Architecture as a Technology of Framing Experience: Camera Obscura, Camp, and the Confessional

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FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

By

V. Şafak Uysal
March, 2009

I certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art, Design and Architecture.

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Approved by the Institute of Fine Arts

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Prof. Dr. Bülent Özgüç, Director of the Institute of Fine Arts

to merci (1999-2009),
whose presence have framed the durée of my graduate years,
and whose traces will remain with me for years to come...

ABSTRACT

**Architecture as a Technology of Framing Experience:
Camera Obscura, Camp, and the Confessional**

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March, 2009

Throughout architectural history, the problematic of experience is mostly addressed within the confines of either deterministic or phenomenological models. Bound as they are, however, to the transcendental coordinates of a founding structure and a self-contained subject figure, neither one of these models seems to provide us with the necessary tools of engaging with the transgressive aspects of experience in general or architectural experience in particular. Beginning with the problem of how architecture can be said to effect the experience of its subjects, the dissertation aims at gaining an insight into the constructive capacity and functioning of architecture as a technology of framing, whereby the subject's relation to environment, to other subjects, and to oneself can be addressed. In order to do this, the author first traces the constituent elements of a so-called "science of experience," an experiontology, throughout the historiographic work of Michel Foucault. Developing a composite framework as such, which facilitates a historico-critical analysis of the work of architecture in relation to the formation and transformation of experiential structures, the author thus identifies the logic of experience as a process of desubjectification at work in and through the triplicate domains of epistemology, politics, and ethics. Once the terms of this logic are tested and further enhanced through the analyses of three environmental formations – namely, the camera obscura, the camp, and the confessional – what is arrived at is a veritable relationship between architecture and experience in the neighborhood of the categories of error, resistance, and interiority of the self. The result is a recognition of architecture as an art of organization of bodily encounters, in accordance with which the architectural frame becomes the condition of possibility for the production and reproduction of novel corporealities.

KEY WORDS: Architecture, Experience, Frame, Technology, Spatial Studies, Critique.

ÖZET

Bir Deneyim Çerçeveleme Teknolojisi Olarak Mimarlık:
Karanlık Oda, Kamp, ve Günah Çıkarma Odası

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Mart, 2009

Deneyim sorunsalı mimarlık tarihi boyunca sıklıkla ya belirlenimci ya da görüngüsel modeller dahilinde ele alınagelmiştir. Ancak bu modellerin her ikisi de, kurucu bir yapının ve kendinden menkul bir özne figürünün aşkın koordinatlarına bağımlı kaldıklarından dolayı, genel olarak deneyimin ya da özel olarak mimari deneyimin dönüştürücü boyutlarıyla temas edebilmemiz için gerekli araçları sağlamakta yetersiz kalmaktadır. Mimarinin deneyim üzerinde nasıl bir etkisi olduğu probleminden yola çıkan bu çalışma ise, bir yandan mimarinin yapıcı/kurucu kapasitesi ve işleyişine, öte yandan da öznenin çevresiyle, diğer öznelerle ve kendisiyle girdiği ilişkilere hitap eden bir farkındalık geliştirebilmeyi amaçlar. Yazar, bunu yapmak için, öncelikli olarak Michel Foucault'nun tarihyazımı çalışmaları boyunca, "deneyimbilim" olarak adlandırılabilecek bir yaklaşımın bileşenlerinin izlerini sürer. Bu bileşik çerçeve, bir yandan yaşantısal yapıların oluşumu ve dönüşümü ile mimarlık arasındaki ilişki bağlamında tarihsel-eleştirel bir analiz yürütmemizi kolaylaştırır. Öte yandan da, deneyimin ardında yatan mantığı -- epistemolojik, politik ve etik bağlamlarda işlemekte olan bir kişi(siz)leştirme sürecine referansla – tarif edebilmemizi sağlar. Bu mantık, üç ayrı çevresel formasyonun – karanlık oda, kamp, ve günah çıkarma odası – karşılaştırmalı analizi bağlamında geliştirilir ve sonunda mimarlık ile deneyim arasında, hata, direniş, ve kendilik kategorileri komşuluğunda cisim kazanan bir ilişki tarif eder hale gelir. Bütün bunların sonucunda mimarlık, bedensel karşılaşmalar organize eden bir sanat olarak karşımıza çıkarken mimari çerçeve ise, yeni yaşam formları ve repertuarlarının üretilmesi ve yeniden üretilmesinde kritik bir rol üstlenen bir "olabilirlik koşulu" niteliği kazanır.

KEY WORDS: Mimarlık, Deneyim, Çerçeve, Teknoloji, Mekan Araştırmaları, Eleştiri.

PREFACE

> It would probably not be worth the trouble of making books if they failed to teach the author something he had not known before, if they did not lead to unforeseen places, and if they did not disperse one toward a strange and new relation with himself. The pain and pleasure of the book is to be an experience. (Foucault, "Preface to THS, Vol.2," 1997, p. 205)

I started this study with the intention of being able to articulate a veritable relationship between architecture and vision, space and visuality. At the time, there was already a wealth of critical interest in vision and visual technologies.[1] What all these diverse enterprises ultimately underlined was the fact that an act as simple as looking was always already impregnated with undeniable and complex charges. It was apparent that vision could not be approached as if it was a natural faculty, devoid of historical and cultural mediation (Brennan & Jay, 1996). It was also apparent that visual technologies, as the means of such mediation, had a more extensive impact on our everyday modes of existence than it was readily acknowledged (Crary, 1988); and so did different "scopic regimes," understood as historical and cultural manifestations of different ways of seeing (Jay, 1988). My intention was to carry such lessons of the field of vision and visuality

[1] The field of vision and visuality had been drawing significant attention in the humanities, especially once the phenomena was aptly named as the "visual turn" of the twentieth century (Mitchell, 1995; Jay, 2002). A number of research fields such as critical theory, gender studies, film studies, and art history, as well as the newly-coined interdisciplinary areas of visual studies and visual culture, had already been throwing light on the complications of the issue at hand ("Visual Culture Questionnaire," 1996). While an extensive amount of literature emphasized the hegemonic and objectifying properties of vision (by focusing issues like ocularcentrism, surveillance, and the gaze), another branch was already in search not only of alternative ways of seeing, but also of alternatives to these alternatives themselves (Berger, 1977; Bryson, 1983; Rose, 1986; Foster, 1988; Crary, 1990; Krauss, 1993; Levin, 1993; Jay, 1994).

into the study of architecture. It was therefore necessary for me to engage with this already existing literature at a deeper level, with the hope of finding an echo in the context of architecture and architectural criticism.

What made the situation even more intriguing was the fact that this was not to be a one-way transfer but a two-way exchange, for architecture had a lot to offer visual studies as well.[2] Especially focusing on the modern era, scholarship coming immediately before and after Beatriz Colomina's *Privacy and Publicity* added a lot to a conception of the role of vision and visual technologies as central to the production and reception of architecture (Bois, 1987; Teyssot, 1990; Vidler, 1992 and 1993; Macarthur, 1996; Zimmerman, 2004). Although most of the critical work had adopted an admonitory perspective,[3] it was obvious that earlier engagements were more on the side of celebration.[4] Enriched even more by recent works like those of Bruno (1993; 2002), Schwarzer (2004), Friedberg (1993; 2002; 2006), Borden (2007), and the like, it was obvious that structural affinities and antagonisms between the spatial and the visual, the haptic and

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[2] From the early modern practices onwards, spatial practices had their own heritage of engaging not only with sight, but also with the alluring and threatening potential of visual technologies and imagery. From outside the field, Michel Foucault had already depicted architecture as a visibility machine in *Discipline and Punish* (1979), and inspired an avalanche of scholarly work that located architecture within a visual economy charged with power relations. About a little more than a decade later, the pioneer work that re-set the watermark from within the field was Beatriz Colomina's "The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism" (1992a) and *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (1994). The former work investigated the logic of gendered gaze in modern domestic space (as it took shape in the works of Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier) and the latter focused on modern architecture's intricate relationship with photography and film (so as ultimately to turn into media itself). Colomina's continuous interest in architecture's relationship to photography, film, and media could be followed through several texts (1987; 1995; 1999; 2001). Her edited volume *Sexuality and Space* (1992), with contributions by various other well-established figures in the field (such as Meaghan Morris, Laura Mulvey, Victor Burgin, Elizabeth Grosz, and Mark Wigley), introduces a number of visual and sexual categories into the discussion of politics of architectural space for the first time. For a comprehensive summary of, and a response to, issues brought about by *Sexuality and Space*, see Bruno (1992). For an overall evaluation of contemporary architectural theory's relation to media, also see Hays (1995).

[3] Such as: Jameson's critique of how photography privileges images over the experience of buildings (1994), or Pallasmaa's denigration of the hegemony of vision in architecture (1996), etc.

[4] Such as: the enthusiasm of early modern architects about film, epitomized by Gieidon's exclamations about film's singular capacity to make the new architecture intelligible (1995); the enthusiasm of the theoreticians of modernity such as Benjamin in the face of parallels between film and architecture ("The Work of Art," 1999, pp. 211-244); and the genealogical relationship between architecture and the moving image, as pondered upon by Sergei Eisenstein's "Montage and Architecture" early in the century (1989), etc.

the optic were demarcating a ground ripe with endless possibilities.[5]

Despite the enormous contributions of all this extensive literature in broadening the repertory of architectural history and criticism proper, there still were a number of dispositions that I did not feel exactly comfortable with – such as the distance between professional and academic professional practice in contemporary architectural culture; the overall inclination to take architecture as a representational system; the still-effectual tendency to ground the discussion in the revolutionary genius or ideological weaknesses of a master architect, manifest as it is in particular architectural "works"; or the easy incorporation of convenient neologisms like "disembodied eye" or "Cartesian perspectivalism" into critical lexicon without rigorous scrutiny, etc.[6] In a way, architectural criticism's inability to go beyond the vocabulary of other, already existing critical frameworks somehow seemed to me to obstruct its ability to probe questions relevant to its own field of study. Instead of being satisfied with a so-called "application" of other theoretical models on the architectural work, I wanted to respond to the necessity of addressing *questions concerning architecture* themselves: What is the logic behind architecture? What does architecture show us that the other disciplines or practices do not? *Not* what architecture essentially is, but what architecture essentially is capable of, and so on.

With all these concerns and questions in mind, I rather intuitively decided to

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[5] Two very recent collections covering this fertile terrain are: the special issue of *The Journal of Architecture*, titled "Visualising the City," edited by Marcus (2006b); and the special issue of *Architectural Theory Review*, titled "Spaces of Vision: Architecture and Visuality in the Modern Era," edited by Özkaya (2007) – especially Derieu (2007), Massey (2007), and McEven (2007). Also see Özkaya's "Visuality and Architectural History" (2006).

[6] *Oppositions* and *Assemblage* are the two leading publication venues that have been instrumental, throughout 1970s to 1990s, in both raising and problematizing such tendencies in architectural theory and criticism. Exemplary deployments of vision and visuality in an architectural context can be found in Slutzky (1980); Bergren (1990), Friedman (1992), Holm (1992), El-Dahdah (1995), and Hartoonian (2001). Schwarzer (1990) provides a concise comparison of the editorial policies of these two journals, alongside others. The implications and major premises of "Cartesian perspectivalism" can be found in Jay (1988). For a warning against and away from any tendency to conflate Cartesian rationalism with perspectivalism, see Crary (1990; chap. 2) and Massey (1997).

concentrate on *camera obscura* as an object of study.[7] Because of its multifaceted history that denied any original point of invention, it was not the product of a single master architect but an anonymous diagram with its own singular history. An architecture without an architect, which functioned perhaps like the condition of possibility for other, say, "proper" works of architecture, so to speak... Therefore, tackling with the systemic properties of the camera as a technology – not simply as a technological instrument but also as an architectural configuration where bodies and visions are fabricated – seemed to be an appropriate starting point and an aesthetico-political challenge. Following such line of thought, I identified my central problem to be *the relation between architecture and image-production technologies*, and concentrated on the camera as a primordial model in order to be able to extract a structural logic behind its operation, as an abstract architectural machine.[8]

But, as I continued studying, complications kept on. Two most important complexities

[7] The specific reasons behind this decision were two-fold. I was convinced that, while heavily scrutinizing vision and visibility, critical inquiry itself had been very much dazzled by the visual, to the point of forgetting the site of its production – the fact that the image was something physically produced. The dark room, in this regard, was not only bearing witness to the material workings of a visual technology on the one hand, but was also an as much architectural configuration (i.e. a chamber), on the other. So, it was located right at the intersection of architectural and visual practices as this awry object of an as much awry way of studying architectural history – miles away from conventional questions of architectural style and periodization.

[8] Though charged with transhistorical and formalist premises, this scheme was further complicated by my observation that such wedlock between architecture and image-production had come to somewhat of an end with advances in non-photographic imaging technologies – i.e. X-ray, ultrasonography, radar, etc. It was true that the "discovery" of linear perspective in fifteenth century Renaissance was the beginning of a long period in history throughout which a theory of seeing (optics) and a method of visual representation (perspective) had become indistinguishable (Veltman, 1992). Camera obscura had provided this rather mathematical and instrumental coupling with a suitable and material home environment. But it was also true that, even if they resulted in a visual output, various forms of medical and military imaging technologies – which primarily relied on non-visual (i.e. electromagnetic, sonic, thermal) input for collecting data – were making their appearance in the scene at the end of nineteenth century (Virilio, 1994). The transition towards "new media" was intensified more and more so as to arrive at an almost full completion somewhere in the middle of twentieth century (Manovich, 2001). Seeing and representation were, even if not completely distinct throughout all facets of everyday life, at least distinguishable again. So, I had one indicator of collapse and another one of bifurcation that together marked nothing less than the beginning and end points of a "period." The real question then became one of recognizing in camera the very paradigm of a historically specific form of seeing and, if possible, building – which could roughly be associated with what went by the name "modern," even if this narrative did not particularly conform with traditional accounts of "modern architecture" as an early-twentieth-century phenomenon.

were related with the status of the dark room within a socio-cultural context; and both rival explanations came from Jonathan Crary's well-known study on modernity and vision, *Techniques of the Observer* (1990). Out of these two,[9] more challenging was the way in which Crary located the camera obscura model in a rather more general knowledge economy, rather than a strictly visual economy. The camera was special not simply as a visual instrument (about this, I was in full agreement); but it was special as an instrument of knowledge (about this, I was puzzled at best). In short, it effected not only how the observer saw the world, but more importantly how the observer developed a knowledge of the world. More than being an optical instrument, the camera was an epistemological machine – an "epistemology engine" as another author would call it (Ihde, 2000). In my framework, this meant attributing to architecture a prominent role in mediating the human subject's relation with the environment not only at a visual level but at a deeper epistemological level.[10]

It gradually became apparent that I was confronted by a much larger task. The subject's knowledge-based relation to its environment was only one part of a bigger picture. The real question was related with the limits of possible experience in general.[11] Up until this point, where epistemology came into view, I was relying on a rather more

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[9] One of these was related with periodization: Crary made clear that the narrative of camera obscura model of vision was not as continuous as it was supposed since it was challenged by another model of subjective vision at the beginning of nineteenth century; so, the dark room represented a rather more classical model of vision, instead of modern vision. Although demanding some revision, this new bit of information did not require from me to thoroughly dispense with my whole argument.

[10] Although not totally unaware of this epistemological dimension, I was under the influence of a rather more psychoanalytical account of vision at the time, which placed the emphasis on the formation of human subjectivity and on the workings of the symbolic when it came to visual matters (Silverman, 1996 & 2000). Of course this formation process had its epistemological implications, but did not centralize it – or even if it did, I had not capitalized this connection until then, in the specific context of my own inquiry.

[11] To make a few points clear: I had already been using the word "experience" ever since my first formulations – one of my tentative subtitles was "The Camera as the Paradigm of Modern Experience." But my appropriation of the word was rather in the fashion of a vague theme back then. The "demise" or "poverty of experience," as it is called (Agamben, 1993; Jay, 2005), was not a central problematic but an unqualified and taken-for-granted backdrop issue that only involved one of my side arguments, taken up in the context of modernity in general. I was accepting this demise at face value, and even making it the ground of quite large-scale deductions and claims that went so far as conceiving the camera to be something that marked the spirit of an entire age, which has been turning us all into "witnesses."

phenomenological understanding of experience, based on Gestalt psychotherapy (Pearls 1973; Polster & Polster, 1973) – "lived experience," so to speak, from the point of view of the living subject. But with the introduction of the field of knowledge, it became apparent that something else was at stake – I try to explicate this "something else" in Chapter Two. I also came to realize that there were, in addition to subject's relation to his/her environment, at least two more relations to take into account in order for me to be able to situate my discussion around the problematic of experience. These two relations were: the subject's relation to other subjects and the subject's relation to oneself. But, to do justice to this sort of a questioning on all three lanes, I was not appropriately equipped. I fortunately had some gear, yet I still had to be discontent.

