so did I. But not to explain Kant. I am no Philosopher. My purpose is to solicit philosophers, and in particular philosophers of time, to help me think an aspect of architecture. Philosophy is often used and abused by architectural thinkers and doers. Architecture is sometimes used and abused by philosophers. The two enter into an unholy alliance, each satisfying the other's vanity. Physical constructs propped up by mental tropes; mental constructs illustrated though physical form. Foundations, structures, grounding, constructs ... these words and many more build bridges between architecture and philosophy. It is in language that each finds an analogy with the other, whether that language is one of stability and

<sup>1</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 86. My emphases.

order, or of slippage and ambiguity.<sup>2</sup> It is an analogy based around structure and form (or their lack) at the inevitable expense of content and intent. When best executed, these analogous mechanisms allow each discipline to argue with each other in a stimulating manner,<sup>3</sup> even if that argument remains within self-referential and isolated circles. At worst the analogy is used instrumentally to direct the actions of architecture. It is more than coincidence that the publication of the philosopher Gilles Deleuze's book, *The Fold*, was accompanied by a rash of folded buildings led by Peter Eisenmann's Columbus Convention Centre. The tactics of philosophy are used to direct the form making of architects - and if those tactics have a subversive edge in their undermining of traditional philosophical institutions then it suits those avant-garde architects to analogously claim that subversion as a principle of their own work. Dangerously the work is also often claimed as 'political', but this is in fact an ineffectual game within the politics of form which too easily ignores the redolent politics of space and its occupation.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to an approach which attempts to construct causal links between philosophy and architecture, I prefer to first acknowledge and then exploit the very distinctness of the two disciplines. For me, the most constructive feature of philosophy is the conceptual distance that it can open up between ways of thinking and objects of enquiry. In many cases this distance results in a retreat to noumenal empires, intellectual citadels removed from grounded experience of the world. However, in other cases this distance allows a productive reinscription of the object of enquiry. Philosophy provides the luxury of setting a space to think unburdened by instrumental demands; there is no need for a direct result. However, this is not to say that such thinking cannot structure intent and then action. It is in this mode that I

<sup>2</sup> These ideas are developed in: J. Till, "The Vanity of Form," *The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 1 (1999): 47–54.

<sup>3</sup> The most brilliant recent example is that of Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> This point is well made by Mary McLeod. See Mary McLeod, "Everyday and "Other" Spaces," in Coleman, Danze, and Henderson (ed.s), *Architecture and Feminism* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 5 and Mary McLeod, "Architecture and Politics in the Reagan Era: From Postmodernism to Deconstructivism," *Assemblage* 8 (1989): 22–59.

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attempt to employ some philosophy of time - to help me understand something more about the production of architecture. My intent is not to legitimate an architectural speculation by resorting to philosophical gravitas, nor to scatter uprooted quotations in the hope that they will rub dignity into the surrounding sentences. To repeat, I am no Philosopher and this is not a discourse on the philosophy of time (no Bergson, no Heidegger). I am an architect who sometimes finds the intellectual space away from the demands of architecture a useful and necessary place from which to speculate on the next set of actions.

The making of architecture never follows the simple linear route that the idealists or determinists would have us believe. It is, rather, a constant set of negotiations - between internal intents and external forces, between certitude and chance - in which different modes of working and thinking continuously overlap. It is in this spirit that I approach writing about architecture, deliberately mixing history, criticism, anecdote and unsupported speculation. Buried within it all is the work of certain philosophers, sometimes brought consciously to the surface but more often lying within as a latent force guiding the direction of the text. In accepting the spirit of chance, I am not bothered in the knowledge that this essay would have been quite different if I had packed, say, Heidegger and Marx rather than Joyce and Lefebvre in my summer holiday suitcase. Writing about architecture should never aspire to be fully prescriptive or definitive because the production of architecture in its very contingency resists the imposition of direct prescription. This essay makes no claim to proposing a theory. To do so would only maintain the false distinction between theory and practice, a distinction which proposes that there can be theories of architecture which might administer the practice of architecture. Instead my hope is to suggest a way of thinking which is theoretical and practical at the same time.

## FROZEN TIME

*'Can't bring back time. Like holding water in your hand'.*

*- James Joyce, Ulysses*

Back to Kant. Prompt a way of thinking to react with or against.