So, I eventually began reformulating my problem around *architecture's relation to experience* and started to look for: (1) other diagrams that would allow me to elaborate further on the other two aspects of experience – namely, the subject's relation to other subjects and to oneself; and (2) a rather more consistent methodological framework that provided me with the necessary tools of analyzing these diagrams and their experiential functioning. To cut it short: I arrived at, or rather turned back to, Michel Foucault – for reasons, and in ways, that I will hopefully be able to clarify in Chapter Two and Six.

In the meantime, I kept on reviewing other possible architectural diagrams. My paradigmatic source in analyzing the camera obscura model, Jonathan Crary, was already approaching his subject with a Foucault-informed sensibility in deciphering this model's effect on how an "observer" related to his/her environment. In addition to Crary, Giorgio Agamben's (1998, 1999) juridico-political analysis of concentration camps and Wolfgang Sofsky's (1997) sociological analysis of "absolute power" provided me with a genuine basis for analyzing architecture's effect on intersubjective relationships. Both were already following frameworks that were, if not totally identical, at least compatible with Foucault. And, finally, Foucault's (1988a) own analyses of Christian confessional practices, coupled with a comparison between two opposing accounts by John Bossy

(1975) and Wietse de Boer (2001), provided me with a third domain for analyzing architecture's effect on the relation of the self to itself. In sum, I had in my hand: three different domains of experience, attested by their own specific architectural diagrams, coming from various historical periods, and three different subject figures taking shape in the analyses of a series of scholars, who lead the way in building up a comparative basis, even if they were all coming from different disciplines. The rest is for the following pages to tell.

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acknowledged.

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And, finally comes my family. I must most certainly honor my mother, who kept me awake and standing in an as much literal way at times I didn't have the strength. Fürüz and Tolga have always been with me in more than one and immeasurable ways. Of course it would be impossible to omit the joy that Kardelen and Karsu brought into my life every time – especially during those very last days of submission. And my father. They are the ones who have given shape to that life force which bears my name.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

One of the driving forces behind the shaping of this study was a concern over the critical role of architectural history.[12] This concern grew out of a constant and necessary confrontation with the question of "How does one engage with architecture and space, historically and critically?" Among many other past and present responses to this question, what is taken seriously here is a suggestion by Foucault: "Focus on what the Greeks called the *techne*" (1984, p. 255).

Space, perhaps more than architecture as such at times, is always of great magnitude for Foucault – to such an extent that virtually all of his discursive analyses include architectural configurations as their non-discursive counterparts. Then again, he doesn't claim the analysis of space as a self-inflicted method of his own, but rather as a necessity that inflicts itself (Flynn, 1993; Mitchell, 2003). When he argues, in *The Order of Things* (1970), for instance, that knowledge is spatialized, this is not simply because he finds delight in thinking with spatial images and metaphors. This is rather because what matters for him, in the epistemological transformations of the seventeenth century, is "to see how spatialization of knowledge was one of the factors in the constitution of this knowledge as a science" (Foucault, 1984, p. 254). Or else, when he talks about architecture in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) as something that takes a political stand at the end of the eighteenth century, again, this is neither because of his own, self-

[12] Regarding the present conditions and future paths of architectural history, see McKellar (1996), Jarzombek (1999), Payne (1999), and Borden & Rendel (2000).

motivated appeal to architecture nor because architecture was not political before. Rather because he claims to observe in the eighteenth century "the development of a kind of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies" (Foucault, 1984, p. 239). In short, space and architecture are matters of historical import mostly because of their weight and position on a power/knowledge scale.

That is why it is not surprising to see that, when asked of the particularity of the knowledge (*savoir*) of architecture as a discipline, Foucault points towards "what the Greeks called the *techne*." Here, he does not refer to the narrow meaning of the term that collapses it into technology – as in hard technology, the technology of wood, fire, and electricity, etc. Instead, he refers to the rather general meaning of "a practical rationality governed by a conscious goal" – as in the government of individuals, the government of souls, and the government of the self by the self, etc. (p. 256). When taken earnestly, this brief suggestion comes to mean that to do a history of architecture is to place it along the lines of a general history of *techne* in the wider sense of the word. It is to relate architecture to a general history of rationalities that give rise to historically specific structures of possible experience; it is to conceive of architecture as technology,[13] so to speak.

Another driving force behind the shaping of this study was an interest in the capacity of architecture as a practice. This interest, again, was nurtured by a perpetual and inevitable confrontation with the question of "What does, or can, architecture do?" One of the

[13] For a general introduction into a critical lineage that begins with Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991) and enables us to conceive of architecture in terms of a "space of technology" and a "technology of space," see Vidler (1999). Also see: Wölfflin (1932) as one of the founding texts of spatial analysis; Frisby (1988) and Frisby & Featherstone (1997) for spatial studies engaging with earlier social thought; Vidler (1994; 2000), Grosz (1995), and Burgin (1996) for an approach towards space as a psychoanalytically-charged technology; Crary (1990), Panofsky (1991), and Damisch (1994) for the relation between space and perspectival technologies; and finally Lynn (1998) for the integration of new technologies in design, representation, and material production. Also see Foucault's "Of Other Spaces" (1998, pp. 175-185) and "The Eye of Power" (1996, pp. 226-240); and Leach (1997) for a series of key texts on architecture by philosophers and cultural theorists from outside the architectural field.

most provocative answers to this question gains life in Bernard Cache's self-reflections on his own work as a practitioner: Architecture as the art of the frame.

In Cache's scenario, the proper place of architecture is liberated from its conventional roles of sheltering, housing, or grounding. Instead, it is reclaimed among a series of practices that function by "framing images in such a way that they induce new forms of life" (Speaks 1995, p. xvii) – architecture as life-generator. The ways in which frame and image are conceived of here are at once very much familiar and as much strange. They both flicker along the line between that which is close and that which is far away. In fact, Cache's work begins precisely with a redefinition of the nature of that interior world which is the most proximate (furniture) and that exterior world which is the most distant (geography). Inside and outside, everyday self and everyday world, all are taken to be made up of "images" – in the widest sense of "anything that presents itself to the mind," be it real or imaginary (Cache, 1995, p. 3).

With this redefinition, Cache puts forward a new understanding of architectural images. His is an architecture that has its footing on an "earth [that] moves" (1995). This is a dynamic world in which new movements and creations emerge in the intercalary spaces between images. For some, it is possible that the idea of a perforated world as such sounds awkwardly abstract and metaphorical. So does, in a world as such, the idea of framing images. Yet, even a brief glance at Cache's more tangible procedures suffices to prove otherwise. It is precisely these procedures – namely, isolation, selection, and arrangement – that delineate architectural practice as enframing. They enable architecture to appropriate intercalar spaces between images and make use of these intervals of life-creating indeterminacy to its advantage. Architecture in other words first "isolates intervals (by way of the wall)"; it then "selects (using the device of the window) one of the vectors of this interval from the external topography"; and, finally, it "arranges this interval in such a way as to *increase the probability of an intended effect*" (Speaks, 1995, p. xviii; emphasis mine).

The concrete implications of Cache's abstract language cannot be easily unveiled. But, perhaps, it would be helpful to set him against Foucault in whose thought architecture likewise but more clearly emerges as "a plunge into a field of social relations in which it *brings about some specific effects*" (Foucault, 1984, p. 253; emphasis mine). On the one hand, there is a conceptualization of architecture as an element of support. It ensures "a certain allocation of people in space, a canalization of their circulation, as well as the coding of their reciprocal relations" (p. 253). This is an architecture fundamental to any form of communal life and any exercise of power. Foucault. On the other hand, there lies another conceptualization of architecture as a concrete interlocking of frames. Each one of these frames has different orientations and functions (the wall, the window, the ground-floor, etc.). This is an architecture characterized as constituent of a primary new world. Cache. When taken together, architecture as a framing technology, what can be said about the sort of functionalism and constructivism attributed to architecture by these two lines of thought? Whether Foucault and Cache are commensurable is far from obvious. Yet it is possible to leave this obscurity in suspense for the time being and simply suffice it to pose the question of "*How can architecture be said to bring any effects at all?"*

The juxtaposition of these two initial concerns already sets the ground in all its complexity and affluence. How does one think *of*, or think *in* architecture? How does one *think* architecture – while taking into consideration the nature of that which is architectural in thinking? This is not the least to say that "thinking through architecture" (Birksted, 1999) is possible only and exclusively through producing *architectural works*. But, to the extent that this is a dissertation driven by questions as to the very basics of architecture (i.e. its historico-critical apprehension and its capacities), bypassing *the question of architecture in relation to thought* sounds just about impossible. Such an account necessitates not only another view of the *work-of-architecture*, but also an other way of doing architectural history. It necessitates that one seeks at least the indicators of

"a new strange tongue in architectural discourse" (Boyman, 1995, p. viii).

1.1. Objectives and Scope of the Study

The aim of this study is to lay the groundwork for a historical and critical understanding of architecture, taking into account its structuring and generative functions, in relation to experience. How does architecture relate to historical structures underlying forms of experience? How does it relate to the construction or conjuring up of that which is new? Is it really possible for the work-of-architecture to shape the experience of the people? Are people capable of bringing about something novel, in themselves and in their environment, through their experience of the work-of-architecture? This particular dissertation is evidently inclined to respond to these questions in an affirmative manner. But, in an as much obvious way, there is no use in the affirmative unless one could say something about *how* architecture *can* effect these changes. Thus, it is this "how" and "can" that will be the focus here.

This study starts with the acknowledgment that the work-of-architecture can only be fully appreciated as taking place in the interaction between body and space.[14] The need to address both sides of this couplet cannot be overestimated. Therefore, the focal point of this study will be the relation between embodied forms of human subjectivity on the one hand *and* the material work-of-architecture on the other, reserving special attention to the essential historicity of both. Put differently, the subject matter of this work is the specific effect of architecture, taken all together as a constructive framing technology[15], on historically specific repertories of bodily existence. A historico-materialist "science" of

[14] This interaction was the focus of my master thesis titled "Bodies and Space 'in Contact': A Study on the Dancing Body as means of Understanding Body-Space Relationship in an Architectural Context."

[15] My historico-materialist appropriation of the idea of frame can be conceived in isomorphic terms to what Deleuze (2003) calls "the ring" in Francis Bacon's practice of painting. For a general introduction, see Polan (1994), Smith (1997), and Bogue (1997). For a rather more post-phenomenological conception of the frame and enframing, see Heidegger (1977) and Derrida (1987); and a rather more sociological and symbolic account of the frame as the condition of possibility for organized experience, see Goffman (1974). For an instructive collection that investigates the question of the frame in visual arts, but nevertheless relates as much to spatial studies, see Kemp (1996), Duro (1996), Preziosi (1996), and Ernst (1996).

experience – an *experiontology*, so to speak – in terms of a *general logic of techno-constructivism.* Needless to say, what is meant by "technique" here does not simply refer to a hard-and-fast definition of technology, just as "constructive" does not simply refer to the construction of a building artifact. In other words, what is avoided is a steadfast identification of architecture with the construction of a singular work that is the product of an architect as master-subject (i.e. Farnsworth House of a Mies van der Rohe). Instead, the work-of-architecture is associated with the constructive work of socio-cultural diagrams – those quasi-determinate niches within the space of which everyday processes of subjectivation and desubjectivation take place.

It is for this reason that, throughout the following chapters, a series of anonymous architectural frames are studied as they give rise to a series of repertories of being: the camera obscura as an epistemological technology that constitutes human beings as subjects of knowledge, the camp as a political technology that constitutes human beings as subjects of power, and the confessional as an ethical technology that constitutes human beings as subjects of relation-to-self. More often than not lying below the threshold of prestigious objects of research, these architectural frames truly deserve attention as "architectures without architects" – not in the sense of the vernacular, attached to this phrase by Bernard Rudofsky in 1960s, but in the sense of the impersonal.

At this point, it is timely to clarify what this study assumes to be the logic behind the work-of-architecture. Architecture is taken here as an art of organization in general. For the purposes of a preliminary account, this general definition could be extended as an *art of organization of bodily encounters*[16] in particular. That is to say that architecture, first, articulates boundaries by way of organizing gaps in an otherwise undifferentiated field. Second, it establishes non-preexistent relationships between variables in the field in

[16] The idea of organization of bodily encounters has its basis in Deleuze's physico-political reading of Spinoza's expressionism (1990). For an introduction, see Hardt (1993), Macherey (1997), and Gatens (1997).

order to make them function together. And, third, it partakes in the construction of new possibilities of life. Architecture figures, in other words, as a tripartite practice: (1) of constructing assemblages that isolate breaking points on the plane of composition; (2) of fabricating frames of experience in such a way that the frame emerges as the condition of possibility, the milieu, of an encounter as a contact between two coexisting realities; and, thus, (3) of actualizing novel corpo-realities (not bodies *per se*, but bodily modes of existence – since bodies are by no means discernible from those regimes of contact in which they participate).[17] Isolation, selection, arrangement; these are the functions. Organization, framing, actualization; these are the working procedures. Assemblages, relations, bodies; these are the constructs.

It is the larger implications of this logic that prompts the author to take up three disjunctive architectural frames as those of *camera obscura, concentration camps,* and *the confessional* while claiming them to be material expressions of specific experiential structures. This is true even if these do not involve any particular sort of building forms, plans, or constructions at times, even to the point of involving nothing but relations between bodies. The analysis of the dark room comes from seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the high point of Classical Age; it provides room for foregrounding subject-environment relationships in the reciprocity of the observer vis-a-vis nature. The analysis of the camp bares very recent resonances, emanating from twentieth century, that are still at work today; it enables one to dramatize intersubjective relationships in the reciprocity between the guard and the prisoner. The analysis of confessional practices extends as far back as the first two centuries of Hellenistic and imperial periods so as to reach a culmination in the sixteenth-century world of the Counter-Reformation; it exhibits a crystallization of intrasubjective relationships in the reciprocity of the penitent vis-a-vis the confessor.

[17] For a related physico-political definition of the body as a power-arrangement established by the encounter between forces, see Protevi's discussion of "forceful body politic" (2001). For a rather more anthropological account of corporealities (i.e. the ways in which, from society to society, man is said to be given the knowledge of how to use their bodies), see Mauss' "Techniques of the Body" (1992).

What binds together these three analyses from extremely variable historical periods is their constitutive status as part and parcel of the experiential field in which they are embedded (Table 1.1). To be more precise, these three analyses are juxtaposed, despite their apparent differences and common non-interest for architectural history, because of their joint participation in an investigation of experience. A diagnostic investigation that privileges impersonal systems underlying individual events, relations, or actions...

What more, for all three analyses, the delineated structure of experience depends on the type of relation each upholds against a "foreign element" that emerges from the outside. The cameratic experience is defined by the encapsulation and elimination of *error*; the camp experience is defined by the loss of all norm, which results in the total abolition of *resistance*; and, the confessional experience is defined by the submerging of the *interiority of the self* in sin. In a sense, architecture's regulatory role over our very relation to the outside turns out to be the condition of possibility for experience. This grants the categories of error, resistance, and the self a critical position in theorizing architecture's way of forming, maintaining, and transforming an experiential field.

Camera Obscura	Concentration Camps	Confessional Practices
Subject-environment relations	Intersubjective relations	Intrasubjective relations
17th – 18th centuries	20th century	16th century
Observer (vis-a-vis Nature)	Guard – Prisoner	Penitent (vis-a-vis Confessor)
Epistemological	Political	Ethical

Table 1.1 Table sequentially summarizing architectural frames, relation types, historical periods, available subject positions, and analytical axes.

As is probably apparent in the non-chronological arrangement above, the author's interest lies neither in history nor in architectural history proper. The intention, in other words, is not to arrive at a convenient teleological narrative, tracing the evolution of a series of couplings between fields of experience, architectural constructs, and their corresponding outsiders. What is intended instead is an analysis and exploitation of the coincidental but constant appearance and reappearance of an architecturally regulated

relationship to the outside in the structuring of experience, even if these regularities belong to different historical sites and periods. It is the author's contention that, once one starts subscribing to pigeon-hole categories such as Renaissance, Classical, and Modern architecture, one cannot explicate this sort of structural persistences that cut through diachronic differences. Constant appearance of a foreign element as the basis of the experience of a limit, on the contrary, highlights a persistence as such and begs for analysis.

Motivated by this very persistence, the author tries to bypass a history of experience and capitalize instead the architectural invocation of error, resistance, and the self in the epistemological, political, and ethical structuring of experience. The idea of a "history of experience" denotes a conception of experience as a pregiven and stable limit – an ever-the-same jar, the changing contents of which can be given a name and be subjected to a straightforward description. To acknowledge historicity, on the other hand, means recognizing the limits of an experiential field as a historical formation.[18] Only then can existing fields of experience be transformed so as to allow the emergence of new forms and modes of relating to the outside. Rather than taking experience, error, resistance, and self as preestablished objects of architecture and thought, what is needed is to try to understand how they are produced and cross-linked by the disciplinary technologies of knowledge, power, and self.