‘... that space and time, as the necessary conditions of all inner and outer experience.’

For Kant, as with others before and after, space and time are essential conditions of experience, and with this status they are raised to become central philosophical categories. Space and Time. Time and Space. Dependently joined and so when artificially separated always wanting.

Of the two categories it is space which architecture has most commonly appropriated into its own discourse, often in a manner which conflates space as a philosophical category with space as an architectural phenomenon. Space in architecture is often thought of, thought through, as abstract matter, there to be pushed and pulled in accordance with the genius of the architect. The standard words of architectural discourse give it all away - layered space, folded space, negative space - all these determine space as a kind of formal stuff. In this abstraction, space is detached from its historical and social constitution and thereby divorced from its essential connectedness with time. It is an abstraction that is inscribed in the chosen methods of architectural representation, the plan and section, described by one philosopher/architect as 'absolutely barbarous things for measuring space because they do not measure time'.<sup>5</sup> Architectural space, in the purity of its formal and conceptual genesis, is emptied of all considerations of time and is seen as a formal and aesthetic object. Time is frozen out or, rather, time is frozen. But this act is not an oversight, a mere forgetting of time. More it is an active defence against ‘the terror of time’.<sup>6</sup>

Le Corbusier knew exactly what he was doing in arranging loaves and fishes into miraculous domestic arrangements in the photographs of the early villas. Freeze life, freeze time, control time. It is a control which attempts to banish those elements of time which present a challenge to the immutable authority of architecture. Time is defeated by removing from it the most dangerous (but also of course most essential) element, that of flux. Conditions of cyclical time (seasons, night, weather) or linear

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5 Paul Virilio, "Gravitational Space," interview by L.Loupe, in Paul Virilio, *Traces Of Dance*, ed. Laurence Loupe, illustrated ed. (Paris: Dis Voir, 1994), 35.

6 Karsten Harries, "Building and the Terror of Time," *Perspecta* 19 (1982): 52–69.

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time (programmatic change, dirt, ageing, social drift) are either denied or manipulated to organise Harries' 'defence against the terror of time... to abolish time within time'.<sup>7</sup> Contemporary production of architecture thus presents the paradigm of architecture captured at an idealised moment of conception. Take those pictures of buildings caught perfectly before people, dirt, rain and history move in; since the beginning of the twentieth century it is these pictures which have framed a history of architecture in both its production and reproduction - a history, in which architecture is seen to be a stable power, existing over the dynamic forces of time.

It is in the rhetoric and work of the hi-tech movement that these attitudes to the control of time can be most clearly identified. As we shall see, the hi-tech protagonists in a pincer movement deny cyclical time on the one hand and control linear time on the other. Whilst these actions follow modernist tenets, they are, in the hi-tech movement, provided with an additional and decisive weapon, that of technology.

In order to defeat the cyclical time of days, seasons and years, shiny, hard, immutable surfaces are employed to shrug off the effects of weather, dirt and accident. One of my favourite photographs is of two full-size prototype panels hanging from a crane in the barren landscape of the London Docklands. One panel is made of stainless steel, the other of granite; otherwise they are identical. In front stand the clients and architects of the future Canary Wharf tower; they are here to choose between the two materials. They look as if they are shuffling their feet with indecision, but in fact the choice must be clear. Leave the granite for the ground hugging neoclassical stuff below. This is a tower which defies nature's forces (wind, gravity, seasons); it has to be clad in radiant steel. Later there is that moment when the building is under construction and the panels still covered in blue plastic; a shrink wrapped tower. I announce my yearning to have the job of peeling back that tight layer to reveal the glorious, shiny, tower beneath. 'Fetishist', my friends say. 'Exactly', I respond - because only through the fetish of the surface is the illusion of the control of cyclical time maintained. There is here a debt to Corbusier's *Law of Ripolin* ('there are no more dirty, dark corners.... on white walls these accretions of

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7 Ibid., 65.

dead things from the past world would be intolerable; they would leave a stain'<sup>8</sup>) but technology has moved on, whitewash has given way to metals and plastics. In this progression, we lose the connection that Le Corbusier made between the visual purity of the whitewash and the moral purity of the whitewashed spaces ('whitewash exists wherever people have preserved intact the balanced structure of a harmonious culture'<sup>9</sup>). The hi-tech surfaces are justified in terms of their technological and aesthetic prowess rather than their social resonances.

In the reduction of hi-tech to an aesthetic, the main emphasis is not so much that the buildings should *actually* deny cyclical time, but that they should look as if they could. It is clear that these hi-tech boys (for so they are) have never done the cleaning; any common sense would tell them that the shinier surface the more apparent the dirt, the tarnish, the changes. It was when cleaning cradles hunched over the top of buildings became an aesthetic in their own right<sup>10</sup> that the problem became most absurdly apparent. The cleaning cradles, or the spectacle of trained mountaineers clambering in specially developed suckered boots over I.M. Pei's Louvre Pyramid with polishing clothes, are essential in maintaining the *illusion* that architecture can stand outside the ravages of time. In fact they are just signals of the ensnarement of technological determinism, in which technology has moved from being a means to an end to being an end in its own right, one technology (the cradle) attempting to solve a condition created by another technology (the shiny surface) without questioning the efficacy of technology in the first place.

Behind the surfaces, environmental systems are used to master the effects of diurnal and seasonal cycles. Heat, light and coolth are deployed to contrive an even sense of time over and above external rhythms, building management systems operating unseen in the background to maintain constancy. The contemporary fashion for presenting hi-tech buildings as computer rendered nocturnal images brings with it a covert sense that these buildings and their technologies (representational and real) are even capable of standing in the face of that oldest dread of all, that of night.

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8 Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today* (London: Architectural Press, 1987), 188.

9 Ibid., 190.

10 Most famously in Richard Rogers and Partners' Lloyds Building, London.

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When it comes to the linear time of history, the technology of hi-tech architecture is used to control time. In the late twentieth century the progressive claims of hi-tech and the reactive claims of the traditionalists are two sides of the same coin, joined by an attitude that architecture can reify a particular condition of time, and in this reification freeze it. The traditionalists' abrupt appropriation of past architectural figures attempts to summon up in an instant an aesthetic, and with it the values attached to that aesthetic. Just add people to these perfected images and the hope is that they will assume the virtues of that frozen moment in time. Princely Poundbury is the most explicit example of attempt to conjoin moral and aesthetic values, conveniently forgetting the feudal systems which developed those values in the first place whilst busily worrying over the civic choice of lampposts. But like all instant mixes ('just add water') the result can never match the complexity of the original, particularly when the original is subject to all the dynamics of time. Time, as Joyce reminds us, is too slippery to recreate. ('Can't bring back time. Like holding water in your hand'.)

Where the traditionalists yearn fruitlessly for the instant of a lost age, the hi-tech movement is, they tell us, summoning up an instant of the immediate future. This is indicative of a more general tendency of nineteenth and twentieth century modernity, namely its ability to see itself in specific relation to other epochs. Modernity is not merely placed 'in a linear sequence of chronological time', but assumes a transcendence over the past and with this 'a reorientation towards the future.'<sup>11</sup> One of the results of this rupturing is that time is divided into discrete epochs, each of which becomes available for isolated representation, torn from a dynamic continuity. For hi-tech architecture, this time is one of a historicist lineage of progress, a determinist series of discrete moments, the next one of which architecture assumes the right to express in a gesture of formal and technological progression.

There is much talk of buildings expressing the spirit of the age, and technology is employed to do this job. Technology is deployed as an emblem of newness; progress is announced through the development of ever more refined joints, ever more complex systems, ever more shiny surfaces. In much hi-tech rhetoric this projection

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11 Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time* (London: Verso, 1995), 9.

towards a reified future takes on a crusading cant; it becomes a moral necessity for architecture to stand for the next epoch. In fact such representation is simply an aestheticisation of frozen time. Thus the architect Jean Nouvel can state that 'the capacity for capturing or freezing the values concealed in a specific moment, that is the power of architecture'. But this power is illusory. However much one burnishes the surface, sharpens the technique - actions that are becoming increasingly frantic as we approach that great moment of time, the millennium (now that's a big one to freeze) - time slips in round the back to disrupt those static perfections.

When Bruno Schulz implores 'don't tamper with time', he might be speaking directly to these cryonic architects.