1.2. Status, Tasks, and Structure of the Dissertation

As clarified in the preface, this study oscillated between several options throughout the research process. In trying to locate visual experience in a general experiential field, there was always the risk of digressing from the main line of inquiry. Another risk, waiting at bay, was the possibility of collapsing back into theoretical presumptions the neighborhood of which was avoided in the first place. In the meantime, the author

[18] It is Baydar (2003) who has drawn my attention to this distinction, in the context of Zizek's differentiation between history and historicity.

found himself scanning texts and practices that took him farther and away, not only from the original context, but also from the scholarly field that he began with. It is quite possible that he might seem to have expanded the scope too much, so as to end up reaching for an insurmountable area.

But the approach that is followed here, in fact, is of an inverse order – even a regressive one. This is especially so because the author wound up foregrounding what was perhaps to have been simply the methodological framework in his earlier formulations. One option was to assume an ostensibly solid methodology and follow it up by a series of critico-analytical readings in the discursive field surrounding image-production technologies. Instead, the author chooses to take a few steps back and concentrates on building up a quasi-methodological framework that is to be further tested and developed in and through a series of analyses. Although resting on the assumption of being fresh, this study therefore is not composed exclusively of new and revolutionary material. Most of the elements in it are recapitulations of others. What is new here is not necessarily the individual bits and pieces that make up the whole, but it is rather the way in which they are used and organized that lends this approach its singularity and its claim for attention, if any. In this sense, it is fair to say that the rank of this work, as it stands now, lies half-way between a meta-analysis with an interest in methodology development *and* a critical inquiry with its own findings. This dissertation comprises of the report of the whole process.

In light of all of the above, the tasks of this dissertation can be laid out as follows:

1. To develop an initial framework that facilitates a historico-critical analysis of the work-of-architecture in relation to the formation and transformation of experiential structures;
2. To provide close readings of the abstract schemata of (a) the camera obscura, (b) the camp, and (c) the confessional as they give rise to historically specific subject modalities; and

3. To rewind the whole process so as to be able to identify a veritable relationship between architecture and experience – in the neighborhood of the categories of error, resistance, and the self.

The first task will be taken up in Chapter Two; the second task throughout Chapters Three, Four, and Five; and the third task in Chapter Six. A final and brief Epilogue will close the circle.

CHAPTER TWO:

Architecture and Experience of the Limit

Introduction of the problem of experience into the specific agenda of architectural discourse mostly goes hand in hand with a quest for a presumably more sensuous and meaningful architecture. Engine of this quest is an urgent willingness to contest the predominance of vision and lack of meaning in contemporary spatial experience and architectural practice. The reaction against such hegemony and lack usually takes the form of an open invitation for an architecture that embraces haptic experience, engages the senses as a whole, and strives to highlight the achievement of a sense of place, or lack thereof. One of the earliest examples of an outright call as such is *Body, Memory, and Architecture* (1977), co-authored by Kent C. Bloomer and Charles W. Moore in an attempt to foreground bodily and emotional coordinates of experience against formal aspects of construction.

While responses to the problem do vary, those that are most emblematic gather around two frameworks. The first of these, *phenomenology of architecture*, is associated with the writings of a series of theoreticians such as Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980; 1985), Juhani Pallasmaa (1996; 1998; 2001), and more recently Alberto Perez-Gomez (1983). It gained prominence around 1970s, especially with the introduction of Heidegger's idea of “dwelling” and Merleau-Ponty's concept of “pure perception” into the vocabulary of architectural thought. The second, *critical regionalism*, on the other hand, is mostly associated with its initiator Alexander Tzonis' holistic approach to design, but is more

generally known by Kenneth Frampton's (2001; 2007) full-front opposition to "scenographic" architecture in favor of tectonic features. While also influenced by a general phenomenological approach, this second framework feeds as much upon Lewis Mumford's (1961) critique of the International Style and post-WWII approaches to planning. An earlier kinship, based upon an interest in elaborating on the senses in phenomenological terms, can be established between these two frameworks and the domain of *environmental psychology*, especially as it takes shape in the work of James Gibson (1974; 1979) and his followers.

Given due respect, almost the entire terrain covered by the above literature and its extensions leaves the present inquiry ill-equipped. This is basically because of a problematic premise that is somehow fundamental to all. Simply put, they all succumb, in one way or another, to an essential and authentic idea of architectural experience – either taken to be devoid of cultural mediation or incorporating no sign of transformation in the sense of undergoing change. The traces of this hereditary pattern, possibly the result of a vulgar appropriation of phenomenology, can be observed in some key expressions such as "genius loci," "the eyes of the skin," "the truth of a place," and "the spiritual essence of architectural works." Others can be seen to be hauling behind the belief that a building can allegedly possess an "inner" language of its own, or that there exists some authentic feelings "true" to architecture. And, finally, there are those assumptions: the possibility of a "return to things," the mission of domesticating "meaningless space," and the existence of a way of looking at architecture "from within" the consciousness experiencing it, etc.

To overcome the shortcomings of these approaches, a comprehensive reformulation of the whole problem of experience in the context of architecture is necessary. To be able to do this, this study will be leaning back on the work of Michel Foucault. Interestingly enough, the concept of experience has its own share of misfortune in Foucault's unquestionably manifold and heterogeneous oeuvre. But it is the author's contention

that it is possible, with a bit of a twisted reading, to outline an adequate framework out of methodological insights extracted from his critical historiography. In view of the relationship between architecture and modes of subjectivation, this chapter will therefore try to maintain the plausibility of a claim as such – that experience can at least be said to lend itself to a legitimate capitalization when followed throughout Foucault's entire work from early texts to the latest[19].

2.1. Foucault, or the Whale of History: A Restless Animal of Experience

It might seem strayed at first for a study that focuses on the relationship between architecture and experience to methodologically rely on Foucault. There is no denying that architecture and space do hold a special position in his work. But is it really adequate to claim that experience does the same?[20] There is enough proof to suspect otherwise. For he in fact is one of the most forceful and loud critics of the concept. His dissent especially of an existential and phenomenological version of apprehending experience is well known. This, Foucault argues, is an idea of experience cathected with investments of a transcendental kind, administered by the plethora of meaning and the intentionality of the subject. It particularly gains concrete form in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, with Edmund Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* in the background (Foucault, 1998, p. 466).[21]

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[19] It is important to highlight from the outset that, in this venture, I have tried to stay away from Foucault's own explicitly architectural investigations, such as those based on the Panopticon, which have already been well-exploited in architectural circles. The choice was deliberate and temporary, so as to be able to look at the methodological underpinnings of his work in its totality and under a new light.

[20] Mine certainly is not the first attempt to recognize the centrality of the concept of experience in Foucault. Although a standpoint as such is not advocated frequently, exceptions include Han (2002), Gutting (2002), Rayner (2003), Heiner (2003), O'Leary (2005; 2008), and the last chapter of Jay (2005). I owe a great deal to all in the following formulations.

[21] I personally am not interested in the biographical details of this dispute, which covers an unavoidable amount of space throughout a number of interviews and commentaries. Most of these thrive on polemics around the younger Foucault's rebellion against the masters of his early years. For basic details, see "Foucault responds to Sartre" (1996, pp. 51-56), "Structuralism and Poststructuralism" (1998, pp. 433-458), and "Interview with Michel Foucault" (2000, pp. 239-297). Nevertheless, it is this dispute that allows a second and more fundamental concept of experience to surface in Foucault's work.

The second version of experience emanates in the same way from Husserl's *Meditations* but takes a different turn much appraised by Foucault – especially as appropriated by Jean Cavaillès, Gaston Bachelard, Alexandre Koyré, and Georges Canguillhem. Such a line of descent is affiliated with the field of history of science, which is said to be characteristically driven by investigations into the normative nature and discontinuous evolution of knowledge and rationality (pp. 466-469). It is in his notorious introduction to Canguillhem's *The Normal and The Pathological* (1991) that Foucault stipulates a well-rounded summary of his overall position towards these two filliations.[22]

Even apart from these differentiations, it is hard to miss that Foucault suffers from a precarious relation with the concept of experience. It finds sporadic expression in formulas like the "limit-experience" and the "experience-book" throughout his whole career as a historian of thought (Rayner, 2003; O'Leary 2008). But the unease is apparent in the customary dismissal of experience from the often provided characterizations of his own vocations.[23] The apparently seamless "effort to understand his past work in terms of a current project" and the underlying "intention to continually re-create himself as a thinker" are always there at work (Gutting, 2002, p. 72). Despite

[22] The same text, renowned as an independent title on its own as "Life: Experience and Science" (1998, pp. 465-478), also deserves attention for its genuine accentuation of the "knowledge-as-error" thesis as central to Canguillhem's vital rationalism. It can always be argued that Foucault overemphasizes here the incompatibility of the two versions of experience mentioned above. But, since his attempt to distance himself from the "lived experience" of phenomenology overlaps with my attempt to make sense of it, I nevertheless accept this bifurcation as an initiation point.

[23] In 1966, for instance, Foucault purports that he deals with "practices, institutions and theories on the same plane and according to the same isomorphisms," and that he looks for "the underlying knowledge that makes them possible, the stratum of knowledge that constitutes them historically" ("The Order of Things," 1998, p. 262). In 1977, however, it is the same Foucault who asks with a change in tone: "When I think back now, I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about, in *Madness and Civilization* or *The Birth of the Clinic*, but power?" ("Truth and Power," 1980, p. 115). When it comes to 1982, this time we find him sketching out another formulation: "It is not power, but the subject, which is the general theme of my research" ("The Subject and Power," 1983, p. 209). Once we get used to the dizzyingly-wide range of the variety exhibited in these self-interpretations, it is no surprise to see that he puts things differently even throughout contemporaneous formulations. The exemplary instance is a course lecture around the same years, and takes record of his work as to have moved from "the history of subjectivity" to "an analysis of the forms of governmentality" and finally reached "a history of the care of the self" ("Subjectivity and Truth," 1997, p. 88).

these, however, the one term that escapes Foucault's perpetual tempering on his own present and the transformations of his conceptual architecture is *experience*.

One exception to this constant avoidance is a lengthy, demanding, and much-cited interview conducted by D. Trombadori in 1978 (Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault," 2000, pp. 239-297). In this interview, Foucault "enigmatically theorizes the concept of the 'limit-experience' and cites it as a guiding force of his work" (Heiner, 2003, p. 22). Celebrated here is an experience that fulfills "the function of wrenching the subject [away] from itself, of seeing to it that the subject is no longer itself, or that it is brought to its annihilation, or its dissolution. This is a project of desubjectivation" (Foucault, 2000, p. 241).

Exploited here is the multilayer potential of the French term *expérience*, which corresponds simultaneously to both *experience* and *experiment*. This tension between the two English equivalences is exactly where one should look – if, that is, one wants to comprehend the antagonism between subjective experience and the kind of experience that produces its subjects. The virtue of Foucault's experience-books is their strict adherence to this second sense, experimental experience, in putting both "the author and the reader to the test of their own limits" (O'Leary, 2008, p. 7).

His problem, says Foucault, in writing experience-books is not to satisfy professionals of history proper, but

> to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. Which means that at the end of a book we would establish new relationships with the subject at issue: the I who wrote the book and those who have read it would have a different relationship with [for instance] madness, with its contemporary status, and its history in the modern world. (2000, p. 242)

With these more explicit references to the transgressive and transformative aspects of reading and writing, Foucault's attempt to avoid mundane experience gains clarity. He

finds the phenomenologically-framed experience serve too much as a means towards grounding the subject. In such a framework, the subject as an agent begins to take on a wholesome responsibility, "in its transcendental functions, for founding that experience together with its meanings" (p. 244). Whereas, he appraises in the limit-experience the possibility it provides for wrenching the subject away from itself so as to annihilate any sense of transcendental fixity or self-identity. On the one hand, there is the "lived experience" of the phenomenologist, "the everyday in its transitory form" and, on the other, the "unlivable" experience of Nietzsche, Bataille, and Blanchot, the experience that involves "the maximum of intensity and the maximum of impossibility at the same time" (p. 241). Whereas "phenomenological work consists in unfolding the field of possibilities related to everyday experience," the experience that interests Foucault is about "trying to reach a certain point in life that is as close as possible to the 'unlivable,' to that which can't be lived through" (p. 241).

It is possible to take this as an opportunity to briefly touch upon another series of polemics around Foucault's alleged return to the question of the subject, starting with *The History of Sexuality* (1990a).[24] As laid out above, Foucault values the limit-experience especially because it clears the ground for a succeeding transformation. This is "a transformation of the relationship we have with ourselves and with the world . . . a transformation of the relationship we have with our knowledge" (2000, p. 244). For, as much as they resort to an otherwise omitted evaluation of the self, late works of Foucault aim at nothing but understanding the modes of subjectivation that the self has to go through in order to become a legitimate subject of this or that type of knowledge (*connaissance*). This understanding functions as means not of a return but of an overturning of the process of subjectivation so that it can ultimately be, certainly not reversed or re-directed, but at least destabilized (Foucault, 1983).

[24] For a detailed account of Foucault's late interest in the theme of subjectivity, see Harrer (2005). A genealogical inquiry into the Nietzschean origins of Foucault's critical conception of the self can be found in Marshall (2001). Also see Allen (2000), regarding Foucault alleged anti-subjectivity.

So, it is true that the concern related with comprehending modes of subjectivation finds a rather more clear expression in Foucault's later writings. But this does not cancel out the fact that it corresponds in his early works to an attempt at comprehending structures of experience in their historicity. It is with this objective in mind that Foucault sets out to show, in *Madness and Civilization* (1965), how the classical age constitutes a field of experience with a specific integrity, coherency, and function of its own. It is with this sensibility towards historical structuring of experience that he opens *The Order of Things* by stating that: "In every culture . . . there is the pure experience of order and its modes of being. The present study is an attempt to analyze that experience" (1970, p. xxi). And, it is this very same concern that comes to the fore in the analysis of "sexuality as a historically singular form of experience" throughout *The History of Sexuality* series (Foucault, 1997, p. 199). Especially in the second volume of the "sex books," titled *The Use of Pleasure*, the concept of experience finds one of its most mature forms as something that can and must be "thought." Here, experience is taken to be the very mode in which being is historically given to us (Foucault, 1990b, p. 11).

The perseverance of a stubborn theme as such impels Foucault to still speak of a Christian experience and a modern European experience of philosophy in his last lectures at Collège de France (O'Leary, 2008). And, it is this persistence that allows this study to trace the prominence of the above tension between two senses of experience – experience as structure and experiment as challenge to structure – replay its trajectory throughout Foucault's entire work. Accordingly, there is on the one hand an attempt to understand dominant historical structures that establish *the limits of our experiential field* and, on the other, an attempt to provide the means of bringing about *limit-experiences* into the picture so that this more or less established experiential field can be destabilized towards a rejunivating transgression. A thorough understanding of how to effect such a destabilization requires a deeper investigation of Foucault's constantly-evolving methodological framework. For it is precisely in and through historical examinations of forms of knowledge – surrounding madness, prison, and sexuality, for instance – that

Foucault seeks the possibility of transforming current practices related with these various domains.

2.2. Historical A Priori Structures of Possible Experience

Before investigating *Madness and Civilization*, it might be appropriate to allow Foucault's preface to speak for itself – as it touches on a number of issues that will be discussed throughout the following pages:

> The classical period – from Willis to Pinel, from the frenzies of Racine's Oreste to Sade's Juliette and the Quinta del Sordo of Goya – covers precisely that epoch in which *the exchange between madness and reason modifies its language*, and in a radical manner. In the history of madness, two events indicate this change with a singular clarity: 1657, the creation of the Ho[s]pital General and the "great confinement" of the poor; 1794, the liberation of the chained inmates of Bicetre. Between these two unique and symmetrical events, something happens whose *ambiguity* has left the historians of medicine at a loss: blind repression in an absolutist regime, according to some; but according to others, the gradual discovery by science and philanthropy of madness in its positive truth. As a matter of fact, beneath these reversible meanings, *a structure is forming which does not resolve the ambiguity but determines it*. It is this structure which accounts for *the transition from the medieval and humanist experience of madness to our own experience*, which confines insanity within mental illness. . . . the shift has been made by a world without images, without positive character, in a kind of silent transparency which reveals . . . *a great motionless structure*; this structure is one of neither drama nor knowledge; it is the point where history is immobilized in the tragic category which both establishes and impugns it. (1965, pp. xi-xii; all emphasis mine)

Foucault, early on in *Madness and Civilization*, associates experience with a founding gesture by which a culture establishes an outside to itself by excluding an intolerable element. However, the experience described here in 1961 and the limit-experience of the Trombadori interview of 1978 are not the same. The latter, *limit-experience proper*, refers to a radical experience that oversteps the existing limits of a cultural field whereas the former, an *experience of the limit*, refers to circumstances surrounding the creation of these very limits (Jay 2005). While the tension between two senses of experience echoes

itself, it is worth emphasizing that only the former aspect will be concentrated upon within the confines of this section. In the context of *Madness and Civilization* (MC, from now on), this comes to mean the classical experience of madness as it rests on the division between reason and unreason.

The second point to note is the dangerously high level of ambiguity surrounding the concept of experience in MC. Throughout the book, it is possible to run into an insurmountable number of differences in usage. Sketching out a classification at the risk of ending up with a caricature, one can say that Foucault is trying to give voice to at least two different types of experience. The first one of these arises out of "the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture" (Foucault, 1990b, p.4).[25] The second type of experience on the other hand, if not exactly identifies, at least points towards an essential experience of madness as experienced or acted out by the mad.[26] The latter also comes close to identifying something like an originary or pure madness – as in madness as an "undifferentiated experience" (p. ix), "a not yet divided experience of division itself" (Foucault, 1965, p. ix), etc.

Here, in this second type, Foucault inadvertently breeches borders that he will later despise by oscillating between phenomenological and transcendental poles.[27] This

[25] This first idea makes itself felt in expressions like the omnipresent "classical experience of madness" (Foucault, 1965, p. 35), along with its historical alterations such as: "the transition from the medieval and humanist experience of madness to our own experience" (p. xii), "the Western experience of madness" (p. 18), "the tragic experience of madness appearing in the fifteenth century" (p. 28), "a critical and moral experience of Unreason" (p. 31), "the great organizing structures of the experience of madness" (p. 175), "experience of leprosy" (p. 291), etc.

[26] This second idea manifests itself in expressions like: "the literary experience of madness" (Foucault, 1965, p. 31), "the experiences which are to be found in the immediate neighborhood of this essential language of madness: that is, the dream and the delusion" (p. 101), "the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism" (p. 198), "the concrete experience of madness" (p. 243), etc.

[27] It is this ambiguity that enables Derrida to criticize Foucault for attempting to "write a history of madness itself," that is, madness before it has been "captured" by reason. According to Derrida, Foucault should have realized that within Foucault's own scheme, anything that one might say (or write) about madness would only work to replicate the incarceration of madness – madness cannot speak for itself, because it's the antithesis of reason and language. For Derrida's critique, see "Cogito and the History of Madness" (1978, pp. 31-63). For Foucault's response to Derrida, see "My Body,

tendency finds its summit in the closing pages of the book where he advances "highly condensed references to some fundamental form of Otherness which lies beyond the grasp of reason and science and which in some unexplained way seems to give them their possibility" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 11). In fact, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* will already recognize how MC has given too great a role to an incipient notion of experience – one that is in danger of reintroducing "an anonymous and general subject of history" (1972, p. 16).[28]

Nevertheless, the willingness to put a distance between himself and this tendency pushes Foucault towards completely shaking the notion of experience out of his lexicon during a large portion of 1970s. From *The Archaeology* onwards, he begins to give a publicly accessible concrete content to whatever remained of his temptation to find the ontological basis of our historical practices. He even goes so far as totally denying the figure of intellectual the privileged position of giving voice to the experience of a presumably unreachable or victimized other (Foucault, "Intellectuals and Power," 1977, pp. 205-217). Later in *The History of Sexuality*, for instance, he interprets "the search for a secret inaccessible sexuality behind appearances not as an attempt that correctly pursues the deep truth of the human condition, but rather as a mythic construction of modern thought that plays an important role in our contemporary form of knowledge and power" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 11).

Once the complex vocabulary of MC is set aside and the description of the field of experience surrounding madness comes to the fore, it becomes possible to see that Foucault's narrative of *corpus insanus* takes off with the Renaissance, right after the figure of madman usurps the empty plot left behind by the lepers of the Middle Ages. This is the story of a cultural figure of excess and irregularity. While accompanied by the

This Paper, This Fire" (1998, pp. 393-417).

[28] Deleuze identifies this as a recourse to "an 'experience' of madness that is already inscribed in a duality existing between the states of raw things and propositions" (1988, p. 13). He later on remarks, however, how Foucault reproaches his entanglement in the web of a desire to invoke, in MC, not only an experience lived as raw or savage but also the eternal values of the imagination (p. 50).

simpleton, the drunkard, the debauchee, and the lover, the mad is sent on exile down Europe's rivers with the Ship of Fools, *Narrenschiff*, in search of his reason. Then one meets him again in seventeenth century. Thanks to a social sensibility gaining currency in the European culture of the period, he is confined this time in houses of internment along with the poor, the homeless, the recalcitrant, and the vagabond. After the French Revolution, all of a sudden a new, presumably humanitarian, sensibility rises up and demands a further separation of the category of the insane from that of the criminal. And thus is born the world of the asylum and our modern relation with mental illness (Foucault, 1965).

Foucault begins especially by taking note of the fact that the Greek world has no concept that transcribes easily into madness, but that the European Logos does – at least since the beginning of the Middle Ages – almost as if "the Reason-Madness nexus constitutes for Western culture one of the dimensions of its originality" (1965, p. xi). Once it is there, however, the faith of this nexus is quite ambiguous. This is because the entourage and conception of madness changes all the time while the exclusive structure remains the same – refined, at best. One sees that, in terms of accompaniment, the cluster of referents marked by the theme of "outcasts" goes through an incisive transformation. The mad, for instance, takes over from the leper; and, on voyage, his neighborhood becomes consecutively occupied by various figures like the lover, the homeless, and the criminal. On the other hand, the dividing line elaborated with reference to the opposition between *reason* and *madness* in the Classical Age is subsequently relocated on the caesura between *sanity* and *insanity* in our age. Nonetheless, the shifts taking place at the semantic level of cultural classification (oscillating between the madness of unreason and the folly of mental illness) always ride along a more or less continuous tale of confinement and exclusion, leaving the long-term perseverance of a form of power intact (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983).

If one recites Foucault's preface (1965, pp. ix-xii), what takes place here is a modification

in the language of the relation between reason and madness. This modification is sometimes said to be effected by an absolutist repression and at other times by the gradual discovery of madness in its positive truth by science and philanthropy. What is disguised in the ambiguity of these two interpretations, however, is the formation of a structure. This structure not only feeds upon but even fosters and determines the very same ambiguity, rather than resolve it. The same structure explicates the transition between different forms of experience of madness. And it is this kind of historically a priori structures, "great motionless structures" indeed (1965, pp. xii), that Foucault goes after during his early archaeological studies. They are what punctuate the theories, practices, and sensibilities – in short, the experience – of an entire historical stratum.

This experience involves, before anything else, the ways in which a given object is seen and conceptualized in a given culture. Foucault talks about the development and transformation of a certain consciousness, feelings, formulations, perceptive modes, and forms of sensibility towards madness throughout the whole book. Accordingly, the given structure of classical experience makes possible certain ways of sensing, seeing, and feeling madness as an object.[29] Once coupled with the institutional practices of confinement and the forms of knowledge developed within these institutions, this sensibility gradually takes the form of a repugnance that not only shapes but even gives rise to madness as something to be isolated and excluded. In this, Foucault will go so far as to say that "madness only exists in a society" (1996, pp. 7-9), and not outside the modes in which it is abstracted and captured. The resonances between this claim and the closing argument of *Discipline and Punish*, where illegalisms are said to be produced by legal structures themselves, are worth noting ("Illegalities and Delinquency," 1979, pp. 257-292).

What is important for the purposes of this study is the way in which the forms of

[29] In parallel fashion, Silverman (1996) grants the name "dominant fiction" to this given structure, which accounts for "what passes for reality in a given society" (p. 178). For details, see *The Threshold of the Visible World*, Chapter Five.

repugnance that comprise the great hospitals, and the modes of knowledge that explain madness, all together allow one to speak of a classical experience of madness – in the vicinity of a series of discursive and non-discursive practices that take madness as their object and bring about specific repertories of vision and speech. The mode of objectivation of a madness as such, which determines under what conditions it can become an object for a possible knowledge, at the same time finds its counterpart in a mode of subjectivation, which determines the identity, status, and position of a subject. These are conditions to which a "normal" subject is subjected so that it becomes the legitimate subject of that particular kind of knowledge ("Foucault: Maurice Florence," 1998, pp. 459-463). Power/knowledge structures, in short, do not directly address subjects and objects, but instead operate through the relation between two sides of an encounter that, at one stroke, produces both the subject and the object as residues. Although these power/knowledge networks themselves are not visible, they construct fields of visibility by defining repertories of seeing – by determining an ocular field of possibilities available to the subject in its confrontation with the object. This study is based on the argument that architecture enters the scene precisely at this point as an interface that regulates the subject's relations to its surroundings and to itself by giving material shape to these invisible power/knowledge structures.

As can be seen, the above summary extends beyond the reaches of both *Madness and Civilization* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* and introduces along the way the concept of power, which actually emerges only after *Discipline and Punish* of 1975. But this is understandably so because Foucault presumes the existence of power structures to be already at work in almost all of his works preceding *The Archaeology*. The rationale is there, but the consciousness of this rationale only gains expression after a certain point. Until this point, Foucault's only definitive basis is knowledge, operating at *an epistemological level* through discursive and non-discursive formations – through rules of the sayable and the visible that determine how the subject knows the world. Once knowledge is coupled with power relations so as to constitute an inseparable

power/knowledge nexus as basis, however, Foucault begins to articulate the same structures at *a political level*. This time, his analytical reasoning displays a shift from a so-called "archaeology" to "genealogy" while his subject matter becomes open ended strategies that effect relations between forces – that is, forms of power that take hold of the subject's behavior and conduct.

This is what enables Foucault, from *The History of Sexuality* onwards, to address sexuality as a historically singular experience that is constituted by three axes. In *Volume I: An Introduction*, which also goes by the name *The Will to Knowledge*, the first two axes are already inherited from his previous works and are taken for granted: (1) knowledge formations that address sexuality, and (2) systems of power that regulate its practice. But the necessary methodological tools for investigating a third domain are missing. This domain finally finds expression in the second volume as (3) "forms within which individuals are able, are obliged, to recognize themselves as subjects of [a] sexuality" (1990b, p. 4). Incorporating one's modes of relating to oneself, this third axis operates more at *an ethical level* as it reflects a newly-emerging scheme of analysis, called "problematics" (1990b, pp. 4-5). Relating his fresh interest in subjectivity to his earlier analyses of discourse and power, Foucault begins here to formulate all three domains in terms of a general project of a critical history of thought (pp. 9-13). This comes to mean the history of the modes of objectivation, coercion, and subjectivation that constitute what he elsewhere calls "the historical a priori of a possible experience" for a particular set of people living in a particular period of time (1998, p. 460).

Once all of these three axes (which roughly reflect Foucault's preoccupations in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s respectively) are laid out, it becomes possible to see more clearly that there is no chronological hierarchy between these approaches throughout Foucault's whole corpus. They are inextricably linked in accounting for all the means by which structures of experience can be historicized (Deleuze, 1988). In his reportedly last interview, dated 1984 ("The Return of Morality," 1996, pp. 465-473), Foucault himself

isolates his three fundamental problematizations as those of truth, power, and individual conduct. He explicitly remarks that "these three domains of experience can only be understood one in relation to the others and cannot be understood one without the others" (p. 466). What Foucault offers us in the end is a complex methodology that allows one to historically analyze a specific amalgam of experience with reference to (1) knowledge formations (How do we know the world?); (2) power relations (How do we relate to others?); and (3) relations-to-self (How do we conduct ourselves?).

* * * * *

To summarize, this chapter tried to show how one can comprehend structures of possible experience by overlaying a Foucauldian analytic upon different types of relations. This study accordingly argues that the domain of knowledge can be appropriated in gaining an insight into those systems operating on subject-environment relationships along an epistemological axis; that the domain of power can be appropriated in capturing those systems operating on intersubjective relationships along a political axis; and the domain of self-technologies can be appropriated in explicating those systems operating on intrasubjective relationships along an ethical axis. Since the subject is taken here to be a subject only insofar as he or she is a subject-in-relation, an analytical matrix as such provides one with an appropriate scheme for studying the ways in which architectural frames structure historically specific fields of experience – the ways in which architecture effects modes of subjectification. This will be shown in the respective contexts of camera obscura, camp, and the confessional. In other words, each one of the following chapters will capitalize only one out of three domains of experience as an opportunity to magnify the structuring function of a corresponding architectural frame (Table 2.1). It should be noted, however, that the enforcement of a separation as such is completely artificial and that it can only be accounted for in the realm of analysis. In reality, each analytical coordinate can be found to be at work in every architectural diagram in its virtual state.

	CHAPTER THREE	CHAPTER FOUR	CHAPTER FIVE
TYPE OF EXPERIENCE	Subject-Environment Relationship	Inter-subjective Relationships	Intra-subjective Relationship
ARCHITECTURAL FRAME	Camera Obscura	Concentration Camps	Confessional
HISTORICAL PERIOD	17th & 18th Centuries	20th Century	16th Century
SUBJECTIVE PERSONA	Observer – Environment	Guard – Prisoner	Penitent – Confessor
DOMAIN OF EXPERIENCE	Knowledge Formations	Power Relations	Relation-to-Self
ANALYTICAL AXIS	Epistemological	Political	Ethical

Table 2.1 Table showing chapter structure, along with corresponding analytical coordinates.

CHAPTER THREE:

Camera Obscura

Everything began with an optical principle, the origin of which was quite dubious: when light rays entered a darkened room through a small hole in one of its walls, they generated an inverted image of the exterior scene on the opposite wall (Figure 3.1). This principle, which interchangeably went by the name *pinhole effect* or the *camera obscura effect*, has been known to man since at least fifth century B.C. Starting with early accounts of this effect, this chapter will first rehearse a broad and rather more conventional overview of the history of camera, and then offer a close reading of Jonathan Crary's analysis of the camera obscura in terms of a model of vision specific to seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

3.1. An Instrumental Overview

The earliest account of the pinhole effect is said to be given by the Chinese philosopher Mo Ti, who gave the name “collecting place” or the “locked treasure room” to the phenomenon (Hammond, 1981). A more or less contemporaneous account found expression in the *Problems* of Aristotle (ca 330 BC), regarding how the sunbeams gave out a circular image when they passed through quadrilaterals and how the images of the sun could be cast on the ground through the openings between tree leaves (Burns, 1999). Here, Aristotle's main concern was to watch the solar eclipse without eye-damage, a problem that he managed to solve but could not explain.

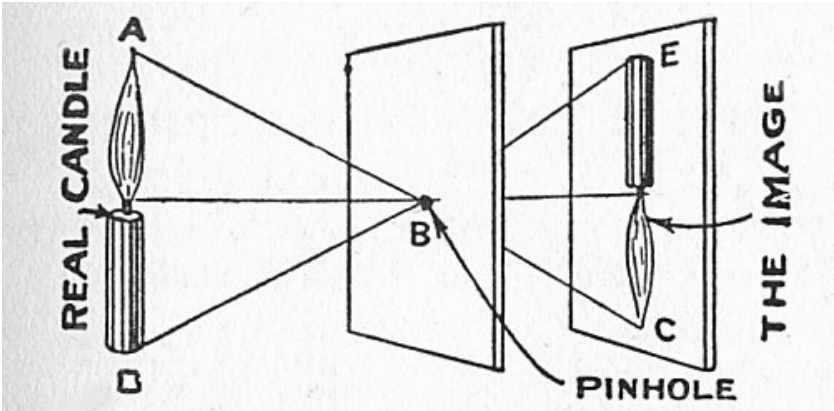

Figure 3.1. Pinhole principle (Lewellen, 1955).

The next step in this early history requires a giant leap in time, following an intermittent series of forerunners. The Arab scholar Ibn al-Haytham, also known as Alhazen, is credited as the father of modern optics because of his correct explanation and recapturing of the intromission theory of vision in tenth and eleventh centuries. It is also in Alhazen's writings that one finds the first scientific investigations into pinhole mechanics. Recognizing the procreative capacity of the pinhole principle in an analogy of the eye for the first time, Alhazen's *Book of Optics* documents his deduction of the linearity of light with the help of a well-known three candle experiment. It also describes the correct means of capturing a solar eclipse, along with the properties of simple concave/convex lenses and mirrors (Sabra, 2003; Sabra, 2007; "Ibn al-Haytham," 2008).

In the following centuries up until Renaissance, the pinhole technique was used or mentioned in various situations, ranging from astronomic observations to "moving shows," the veracity of which are the subject of conflicting arguments[30]. The transition

[30] Among numerous names associated with the history of the camera obscura are: Roger Bacon (who speaks of the dark room as means of safely observing the sun), Gillaume de Saint-Cloud (who recommends the use of the camera against impairments of the eye); and Arnaldus de Villanova (whose scarcely-known experimentations with "moving shows," which place the audience in a dark room while having the actors perform outside, signal one of the earliest instances of a possible intersection between image-projection and live performance, or cinema and theater) (Scharf, 1974; Hammond, 1981; Steadman, 2001).

to Renaissance is unsurprisingly associated with the Italian architects Fillipo Brunelleschi and Leon Battista Alberti[31]. But the actual honor of describing in detail the workings of the camera obscura for the first time belongs to Leonardo da Vinci's 1502-dated *Codex Atlanticus* and 1508-dated *Manuscript D* (Eder, 1945). Although these manuscripts remained unknown until they were deciphered and published by Venturi in 1797, they still provide some evidence in favor of the utilization of the dark room in explaining the physiology of the human eye (Figure 3.2), against the popular view that camera obscura was primarily appropriated as a drawing device during Renaissance.