'Keep off time, time is untouchable, one must not provoke it! Isn't it enough for you to have space? Space is for human beings, you can swing about in space, turn somersaults, fall down, jump from star to star. But for goodness' sake, don't tamper with time'.<sup>12</sup>

And yet architects persist in denying this irrepressible force, believing that time can be held within architecture either technically or representationally. Of the canonic hi-tech buildings, it is perhaps the Piano and Rogers' Beauborg Centre that has most majestically tried to fly in the face of time. Just twenty years after its completion, the building is now closed for restoration, shrouded in the manner of the great cathedrals; a fitting tribute to a magnificent old new building. When shrouds are lifted from the cathedrals there is sense of certainty that what will be revealed is a restoration; restoration to the original historic state and restoration to a better condition. With Beauborg the expectation of what should be revealed is less certain. The collapse of the restorative time scale to twenty years confuses our sense of where the building stands in time. The confusion is heightened by the intentional model of time that is built into Beauborg; it is meant to be able to accommodate change, announcing its flexibility brashly through the aesthetic of frame and parts. And so when the shroud is dropped, would it be more authentic to reveal a completely different set of forms within the overall frame or should a heritage notion of authenticity force a return to the building's primal state?

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12 Bruno Schulz, *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass* (London: Picador, 1987), 131.

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The answer may be found in the reaction to a previous modification. When Gae Aulenti took the flexibility rhetoric at face value and moved in a container for the modern art collection, the building and its supporters fought back. Aulenti's enclosed spaces and fixed white walls were seen as a betrayal of the openness and transparency of the host building. The attack and its implications were ruthless; the building may be flexible but only in a certain kind of way. Of course issues of style were at stake as well, but what becomes apparent is not so much that the building is really flexible but that it is seen to be flexible. Beauborg thus represents a single moment in time, reifying the condition of flux that was seen to be the identifying feature of the contemporary world in which the building was conceived. This reinforces an iconic reading of Beauborg, fitting it neatly into a genealogy of monumentalist time in which buildings are suspended above the passage of real time.

And yet when the shrouds come down, one thing is for sure: Beauborg will be cleaner. And another thing is equally sure: that cleanliness will invoke a feeling of helplessness in that there is a certainty that time will once again rush in to upset the hygienic image of renewedness.

There is always a tension between what architecture thinks itself to be and what it actually is. In the case of Beauborg and the times it is meant to hold, but is manifestly held by, this tension stretches - but never breaks - the building. It remains magnificent not because of its original iconic status, but despite it as time surges up to reformulate the building. However, in order to accept this reformulation not as an affront to the authority of architecture but rather as something positive, one has to reverse an equation: not to see time as held in architecture but to see architecture in time. In this latter spirit, I am secretly hoping that when those shrouds come down, they will have put a few of those pipes into sensible square ducts.

#### THICK TIME

*'Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past.'*

- James Joyce, *Ulysses*

Back to Kant. For the last time. He starts his explanation of time in *The Critique of Pure Reason* with the words: 'Time is not an empirical concept derived from any experience'.<sup>13</sup> These words fly in the face of what we perceive to be a common sense notion that time is a condition of the world, understood through experience of the world. Kant, however argues against the idea that 'time inheres in things'. For him, time is not a property of objects but a form of intuition - with regard to time, the intuition of an object is not 'not to be looked for in the object itself but in the subject to which the object appears.' It is the autonomous subject who brings representations of time to the world and not vice-versa. Because the subject 'really has representations of time and determinations of it', time can be represented 'prior to objects and therefore *a priori*.' Time for Kant, is thus 'form of knowledge' which comes prior to our experience of the world. The rational mind actively constitutes the temporality of the world and its objects.

Any attempt to lay the precision of Kant's arguments over the rough carcass of architecture is doomed to clumsy failure and I would be the last to find causal links between Kantian notions of time and the conceit of modernist architects in freezing time. But, however subliminally, a powerful legacy of the Enlightenment endures, the legacy of the rational subject asserting prior knowledge over experience of the world. A legacy of a strange power of mind over matter. In its degraded form (without the firm hand of Kant to guide us) this power of mind over matter transpires as a conceit, but it is a conceit that has allowed the architect to maintain an illusion of buildings existing over time in the bitter face of the reality of time. To overcome this conceit demands a reversal of the Kantian equation - to dismiss any a priori notions of time and accept that our knowledge of time is a product of our experience of time in an acknowledgement of time as a condition which 'exceeds and precedes all constitutive activity of the self'.<sup>14</sup> One's experience of the world is radically affected by different modalities of time. In this light time (in all its guises) is apprehended not as an

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<sup>13</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 74. All subsequent quotes are from pp.74-78.