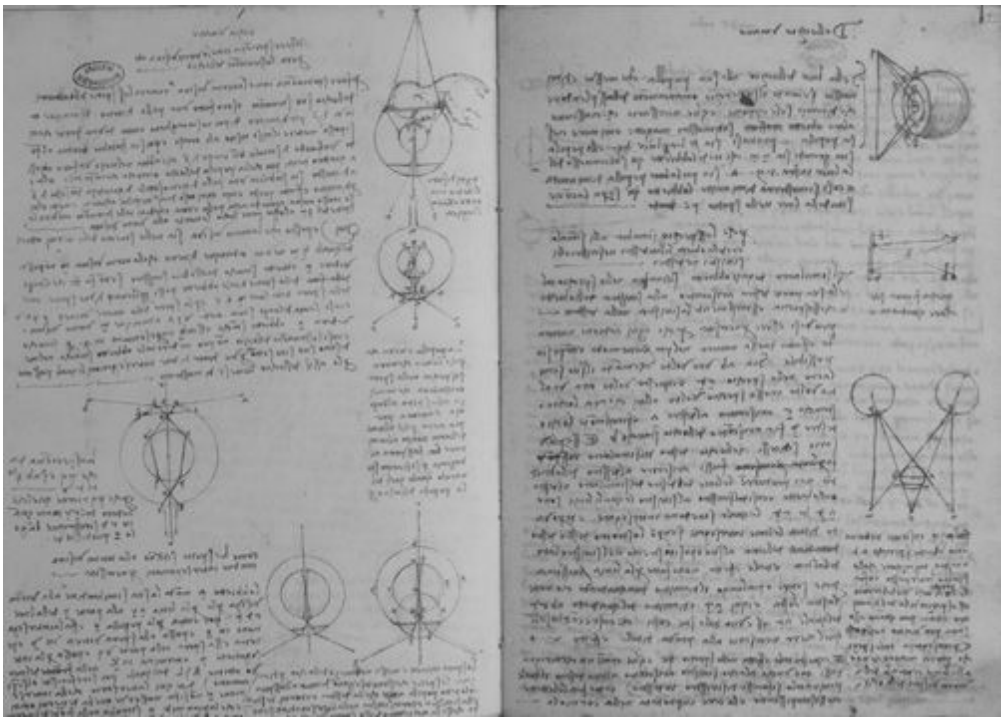

Figure 3.2. Leonardo's view of the eye's optics, from *MS D*, 1508 (retrieved from <<www.universalleonardo.org>>).

[31] On the one hand, Brunelleschi's use of the camera obscura is said to have greatly effected his "discovery" of pictorial perspective. On the other hand, Alberti's descriptions of an instrument called "intersector" in his *Treatise on Painting* is usually confused with the camera obscura, whereas it actually stands much closer to camera lucida. The source of the confusion is probably a misreading of Vasari's *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, in which we also find references to "show-boxes" that are in fact a lot more reminiscent of the magic lanterns of Drebbel and Kircher than they are of the camera obscura (for details, see Veltman's *Sources and Literature of Perspective,* volumes 1 and 3). Although Brunelleschi and Alberti seem to mark a move away from a scientific or explanatory utilization of the camera towards a much more prioritized artistic instrumentality (i.e. drawing true-to-life pictures), it is worth noting that the appearance of these two names in the history of the camera is more likely to be the result of a retrospective confluence of perspectival and cameratic practices.

Since Da Vinci's manuscripts fell prey to a publication delay that lasted about three centuries, Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture* (1914) turned out to be credited as the earliest published description of the camera obscura – as it was translated in 1521 by Caesare Caesariano, a student under Da Vinci for some time. In the meantime, a Dutch astronomer Reinerus Gemma-Frisius observed a solar eclipse on the 1544, and later provided an illustration of the event in 1545, which is taken to be the first published illustration of a camera obscura (Fiorentini, 2006) (Figure 3.3). A contemporary account was given by Girolamo Cardano, who provided very graphic descriptions of darkroom pictures and their appearances (Burns, 1999). Cardano is also credited for having initiated the use of a convex lens in the aperture for the first time, as an extension of his projection scenes of the outdoors[32].

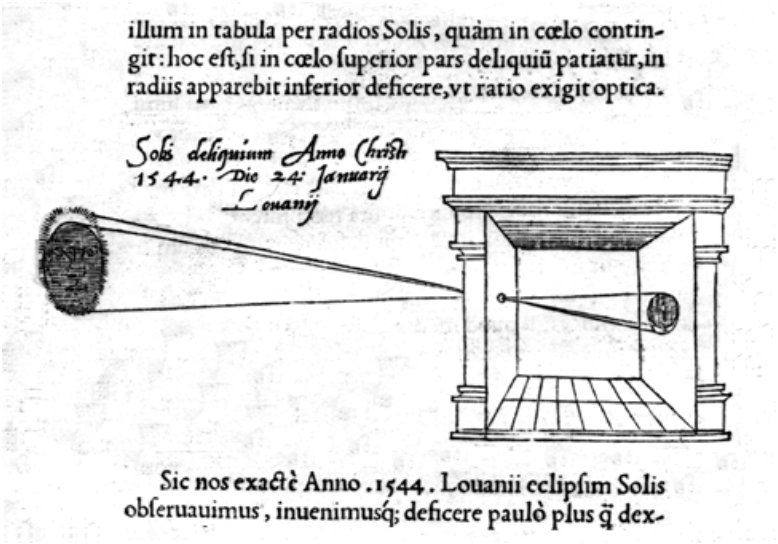

Figure 3.3. The first published illustration of camera obscura by Gemma-Frisius (Gernsheim, 1982).

When della Porta's *Magiae Naturalis Libri* finally entered the picture as a popular piece

[32] Stedman (2001) argues that what Cardano called "*orbis vitra*" could quite likely be just a concave mirror to concentrate light-rays. But, in any case, Cardano's scene projections, accompanied by sound effects, immediately place him on the same track with Arnauld de Villanova.

of scientific literature in sixteenth century, the scene was apparently already saturated with plenty of dark room prescriptions. However, this did not prevent della Porta from being credited as the inventor of camera obscura, mostly because of the high-level of publicity and popularity surrounding his "natural magic." This popularity was also due to the way in which he recommended the camera to be used as an artistic aid in portraiture and landscape drawings as well as in reproductions of other paintings. With the help of a crystal glass, which gave out a hyper-real image much alike that of a lens, he described how everyone with a bit of skill could draw outlines of figures with ease (Wenczel, 2007).

Following della Porta, the number of improvements increased each day. Daniele Barbaro inserted, in 1568, a lens and a diaphragm into the body of the camera (Burns, 1999); Friedrich Risner constructed, in 1572, a small hut that could be carried around the countryside; Giovanni Battista Benedetti suggested, in 1585, the use of a 45 degree mirror for image inversion; Kepler invented, in 1620, a portable tent-type camera (Gorman, 2007), etc. As a result of this long process accompanied by shrinkage in size and improvement in optical quality, the camera was disengaged from its necessary locus in a large, stationery room and became small enough to be carried by a single person by 1657 (Figure 3.4 and 3.5). The transformation of an optical device into an artistic instrument was almost complete.

Remarkable as they happened to be, however, these instruments were still challenged by the problem of being restricted to vertical projection since the artists nevertheless preferred to sketch their subject matter on laptop pads. The solution to this perplexity came from Johann Zahn, who utilized a mirror to invert the image in what is known as the "reflex box camera" in his *Oculus Artificialis Teledioptricus*, in 1685[33] (Figure 3.6). A

[33] There is also Johann Christoph Sturm's first-time prescription of a reflex mirror in 1676. Zahn's contribution is to improve upon Sturm's design and introduce lenses with longer and shorter focal lengths. Zahn also initiates the idea of covering the interior of the camera with black paint (to avoid internal reflections) and the construction of solar microscopes (as an extension of Kircher's early insect projections) (Gernsheim, 1982).

rival model was hatched by Robert Hooke, who announced in 1694 his "picture-box" – a conic device, especially designed for travelers, that required the user to insert his head and shoulders into the instrument (Fiorentini, 2006) (Figure 3.7). Whatever the case, with these final twists, the camera was once and for all said to become the ultimate drawing aid for the mobile artist[34] (Figure 3.9). It was during this proliferation period in early seventeenth century that Kepler, who used it for topographical mapping, coined the term "camera obscura" (initially *camera clausa*) for the first time and discussed it in both of his works on optics – *Ad Vitellionem Paralipomena* of 1604 and *Dioptrice* of 1611 (Dupre, 2007). It was also in this period that the camera obscura met its most-cited illustration in the writings of Athanasius Kircher who, in *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae*, dated 1646, depicted a portable cubicle that consisted of an inner shell containing a transparent paper and an outer shell with lenses in the center of each wall (Figure 3.8). In short, during the latter half of the seventeenth century, camera descriptions proliferated across Europe as popular aids to sketching, painting, architectural drafting, topographical drawing, and spying (Figure 3.10).

In late 1800s, a final development situated the camera within an economy of mass entertainment. Large chambers with table-like "screens" and special lens arrangements provided an audience of ten to fifteen people with the possibility of watching live images, transferred from a cupola installed on the roof (Figure 3.11). Mostly located at holiday resorts, outdoor places of entertainment, and amusement parks, these projections in color and movement are said to have given birth to a proto-cinematic experience (Figure 3.12 and 3.13).

[34] It is important to note that it is not through first-person accounts by the artists but through a secondary and recommendatory literature that many historians arrive at this conclusion. A prominent Dutch physicist and astronomer, Constantin Huygens, for instance, introduces and demonstrates the camera obscura to many Dutch artists (Wheelock 1977a), including Jan Vermeer – a.k.a. Vermeer van Delft – although his use of this device has recently been the subject of intense inquiry and discussion (Gowing, 1952; Seymour, 1964; Schwarz, 1966; Fink, 1971; Steadman, 2001). Numerous artists throughout the 18th century, in addition to Vermeer, are said to have used the device as an aid to drawing. These include: Canaletto, Reynolds, and Sandby (Wheelock, 1977b).

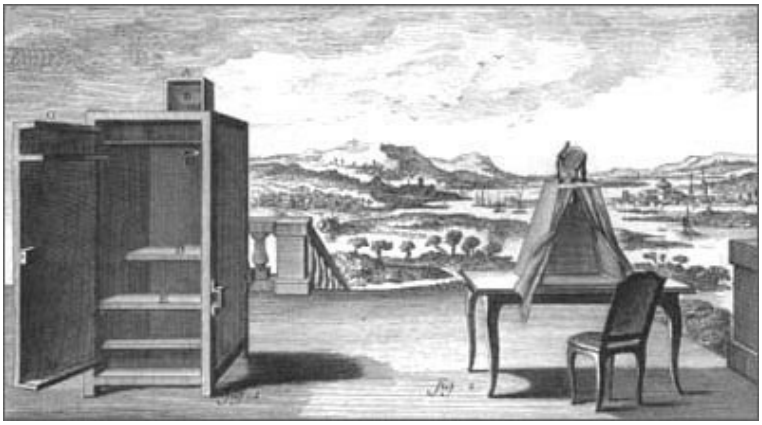

Figure 3.4. Portable cubicles and tent-cameras (Burns, 1999).

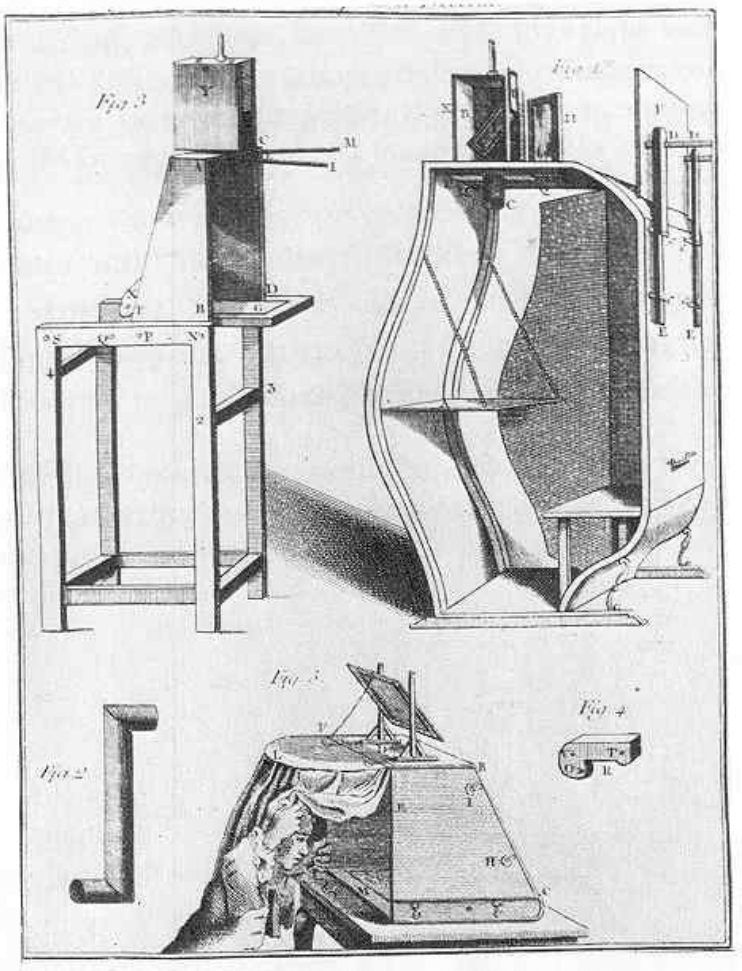

Figure 3.5. Various forms of cameras obscuras, from sedan chairs to table-tops (Burns, 1999).

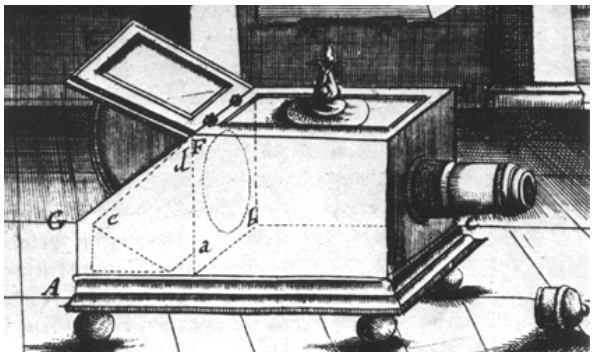

Figure 3.6. Zahn's reflex box camera obscura, 1685 (Burns, 1999).

Figure 3.7. Hooke's portable camera, 1694 (Burns, 1999).

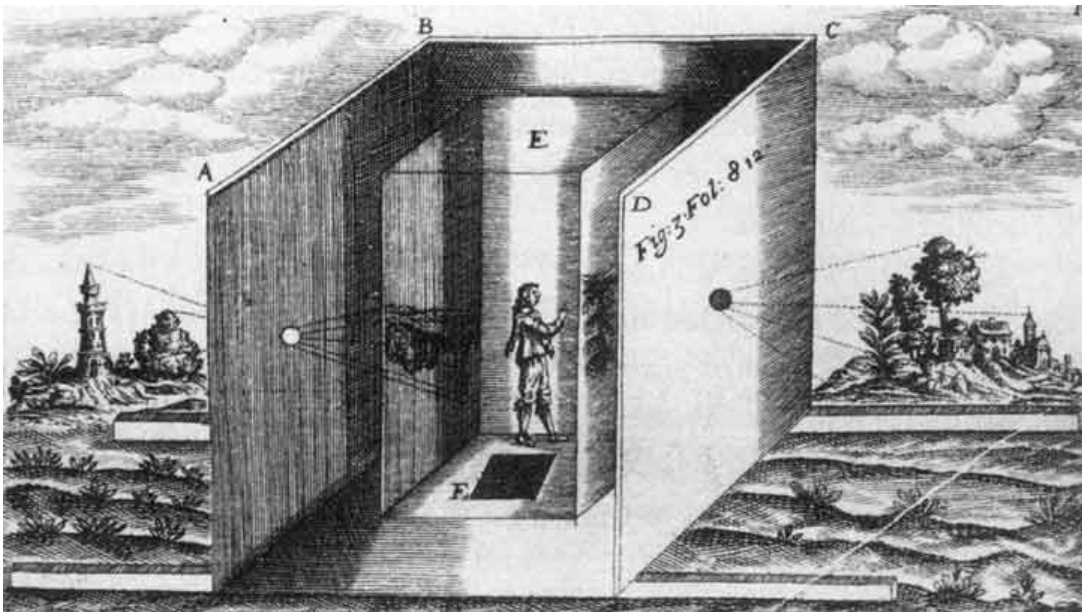

Figure 3.8. Camera obscura illustration by Kircher, 1646 (retrieved from ECHO European Cultural Heritage Online, <<http://echo.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de>>).

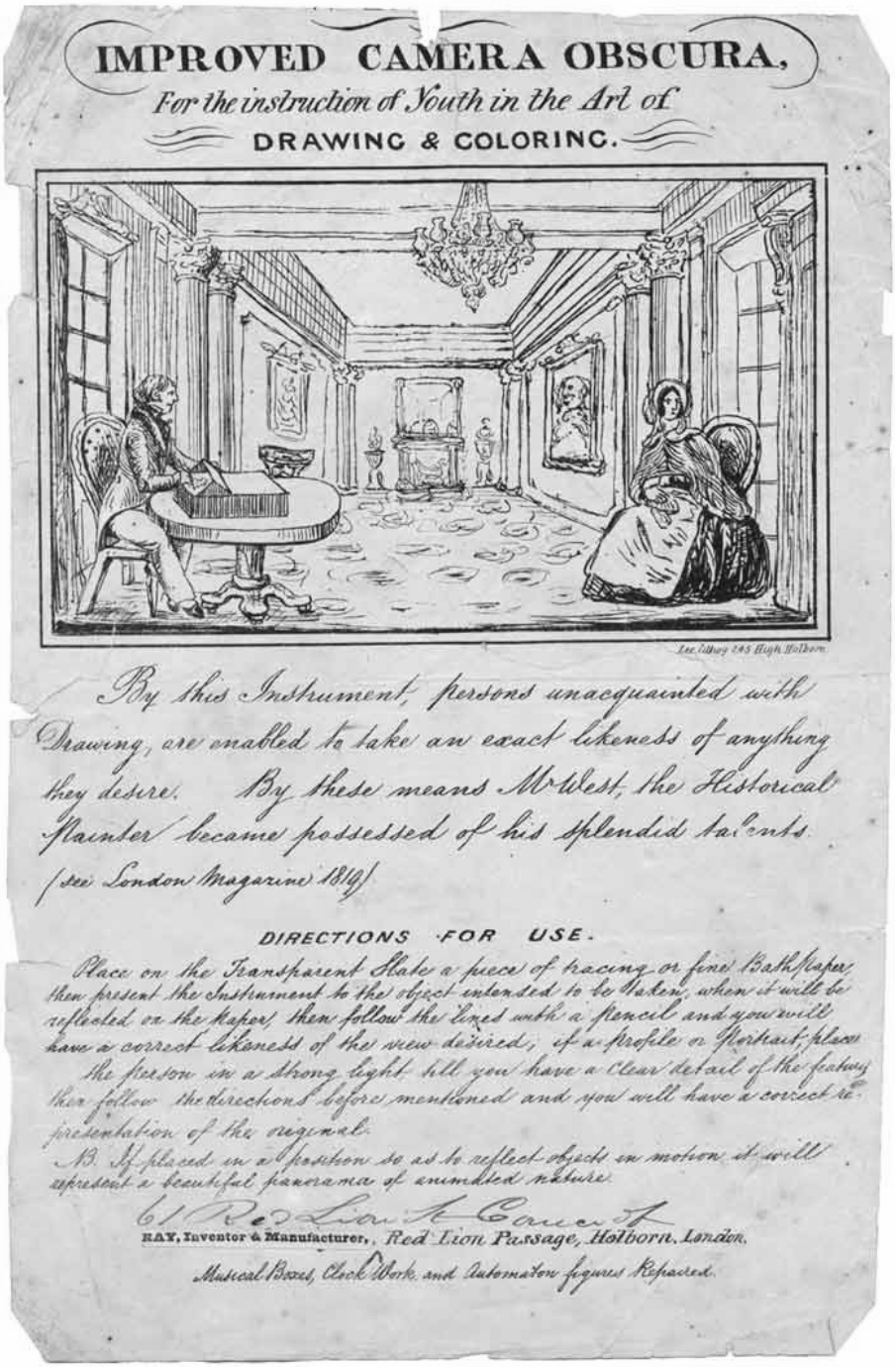

Figure 3.9. Camera obscura directions for use in drawing and coloring. (retrieved from Bright Bytes Studio, <<www.brightbytes.com>>).

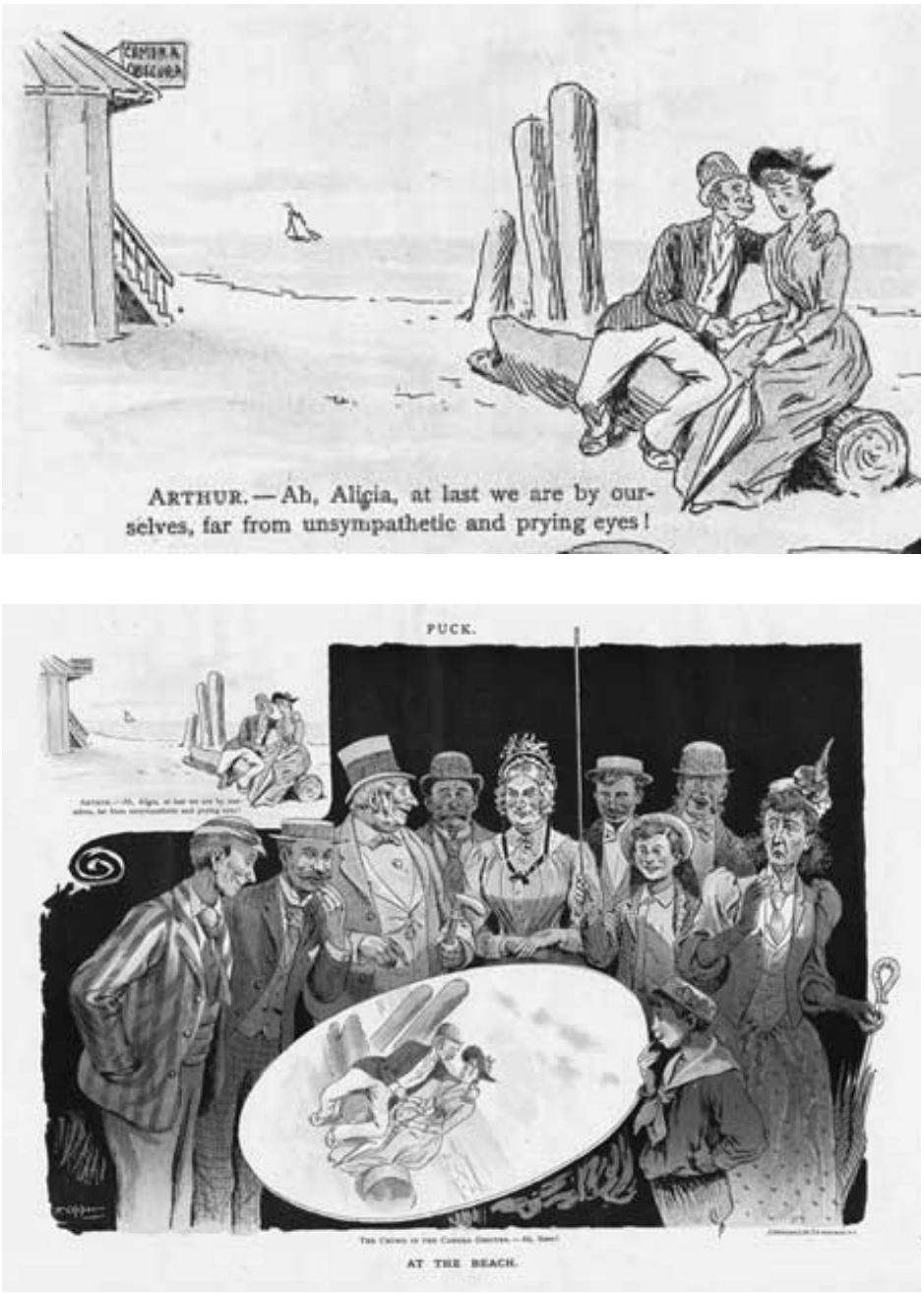

Figure 3.10. "Ah, Alicia, at least we are by ourselves, far from unsympathetic and prying eyes!" (retrieved from Bright Bytes Studio, <<www.brightbytes.com>>).

Figure 3.11. Card-postal towards the end of 19th century, "at the Central Park" (retrieved from Bright Bytes Studio, <<www.brightbytes.com>>).

Figure 3.12. Card-postal with camera obscura at St. Monica, California (retrieved from Bright Bytes Studio, <<www.brightbytes.com>>).

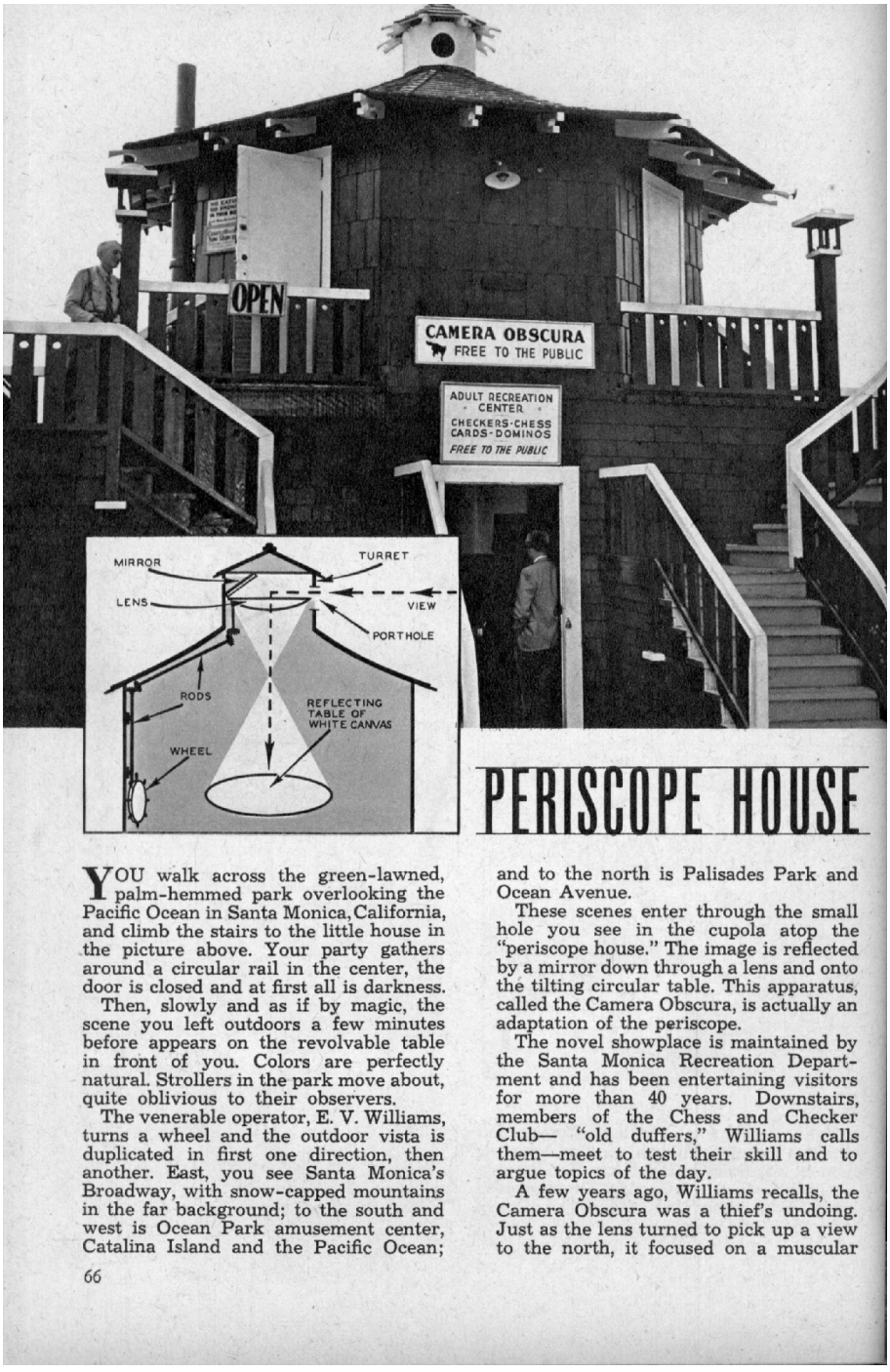

Figure 3.13. The same camera at St. Monica, also known as the "Periscope House." (The image from May, 1947 issue of *Mechanix Illustrated*; retrieved from <<http://blog.modernmechanix.com>>).

* * * * *

To summarize, it was possible to encounter four different types of dark room structures by the end of nineteenth century: (1) camera obscura proper with no intermediaries, resulting in vertically and horizontally inverted images; (2) camera obscura proper with an intermediary shell or screen, resulting in horizontally correct but vertically inverted images; (3) camera obscura with periscopic apertures that incorporated 45 degree reflectors, resulting in both vertically and horizontally correct images; and (4) box-type cameras with 45 degree reflectors, resulting in vertically correct but horizontally inverted images (Figure 3.14).[35]

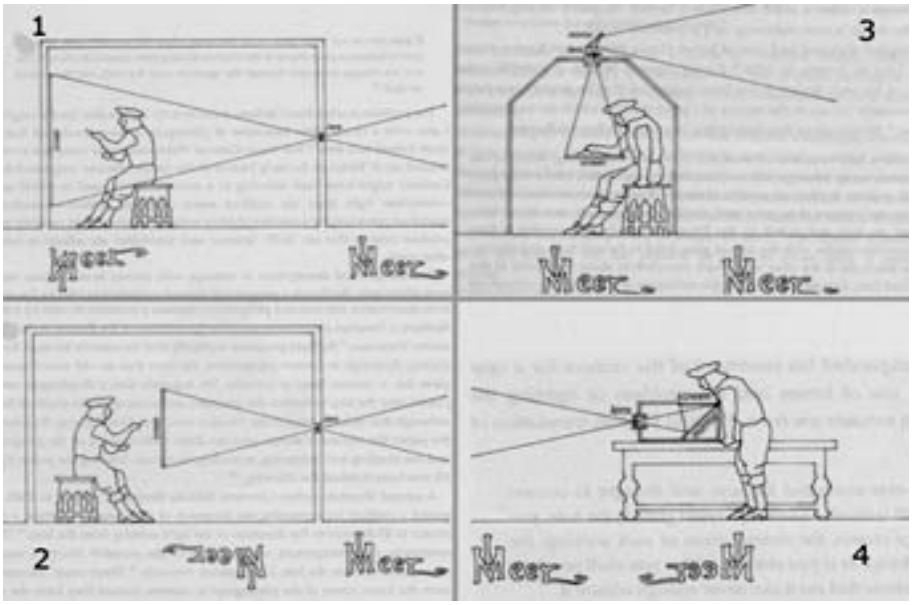

Figure 3.14. Four major types of camera obscura (Lefevre, 2007).

[35] There is finally the possibility of combinatory fixtures such as Scheiner's combination of a telescope with a camera obscura or Winterschmidt's solar microscope (Gorman, 2007). But these examples, representing extreme and singular cases of innovation, do not comprise a unified category – even if they do, they can only be said to qualify the aperture without challenging the structure. So, they could legitimately be left out. It is also worth noting that, when dealing historically with a discourse or practice like that of camera obscura, one is limited to textual descriptions or illustrations. But, as it will be more clear in the following sections, this is not simply a technical problem such as lack of resources that one has to overcome. There is, for instance, one recent experimental model built for the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, even if this is not an exact replica but a generic device from which all types of camera obscura can supposedly be configured. Yet, even in this case, it makes no sense to talk about a return back to, or a reconstruction of, an originary camera obscura experience. We simply can never assume the epistemological coordinates of a by-gone century from where we stand. As we live in a totally different experiential field, we simply have to limit ourselves to *describing descriptions* at best.

The same historical outline can also be reorganized with reference to practical use and purpose: (1) the use of camera obscura *as a scientific model*, where its explanatory and experimental power comes forth (as in Alhazen's experiments with the linearity of light rays or Leonardo's analogy to the eye); (2) the use of camera obscura *as an optical instrument* for observation and cartographic purposes (as in Gemma-Frisius's astronomic/solar observations or Kepler's topographical mapping and measurement practices); (3) the use of camera obscura *as an artistic device* for the purpose of producing true-to-life images and of drawing correct perspectives (as in della Porta's painting hints or Vermeer's actual practice); and (4) the use of camera obscura *as popular entertainment*, where the issue of live spectatorship takes center stage (as in Arnold of Villanova's quasi-theatrical performances or the proto-cinematographic site-observatories).

The fourth of these categories historically appeared only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (with temporally-scattered precursors). The third category became available only after the incorporation of the lens into the body of the camera in the sixteenth century. And the first and second categories have been existent ever since the early beginnings, sometimes competing, sometimes supporting each other – the variation depending on the discursive field or the discipline involved[36]. With this sort of a categorization, it seems possible to detect a gradual shift in practice from scientific explanation, experimentation, and observation towards artistic production and popular entertainment. Nonetheless, the latter two eventually came to dominate majority of historical perspectives on the whole cameratic enterprise.

3.2. Towards a Genealogy of the Dark Room

As can be seen so far, when it comes to the "evolution" of the camera obscura, any linear

[36] I obviously and deliberately stop before the use of camera as a photographic and cinematographic apparatus since, from then on, begins a totally different realm, where first chemical and then digital processes start to rule our whole relationship with the device even if the underlying principle remains the same.

narrative based on object-continuity is immediately challenged by a great deal of variation. If nothing else, the pinhole principle as an empirical fact of physics is one thing, but the camera obscura as a historically specific model of vision that determined the status and possibilities of an observer is another. This variation cannot simply be accounted for in terms of improvement or shifts in practice. In other words, it simply is not possible to impose pregiven continuities upon a multifaceted reality as that of the camera. What does it mean, then, to talk about the camera obscura as a "model"? How will it be possible to identify a repertory for the observer inside and claim that repertory to be historically specific?