<sup>14</sup> Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 45.

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abstraction to be intellectually ordered, but as a phenomenological immediacy to be engaged with at a human and social level. Bodies, and the buildings that they inhabit, exist within time, and so an understanding of the temporality of human existence - of time as lived - provides clues as to how to approach the temporality of architecture.<sup>15</sup>

It is the work of a novelist rather than a philosopher that most acutely describes time as lived and the impossibility of placing it into a neat set of categories. In *Ulysses*, James Joyce weaves threads of epic time (the time of the Homeric Gods), natural cyclical time (the rivers, the shifting sands), historical cyclical time (the repetitive sense of Ireland's identity), linear historical time (the particular chronological response to colonisation), personal time (Joyce's own life reinscribed in the pages), fuzzy time (memories snatched), focused time (the endless newspapers), their future time, my future time (when will I finish it?)... and so on and on. The relationship of these threads is always restless, so that no one temporal modality predominates over the others. It is not, as is implied in many phenomenological philosophies of time, a matter of the present being held in the thrall of the past, but the two co-existing in a coincident, continually evolving relationship - a present in which the anticipation of the future is always at hand ('Coming events cast their shadows before them', muses Bloom). *Ulysses* invokes a sense of time not as a series of successive slices of instants,<sup>16</sup> but as an expanded present.<sup>17</sup> Thick Time. It is a present that gathers the past and pregnantly holds the future, but not in an easy linear manner ('Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past.')

Time in *Ulysses* is revealed through the literary device of the epiphany, 'the moment in which the soul of the commonest object seems to us radiant' in a sudden

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15 Whilst the most famous phenomenological exposition of time remains Heidegger's *Being and Time*, the more immediately relevant for my purposes is Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (University of Chicago Press, 1988) with its thinking through the tension between the individual time of the soul (in all its phenomenological richness) and the universal time of the world (in all its cosmological significance). See especially pp.12-23. His important exposition shows how historical time, as narrative, has mediated this tension. See also Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 45-48.

16 A definition first proposed by Aristotle and persistent ever since.

17 See: Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, vol. 2nd (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 86.

'revelation of the whatness of the thing'.<sup>18</sup> These epiphanies in all their immediate ordinariness, but eventual complexity, give to *Ulysses* a concentration on the everyday as the place of extraordinarily productive potential. Time, for Joyce, inheres in the commonplace objects and situations of Dublin (a reversal, remember of Kant's argument that time does not inhere in things). Joyce's time, as he follows Bloom, Dedalus and their friends through the streets of Dublin, is the time of the everyday, but it is by no means ordinary, summoning up as it does the richness of multiple and coincident modes of time. Normally everyday time is seen to be subsumed by more ascendant temporal modes - thus the linear time of progress in its concentration on the iconic, the one-off, has no place for the quotidian. Joyce's triumph is contextualise these other modes of time through the everyday. In *Ulysses* other times are seen through, and thereby reformulated by, everyday time.

Joyce's time elides with the philosophical readings of everyday time. In these what is stressed is the way that everyday is subject to constant repetitions and cycles,<sup>19</sup> but is also open to randomness and chance. The everyday is the result of 'a myriad repetitive practices',<sup>20</sup> and thus accumulates traces of the past, but in its very incompleteness is always accessible to reformulation and thus orientated towards the future. It is thus the place where 'the riddle of recurrence intercepts the theory of becoming.'<sup>21</sup>

It is the anticipation of action that most clearly identifies the thick time of the everyday. The traditionalists are swayed by the siren chants of repetition and the progressivists caught within the tramlines of linear history; in both cases the next step is implicitly given and, in the end, uncritical. In thick time, however, there is an

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18 James Joyce, as quoted in Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 83.

19 'The everyday is 'situated at the intersection of two modes of repetition: the cyclical, which dominates in nature, and the linear, which dominates in processes known as "rational".' Henri Lefebvre, "The Everyday and Everydayness," *Yale French Studies* 73 (1987): 10.