In order to respond to these questions, the following sections will be drawing upon Jonathan Crary's analysis of the camera obscura in *Techniques of the Observer* (1990). For Crary shows that there is a certain consistency and regularity with which the formal relations constituted by the camera are repeated throughout seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is only when such regularity comes to the fore that the multiplicity of camera's local manifestations can be bypassed and the camera can be analyzed as a historically distinguishable assemblage of seeing and speaking.

Towards this end, one of the points against which Crary attacks is the common conflation of the effects of the camera obscura with techniques of linear perspective. While the two practices were indubitably related, the fact that they positioned the observer against two different realities calls for a distinction. Camera obscura positioned an interiorized body against an exterior world whereas perspective positioned a body against a two-dimensional representation. In other words, the camera gave rise to a much more complex mode of subjectivation than the observer's relation to a picture-making procedure. This complexity also disqualifies the somewhat biased art-historical interpretations of the camera obscura in terms primarily of a function of generating images, which in fact corresponded only to one among many of its uses. Not only did the cameratic apparatus give life to animate images more life-like than their original

objects, but the orderly cut it made of the undifferentiated field outside only allowed a view of the field without representing it. Thus, the experience to which a perspectival construction gave rise was quite incommensurable with that of the projection of the camera[37] (Crary, 1990, pp. 32-34).

Another misconception to be treated carefully is related with the interpretation of camera obscura as representative of an intrinsically Northern European model of visuality. At issue here is Svetlana Alper's (1983) Dutch "art of describing" and the way in which she finds essential correlations between seventeenth century Dutch painting and Kepler's statements about the camera obscura. According to Crary, Alpers disregards the transnational character of intellectual and scientific life in Europe during this period. She neglects other contemporary thinkers such as Leibniz, Descartes, Newton, and Locke, in whose work camera obscura held a central position. She also reduces the camera to a free-floating and transhistorical "option" of seeing that can be accessed by an a priori observer, who avails this option to oneself at any time with no respect to material and historical conditions hovering over his vision. Instead, Crary emphasizes again the importance of introducing discontinuities into an otherwise undifferentiated history of commonalities (1990, pp. 34-36).

Crary's most important strategy, in the sense of proving most useful for this study, is to disengage the history of vision from its empirical manifestations in artworks and from the idealist notion of an isolable perception. Both of these remain tied to shifts in representational practices at a surface level. Instead, he focuses on those underlying structures that they take shape in the body of the observer. "Vision and its effects," Crary argues, "are always inseparable from the possibilities of an observing subject who is both the historical product *and* the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification" (p. 5; emphasis in the original). Defined as someone who

[37] Two influential and exemplary accounts that establish a direct relation between perspectival grid and Cartesian subjectivity are given by Panofsky (1991) and Bryson (1983). For an in-detail argument against such an easy conflation, see Massey (1997).

sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, the status of the observer is conceived of here, *a la* Foucault, as the *effect* of an irreducibly heterogeneous network of discursive, social, technological, and institutional relations within which he is embedded. The observer therefore is not someone who preexists this continually shifting yet nevertheless systemic field of experience. Instead, his bodily reality emerges as a field on which historicity of vision is materialized and itself becomes visible (p. 6).

* * * * *

In summing up, there are three rules to be followed in delineating the camera obscura as a model: (1) to be wary of melding together two such different regimes and techniques as those of camera and perspective – so as to differentiate the two experiential modes they embodied; (2) to concentrate on identifying temporal discontinuity and difference – so as to avoid a blind imposition of spatial continuity and identity; and (3) to differentiate the historically singular mode of subjectivation to which the camera gave rise – so as to extract it from an otherwise technological or ideological tale of continuity.

3.3. "Camera Obscura and Its Subject"

Crary's first stop is Giovanni Battista della Porta's 1558-dated *Magia Naturalis*. This is because Renaissance science, to which most of della Porta's work otherwise conforms, is undermined at the same time by della Porta's own initiation of another organization of knowledge and seeing. His "natural magic" lies at the intersection of, and the convergence between, a fundamentally united world *and* the means of observing this unity. The observer of this world aims at directing and harnessing the forces of nature by employing a universal language of symbols and analogies (Crary, 1990, pp. 36-37). In della Porta's universe, everything is conceived to be adjacent to each other, linked together in a chain.

This is a Renaissance tradition of magic, in which becoming one with an object is the necessary means of contemplating it (Foucault, 1970, p. 18). In such a world, "every sensory perception [becomes] an act of fusion and reunification" (Cassirer, 1972, p. 148). For della Porta's natural magic, an observer can become fully engaged with a particular object through a number of methods, among which camera obscura was simply one. It holds no exclusive priority as a site or mode of observation. However, the camera obscura also abolishes this interlacing of nature and its representation, this indistinction between reality and its projection, by instituting an optical regime that a priori separates and distinguishes the image from the object. For the readers of della Porta several decades later, the collapse of the Renaissance adjacency of knower and known is only the necessary price of attaining an unrivaled and privileged means of observation, promised by the camera (Crary, 1990, p. 38).

3.3.1. Disembodied Eye vs. Contingency of Vision

The traces of a break with this Renaissance tradition can be found at work through a variety of camera obscura descriptions. The earliest fragment on which Crary concentrates comes from Descartes' instructions in *La Dioptrique*. Here, Descartes begins his account with a conventional analogous relationship between the eye and the camera:

> Suppose a chamber is shut up apart from a single hole, and a glass is placed in front of this hole with a white sheet stretched at a certain distance behind it so the light coming from objects outside forms images on the sheet. Now it is said that the room represents the eye; the hole the pupil; the lens the crystalline humour. (quoted in Crary, 1990, p. 47)

But in an immediate displacement that follows, Descartes suggests that an extracted eye, taken from a dead person or an ox, is to be hollowed out and used as a lens to cover the aperture of the camera (Figure 3.15). Thus, despite many readings of his work in terms of an inherent ocularcentrism, one of the complexities of Descartes' fundamentally "visual" metaphysics makes itself felt right away: the images observed within the camera, which now represents the mind, have no relation whatsoever with the visual capacity of a

human eye. They instead reflect the vision of a disembodied cyclopean eye, detached from the observer's body (Judovitz, 1993). This radical disjunction from the body grants an incorporeal status to the bovine eye, which goes through a process of glorification that associates it with the divine.

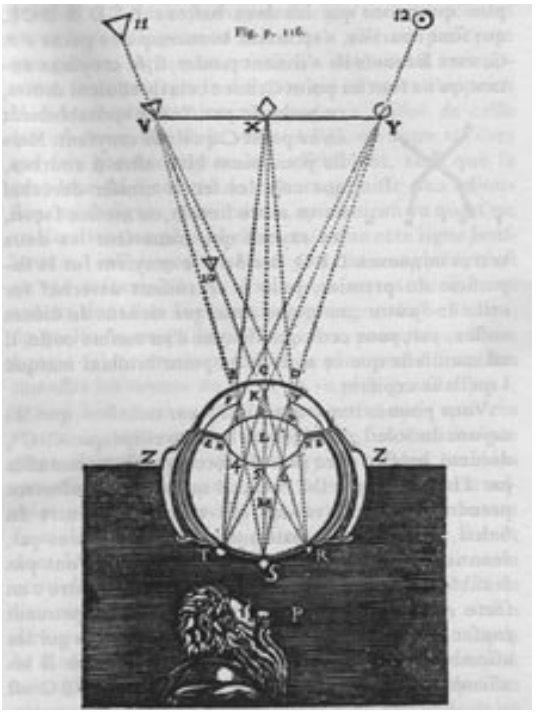

Figure 3.15. Man observing the retina image
by means of an anatomically prepared ox eye (Lefevre, 2007).

The camera obscura now embodies man's position between God and the world. It mimics in a perfectly congruous manner the Cartesian motifs of founding knowledge on a purely objective view of the world and that of escaping from the uncertainties and confusions of the human sensory mechanism. The space of the camera obscura, insofar as it is marked by an enclosedness and darkness separated from the exterior world, gives concrete shape to Descartes's "I will now shut my eyes, I shall stop my ears, I shall disregard my senses" (quoted in Crary, 1990, p. 43). Crary notes that, for Descartes,

> one knows the world "uniquely by perception of the mind," and the secure positioning of the self within an empty interior space is a precondition for knowing the outer world. . . . The orderly and calculable penetration of light rays through the single opening of the camera corresponds to the

> flooding of the mind by the light of reason, not the potentially dangerous dazzlement of the senses by the light of sun. (ibid.)

It is this metaphysical rather than mechanical vision that provides the camera with a vantage point analogous to the eye of God. By removing the ocular membranes from the body of the eye, Descartes ensures the transparency of the monocular device and escapes the latent opacity and obscurity of the binocular human eye. The result is a full-scale rejection of sensory evidence in favor of the orderly representations of the monocular apparatus, whose authenticity lies beyond doubt (Jay, 1994).

Although Descartes' God-like eye seems to lead one back to some sort of a theological point of view, it is worth remembering that the camera obscura model of vision is embedded within a post-Copernican world, in which there is no absolutely privileged point. In this regard, it is Leibniz's monadic expression of a fragmented and decentered world that complements the Cartesian camera by emphasizing the contingency of visibility, a problem never raised by Descartes (Crary, 1990, p. 50). At the core of Leibniz's thought is the goal of reconciling the validity of universal truths with the inescapable fact of a world constituted by multiple points of view (p. 52). Although it attributes an inherently fundamental partiality and relativity to each and every position, Leibniz's monadic viewpoint never pushes towards the other extreme where there is no truth. This is because, in Leibniz, every monad has the capacity to reflect in itself the whole universe, even if this reflection is limited to each monad's own particular and finite viewpoint. Leibniz writes:

> We should have to postulate that there is a screen in this dark room to receive the species, and that it is not uniform but is diversified by folds representing items of innate knowledge; and, what is more, that this screen or membrane, being under tension, has a kind of elasticity or active force, and indeed that it acts (or reacts) in ways which are adapted both to past folds and to new ones. (quoted ibid., p. 51)

The monadic camera's capacity to structure the ideas it receives evokes a sort of activity that not only mimes Cartesian order, but also rivals the passivity accorded to the same device by Locke.

3.3.2. Camera as a Model of Self-Examination

Crary reads Locke's 1690-dated *Essay on Human Understanding* not by itself, but in relation to Newton's 1704-dated *Opticks*. Accordingly, these two texts, without necessarily being assimilated into each other, jointly demonstrate the camera's duplicate role. It is an apparatus of observing empirical phenomena, but it is at the same time an apparatus of reflective introspection and self-examination.

Newton's description supports this duplicate role in two ways. On the one hand, the camera figures as the site of Newton's inductive procedures, in a way becoming the ground on which his knowledge becomes possible. On the other hand, Newton himself figures in this model as an organizer, "the stager of an apparatus from whose actual functioning he is physically distinct" (p. 40). Besides this double gesture, even more important is the acknowledgment of the extensive space between the pinhole on the wall and the image-plane. It is precisely in this ambiguous space that the body of the observer is situated as a marginal supplementary presence. Unlike a perspectival construction, the observer in the camera is not restricted to a point but is rendered mobile in a way that still preserves his subjection to an objective order:

> On the one hand the observer is disjunct from the pure operation of the device and is there as a disembodied witness to a mechanical and transcendental representation of the objectivity of the world. On the other hand, however, his or her presence in the camera implies a spatial and temporal simultaneity of human subjectivity and objective apparatus. (Crary, 1990, p. 41)

The result is a ghostly subject incapable of self-representation.[38]

Locke presents the apparatus of the camera along the same lines as part of his general project of introspection, throughout which he pursues a means of spatially visualizing the operations of the intellect. In a tone even stronger than Newton, he shows the eye of

[38] The same incapacity of man to find a place for himself in the Classical scene of representation is also demonstrated by Foucault in his analysis of Velasquez's *Las Meninas* (1970, pp. 3-16).

the observer to be completely separate from the mechanism of image-production:

> External and internal sensations are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover are the windows by which light is let into this dark room. For, methinks, the understanding is not much unlike a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little opening left . . . to let in external visible resemblances, or some idea of things without; would the pictures coming into such a dark room but stay there and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion it would be very much resemble the understanding of a man. (quoted in Crary, 1990, pp. 41-42)

Complicating the picture even more is the juridical layer thrown over the process by Locke's introduction, elsewhere in his text, of what it literally means to be "in camera" in seventeenth-century England: "within the chambers of a judge or person of title" (p. 42). This way, in addition to giving structure to the observatory act of the subject, the apparatus begins to assign to the viewer the status of an inspector or judge. A specification as such, of a more self-legislative and authoritative function, radically modifies the previous (automatized and neutral) interpretations of the camera. The subject, now allowed to police the correspondence between interior representation and exterior world, begins to be able to exclude anything found to be unruly or foul; "reflective introspection overlaps with a regime of self-discipline" (p. 43).

3.3.3. A Tabular Image

It is at this juncture that the empiricism of the Lockean enterprise finds common ground with its rationalistic adversary, Descartes, who asserts that "perception, or the action by which we perceive, is not a vision . . . but is solely an inspection by the mind" (quoted ibid.). This way, it becomes apparent that there is an underlying structure, which allows even incompatible standpoints to exist on the same experiential field. This structure finds its paradigmatic expression in the camera. Turning into the compulsory site from which vision can be conceived or represented, the camera leaves behind, within several decades, its status as one among many instruments of visual options and begins to indicate the appearance of a new model of subjectivity, the hegemony of an unforeseen subject-effect. The two principal operations of this new subject-effect

include: (1) individuation of the observer and (2) decorporealization of vision. The first of these operations, which directly associates the camera obscura with a certain metaphysics of interiority, corresponds to a withdrawal from the world. It brings about an effect of regulating and purifying one's relation to the manifold contents of the outside. The second operation on the other hand disengages the physical body of the observer from the act of seeing. It authenticates and legitimizes the monadic viewpoint of the individual while the relations between the mechanical apparatus and the pregiven world of objective truth supersede the observer's physical and sensory experience (pp. 38-39).

It might seem so far that these readings only exemplify various appropriations of an architectural metaphor on a discursive plane occupied by a group of, sometimes contradicting, philosophies. But there are no metaphors at work here. These conceptualizations immediately convert the camera obscura model from a disinterested device to an "epistemology engine" (Ihde, 2000) that defines how, throughout a particular historical stratum, an observer knows and interacts with his environment. Whenever one succumbs to a mode of subjectivation marked by the two principal operations of the camera obscura – namely, individuation and decorporealization – one is at once located on the same experiential field as that of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *One is always in the camera – not only when one does not even have eyes with which to see, but also when there is not even a camera*. This point is confirmed by the last model to be extracted from Crary's narrative: that of Bishop Berkeley. What Berkeley discusses in his 1732-dated *The Theory of Vision Vindicated* is not the camera obscura but a coinciding model of perception:

> We may suppose a diaphanous plain erected near the eye, perpendicular to the horizon, and divided into small equal squares. A straight line from the eye to the utmost limit of the horizon, passing through this diaphanous plain, as projected or represented in the perpendicular plain, would rise. The eye sees all the parts and objects in the horizontal plain through certain corresponding squares of the perpendicular diaphanous phrase. . . . It is true this diaphanous plain, and the images supposed to be projected thereon, are altogether of a tangible nature: But then there are pictures relative to those

> images: and those pictures have an order among themselves. (quoted in Crary, 1990, p. 55)

Even if he seems to be talking about a perspectival grid and even if there is no enclosure that surrounds the viewer like the camera obscura, what Berkeley explicitly describes here is someone who is looking at a projection that extends onto a field exterior to oneself. Even more important is the way in which he describes the orderly surface of this visual field as a grid on which the universal grammar of "the Author of nature" can be recognized (p. 55).

In any case, be it Berkeley's diaphanous plain, Locke's *tabula rasa*, or Leibniz's elastic screen, what is faced by the eighteenth century observer is a unified space of order, which is indifferent to his own sensory and physiological presence. This is an order on which the contents of the world can be studied, compared, and made known in terms of a multitude of relationships. Attributed to the camera obscura as a field of projection, the very same unity can be found in the space of Descartes' *mathesis universalis*, in which all objects of thought "irrespective of subject matter" can be ordered and compared: "Our project being, not to inspect the isolated natures of things, but to compare them with each other so that some may be known on the basis of others" (quoted ibid., p. 56). The historical specificity of this unity, of this comparative and organizational ground, is given a name by Heidegger. It is "the age of the world picture" (1977), which refers not to a metaphoric act of looking at the world like a picture but to the process of world's turning-into-a-picture. From another perspective, Foucault baptizes this exhausting ordering of things in the Classical age as the formation of a "table," which becomes the center of knowledge in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and is characterized by the "discovery of simple elements and their progressive combination" (1970, pp. 74-75).