20 Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, 196.

21 Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1984), 18.

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openness to action which in gathering the past and projecting the future, is necessarily interpretative of both conditions.

Everyday time is thick time, that time of the extended present which avoids mere repetition of past times or the instant celebration of new futures. Thick time is where the interception of recurrence and becoming provides the space for action.

## TRACING TIME

In this short journey from abstracted notions of time to grounded, messy readings of the everyday, space has slipped unnoticed into argument. I could not have kept it out. Space and Time. Time and Space. Dependently joined and so when artificially separated always wanting (each other).

*Ulysses* is also the story of a city, Dublin, whose stones, waters, sands and airs spatialise time. And so, following Joyce, I will let time enter my spaces, but only that thick time of the everyday. It is a time which will disrupt the iconic, perfected autonomy of the frozen building, not just in terms of weather and dirt, but in terms of those repetitive, habitual, actions so overlooked by architects clinging to illusions of a detached monumental time. It is a time which accommodates all those smoking travellers who, on each occasion that they return to Paris, ride to the top of the Beauborg escalators (together with all those non-smokers). They stub their cigarettes out in the raised perforated pipes which by now have long lost their heating function and become extended ashtrays - pipes which have become one of many traces of habitual actions which have imploded<sup>22</sup> any notions of the canonic to reveal a reading of Beauborg as the ultimate building of the everyday.

Of course, this thick time has always been around, secreting into those gaps left by the delusion of abstracted, static, spaces existing beyond the tides of time. Secreted but not secret, because these redolent spaces are now legible for interpretation of those past actions, those traces of time that have passed through. Temporised space is thus revealed as a socially constituted construct.

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22 Baudrillard talks of this implosion in Jean Baudrillard, "The Beauborg Effect", in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1997), 210–218.

And the debt is repaid. In spatialising time, architecture and the city restores a thinking to time: that most volatile of conditions is given presence in space and through this can be read in all its coincident forms. This reading occurs in an expanded present where the past can never be rested as a perfected moment of tradition ready for restitution. In thick time, the architect of the here and now casts a critical eye to the previous spatial configurations of control and domination whilst at the same time formulating the redemptive potential of a possible future. Through its grounding in an extended present, this spatial future will not be disturbed by the influx and flux of time, but will sustain all those conflicting conditions (of occupational change, of 'weathering as completion'<sup>23</sup>, of indeterminate manoeuvres, of habitual actions) that everyday time brings with it.

## POSTSCRIPT: DIRTY TIME.

I want to end with a story. I like stories. They bear retelling. Stories have a levity which allows adaptation to the time of telling, as opposed to histories which still bear the weight of fixed authority.

The story is of James Joyce. He spends Christmas, the last before he dies, in Switzerland. His host is the architectural writer Siegfried Giedion. The manuscript for *Space, Time and Architecture*, is complete, holding time in images and words. (This much is true, even history; it is December 1940).<sup>24</sup>

The author of unstable time sits with the documenter of frozen time. They discuss moving to some neighbouring new houses designed, all white and neat, by Marcel Breuer. Joyce is resistant to the move, pointing to the 'fine walls and

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23 Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow, *On Weathering* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993), 45.

24 The story is retold in Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 740. The dirt quote is also 'true'. *Space, Time and Architecture*, was based on the Norton lectures at Harvard 1938-39, and first published in 1941. One of many examples of Giedion's attitude to time, and in particular its aestheticisation through the rationality of architecture is his description of the staircase at the Werkbund as 'like movement seized and immobilized in space'. See also: Jeremy Till, "Architecture in Space, Time," in *Architecture and Anthropology*, ed. Claire Melhuish (Academy Editions, November 1996), 12-16.

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windows' of the traditional house they are sitting in, fire blazing. At the same time he mocks the Swiss fixation with cleanliness and order - a fixation that both Giedion in his writing and his compatriot Breuer in his buildings express through the triumphant power of modernism to banish time and stains.

'You don't know how wonderful dirt is', says Joyce to Giedion.

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It is as if these words were transmitted to Breuer.

As an ageing man, carrying the traces of time,

Breuer builds the De Bijenkorf Department Store in Rotterdam.

Dirty, thick, time.



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