CHAPTER FOUR:

Camp

Among the three instances on which this study is based, the camp unquestionably has been and still is by far the most difficult. The pressure comes from all sides: not only the atrocity of the events themselves, but also the variety of reactions they trigger; not only the trouble in establishing facts, but also the burden of not knowing how to approach those that appear to be established; not only the extensive and multi-disciplinary nature of existing literature and sources, but also the insufficiency of any one single perspective; and, as far as the specific purposes of this study are concerned, not only the apparent marginality and triviality of architectural conditions, but also the insurmountable variety observed in the spatial identities and configurations of those places that function as camp-sites.

Reactions towards the camp phenomenon are marked by antithetical tendencies that serve as means towards a wide-array of ends, ranging from downright disavowal to facilitated incorporation. The defensive end of this scale wanders around various popular strategies.[39] The same patterns of deflection are equally duplicated in academic

[39] Some deny not only the camps themselves, but also the knowledge of their existence at the time of their operation. Renomination of camp-sites as "work camps" or "external stations" mystifies the link between forced-labor and extermination. A comparison of death-counts in different camps ends up in a futile, arithmetic balancing of atrocities. Evacuation of the meaning of the word "holocaust" either obscures the reasoning behind it, or transforms it into something deserved or called for. A public acknowledgment of guilt, however sincere, brings about an ineffective reconciliation. There are also those condemnations of "mania" and "inhumanity"; glorifications of "amendment" and "shame"; declarations of a new, nation-wide or global consciousness; statements and practices of "learning from history"; and many others (Sofsky, 1997).

discourse.[40] Nonetheless, somehow, nothing proves enough – in the face of actions and situations, which impose world-historical consequences upon the intellect, and which cramp any individual or collective attempt to intellectualize at the same time. The very name Auschwitz is said to have brought "speculative discourse to an end" (Lyotard quoted in Rose, 1993, p. 63). It is therefore inevitable that, in focusing on an experience as overwhelming as such, this study, like any other, cannot dare to assume any authoritative position or claim complete comprehension. Yet simultaneously it, like many others, cannot resist the temptation to try making some sort of sense out of all this mass.

Considering the limited amount of space there is, this chapter will thus begin by enlisting a series of critical propositions summarizing the approach followed in this study as it feeds upon the works of Giorgio Agamben and Wolfgang Sofsky. Afterwards, a few points regarding the organizational history of the Nazi concentration camps will be highlighted as a background; and then the implications of approaching the camp as a space of sustained exception will be expanded. Finally, a series of architectural features will be identified as common to a large portion of the Nazi *Lager* network and lying at the basis of the camp as a spatial configuration of "absolute power"; and the profile of *Muselmann* will be centralized as a subject figure characterized by the repertory of a radical powerlessness.

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[40] Abstract contemplation defers and extends the weight of the events in space and time. Causal explanation relativizes the magnitude of the crimes. Typological analyses mostly misread the institutional nature of the chaos created therein. Historical investigation almost naturalizes what is in fact an immanent catastrophy. Psychological inferences individualize what are in fact societal and circumstantial factors. Social inferences bypass the unique sort of power that emerges in the clamps of the camp. Claims of incomprehensibility, even if unintentionally, end up carefully sterilizing the horror. Moral measuring of criminalities banalizes concrete acts as well as overlooking the distinction between offenders and their actions. Functional analyses transform perpetrators into ideologically-blind components of a self-absorbed and anonymous killing machine. Architectural studies of the period wind up establishing a series of stylistic traits as expressive of the Nazi regime. Juxtaposition of Auschwitz to other camp situations defies basic premises of theoretical comparability. To grant it singularity, on the other hand, downplays the significance of other camp conjunctures. And many others as well (Sofsky, 1997).

Despite all warnings in favor of incomprehensibility, the concentration camps were produced by human beings with a particular rationale. This doesn't mean, however, that the consequences of their institution can be subjected to a directly regressive analysis, that their origins can be traced back to individual motifs and intentions. In their collective nature, the crimes accommodated by the camp space always already challenge moral prejudices and criteria that traditionally aim at individual actions or social responsibilities, personal psycho-pathologies or ideological fallacies. They challenge any easy entrapment within a concept of crime evaluated plainly juridical terms. It is this challenge that drives Agamben, in his inquiry into the heart of sovereignty in *Homo Sacer* (1998), to seek out the juridico-political structure that underlies the camp.

The other side of this challenge is that, once established, the camp as a frame gave rise to an unpredictable and unforeseen constellation of power relations. Unpredictable in that this constellation decidedly differed from the plans and intentions of the top members of SS bureaucracy. The reality of the camp was actually a contested field. It was characterized by numerous negotiations based on common interests as well as conflicts, contracts as well as hindrances among several parties. In an as much decisive manner, this constellation also differed from any other type of power known to mankind. It is this novelty that allows Wolfgang Sofsky, in his sociological investigation of "the order of terror" (1997), to forge the neologism "absolute power" in approaching the camp.

Despite such singularity in scope and kind, the camp experience as a configuration of absolute power nevertheless had its own mundane regularity and normality. It fed upon some basic principles such as organized terror, instituted uncertainty, complete exposure, relentless isolation, agglomeration of contrasts, ubiquitous harassment, and non-instrumental labor (ibid., pp. 16-27). One of the most important consequences of the emergence of this constellation was that, in the camp, action and actor irretrievably fell apart – in such a way that the monstrosities of the camp cannot easily be attributed to

neither perpetrators nor victims themselves. Such radical disjunction cannot be compensated by a macro-scale analysis or a teleological explanation of causes, just as it cannot be compensated by a tendency to completely impersonalize organized violence. The first of these compensation attempts fails mainly because it aims at, but falls short of, throwing a general light on what are in fact situated, micro-logical processes. The second, on the other hand, is spoiled by the fact that murder or any other cause of suffering does not just occur by itself, that it has to be embodied and enacted by someone, even if in the form of "individual crimes in a collective" (p. 10). It is therefore necessary in approaching the camp to highlight that power structure which is neither general nor individual, but lies precisely in between. This power structure, once let loose, nullifies all categories of social reciprocation such as work, affection, or even discipline, to the point of bringing them to a halt. But in an as much obscure way, it lasts only as long as the interaction between opposing parties and dies immediately when that interaction comes to an end.

* * * * *

With these in mind, the following will stay as much away as possible from condemnations of the camp as the site of "an anomaly belonging to the past" (Agamben, 1998, p. 166), but instead will emphasize the examination of the specific characteristics of the camp as a socio-spatial reality. In other words, it will try to concentrate on the underlying inter-subjective structure that functions like the condition of possibility of the events that took place in the camp, instead of limiting the analysis to the atrocity of these events themselves. In the final analysis, the aim is to recognize in the architecture of the camp the locus of absolute power which is extremely dissociative but itself only exists as social. It is also worth noting that the analysis will be strictly limited to the National Socialist camp system as a unique and paradigmatic instance of mass extermination – defining, with its industrial and institutional breadth, the experiential horizon of twentieth century. Though, it is the author's contention that most of these

findings would equally be valid, or at least illuminating, if applied to other cases.

4.1. A Quadruple History

The history of the Nazi camp system is all too complicated to fit well into the confines of one sub-section, especially considering the fact that the regime itself lasted between 1933-1945 in a state of constant evolution and change.[41] It is therefore appropriate to pinpoint a few factors that find common articulation in many sources and require acknowledgment.

The managerial history of the camp network was marked by an ambiance of spontaneous innovation and competition, lap-jointed authorities and jurisdictions. It encompassed a long list of agents who were in constant struggle for power over decision-making processes and action, in different service areas and historical periods.[42] Functions and authorities assumed by these agents covered an as much wide range.[43] These two lists – agents and authorities, bodies and tasks – never did match neatly but instead went through ceaseless shuffling. They sometimes overpowered, sometimes overlapped, and sometimes excluded each other in vertical, transversal, and horizontal couplings.

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[41] For a handful of introductory sources from varying perspectives, see Shirer (1960), Höhne (1971), Feig (1981), Rubenstein (1987), Rubenstein and Roth (1987), Maier (1988), Marrus (1989), Baldwin (1990), Lacapra (1994), Berenbaum (1998), Bergen (2003), and Williamson (2004).

[42] These agents included: the Gestapo (the secret state police), the SA (the supra-military "storm troopers" of the Nazi Party), the SS (the supra-military "protective squadron"), local police commandants, central government, secondary and tertiary governmental agencies, local party staff, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Armaments, head-administrators of various governmental districts, guardian units, camp commanders, functionary prisoners, the *KZ-Inspektion* agency (general directorate of the concentration camps), Death's Head troops, various industrial enterprises, the WVHA (central office for economic and administrative affairs), the RSHA (main authority of prosecution), the GBA (labor deployment diplomats), medical staff, and local SS headquarters, etc.

[43] Among these jurisdiction areas are: prosecution and incarceration; planning, construction, and administration of camps; institution of several types of detention facilities; local power of admitting and disposing detainees; provision of supervisors and guardians; expansion and reorganization of the general camp system; command over manufacture cycles; external recruiting of prisoners as workers; supply and supervision of medical services; supply of equipment; accounting and fund management; record-keeping; provision of clothing for guards and inmates; and negotiations with private companies and ministries; etc.

Throughout its life-span of twelve years, *the compositional history of the inmate society* exhibited considerable fluctuations and heterogeneity in terms of categorical status, number, race, and nationality. In its initial stages, all waves of incarceration were subsumed under the category of"political adversaries."[44] From 1936 onwards, two new categories were instituted as cause for arrest: the *Volksschadling* (pestis detrimental to the People) and *Asoziale* (social outcasts).[45] By 1938, political inmates had already become a minority. With the onset of WWII, the camps began to be satiated with prisoners of various foreign nationalities coming from occupied countries (mainly Poland and Soviet Union), in direct proportion to the expansion-span of German forces on European terrain. The scope of imprisonment began to include resistance fighters and the "suspicious" prisoners of the so-called "Night and Fog" operations. The increase in the number of nationalities brought about severe social discriminations among the inmate society. While German-speaking detainees gained relatively higher statuses as "functionaries" or "prominent prisoners," non-Aryan groups (mostly Jews, Poles and Russians) went down the bottom of the hierarchy of classes. During the early stages of the war, arrests began to aim at "war saboteurs," registered prisoners, and finally prisoners of war (POW) in 1941. From 1942 onwards, the second half of war was marked by the mass extermination of European Jews and the labor-training of several groups of "foreign workers" and "security detainees."[46] Throughout all these processes, the fluctuations in population statistics reflected releases, new admissions, deaths, and transfers between camps.

The history of systemization and functional transformation of the camps has to begin by recognizing that the first concentration camp, Dachau, was not established by the

[44] These comprised of communist functionaries, parliamentary representatives, unwanted officeholders, "non-Aryan" medics, left-opposition members, clerical workers, civil servants, reporters, etc.

[45] These two categories mainly included work-reluctant prisoners, homosexuals, professional and habitual criminals, sex offenders, psychopaths, traffic offenders, beggars, vagabonds, prostitutes, alcohol addicts, and Gypsies.

[46] Foreign workers and security detainees consisted of Jews, Gypsies, Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, and Germans convicted for varying sentences.

central government but by secondary offices and local party groups. But besides Dachau, there were a large number of detention facilities already functioning on an irregular and ephemeral basis. As far as a move toward centralization was concerned, the appointment of Heinrich Himmler as the police commander of Bavaria was the first step that provided the basic outlines of the model for the later fusion of the secret police and the SS. In 1934, the Dachau commandant Theodor Eicke was assigned the task of reorganizing the camps, which was the sign of an essential change in their functioning. They were no longer simply temporary facilities of repression, but permanent sites aiming at anybody designated as opponent by the regime. In 1935, *KZ-Inspektion* was instituted as the general camp directorate.

Eicke's primary undertakings during the consolidation period between 1934-36 were the formalization and centralization of camp administration, the standardization of the incarceration system, and the restructuring of the SS camps.[47] The camps began, from 1938 onwards, not only to simply accommodate but to further demand labor-power for SS workhouses. Plausibly the first annihilation operation was also carried out in 1938, under the name of Crystal Night, giving rise to an unforeseen amount of death-counts because of insufficient detaining conditions. The eruption of the war completely modified not only the purposes of the camps but also the configuration of inmate population as a micro-society. During the "Night and Fog" operations, the policy concerning the racial-ethnic cleansing of social outcasts surpassed the policy concerning the restraint of political opposition.

1940s witnessed the establishment of new camps that aimed at responding to pressures caused by the inflow of inmates from occupied countries. While labor had already begun

[47] This made it possible that the configuration of role-distributions be solidified and maintained until the war was over, irrespective of modifications in personnel and their motifs. Consolidation thus equaled integration and institutionalization in conformity with Dachau as model. Dachau, as the apotheosis of the system, incorporated four characteristic features: a categorization system for the inmates, labor as a technology of terror, a gradational and formalized scheme of penal codes, and a military jurisprudence for serious offenses. Installing everyday terror as a precept, the overall basis behind these codes tended more towards describing what was admissible rather than what was restricted (Sofsky, 1997, p. 32).

to come to the fore as an important economic and military factor, which found its earliest model in the Buna camp at Monowitz, it had to wait till 1943 to take on a substantial effect in the form of "external camps." Labor deployment policy opened up the previously self-contained world of the camp system to outside influence coming from inter-ministry bodies and several private companies. While the early half of war had already given rise to another shift in functions towards execution and mass annihilation, the introduction of POWs into the system marked a new phase with systematic starvations and new protocols of killing such as "shot to the neck," the use of the poisonous Zyklon B, and indirect extermination by labor and exhaustion. The latter half of the war was defined by analogous improvements and was accompanied by a rapid increase in the number of camps and prisoner populations. By January 1945, the number of inmates was more than seven hundred thousand while the camp system had formed into a network consisting of nineteen main camps and more than six hundred satellites. Final disintegration of the camps had direct correlations with the advance of the Allied forces. From 1944 onwards, starting with Majdanek, all the camp-sites one by one began to be vacated as remaining prisoners were forced to death marches in massive formations from camp to camp. On May 6 1945, the whole camp system came to an end with the discharging of Ebensee as the last camp to be liberated.

Like the history of systematization, *the architectural history of the camps* has to begin by recognizing that early prisons were constituted in a variety of spaces, including jails, gathering halls, large basements, or horseback-riding facilities. Later on, recently commandeered districts began to take in prisoner transfers. The improvisational nature of the terror and torture that took place in these temporary jails turned them into sites of retaliation against any form of opposition to the regime, be it real or imaginary. By the time the consolidation period of 1934-36 was over, this early paradigm of dispersion was replaced by the Dachau model, which brought about some elementary agreement upon certain architectural components and rationale. Camp layouts and edifices had to abide by simplicity, efficiency, economy, and ease in construction. The architectural

program was simple and specific – accommodating the SS and the administrative offices during the war and the inmates until death. Despite these minimal concerns, however, the construction of a "model" camp was never really the case. Rivalry between bureaucratic bodies, ambiguity produced by the necessity of secrecy, abrupt changes in goals and objectives, all added to the problem. On the practical side, the number of facilities needed in particular areas was so high that much of the effort in planning the camps had to be focused on the appropriation and conversion of existing buildings such as factories, fortified mansions, castles, and cloisters. The choice of construction materials used was basic (brick, stone, wood) but subject to an extensive variation depending on availability, ease in process, and low-cost. The administrative offices were to make do with a huge lack of experience, material, technical knowledge, and skilled labor. These lacks, concerning not only architectural basics but also the uniqueness of the concentration/extermination program, gave rise to a lot of improvisation, experimentation, and innovation (Feig, 1981).

All this changed fundamentally in 1936. New camps were planned and constructed while some universal principles began to be formulated. Camps had to be built as grounds for absolute isolation and enclosure in unpleasing environments that did not attract the public. Since rather more impermanent structures were seen as fit to the purpose, the horse-barn-type barracks and stalls in various row formats gained supremacy. Economic restrictions required the location of the camps to be in close proximity to raw-materials and be accessible by railroad. As the process of consolidation turned into one of military expansion from 1939 onwards, these location choices began to be determined also by proximity to industrial production complexes.[48]

Older camp-sites were each planned with only five thousand inmates in mind. But with the outbreak of war came overcrowding, the first glimpses of which appeared in 1938. Overcrowding became a permanent issue in 1940s, which also witnessed the

[48] For an extensive and insightful study on the relationship between Nazi politics and the building economy, see Jaskot (2000).

establishment of additional camps and resulted in the conversion of the camp into a monumental society. With these changes, the mother camps transformed into the backbone of an expansive network with several branches and satellites. Such differentiation was also reflected in content. Every camp differed not only from others but also from itself within a short span of time. Large shifts in population and large variations in subsidiary functions (greenhouses, riding stables, animal farms, medical experimentation arrangements, etc.) were both causes of uncertainty during construction. Even the strictly engineered gas-chambers and crematoria were subject to differentiation in size, design, and material. The only architectural elements that showed a certain degree of consistency throughout all camps were: (1) high-voltage barbed wires encircling the camps; (2) a discontinuous ring of gates and observation towers; and (3) the roll-call area for general assembly (Feig, 1981). As elementary as they may seem, these three components were perhaps all there was to say about a so-called "Nazi architecture."[49]

* * * * *

In the end, it was these internal dynamics that defined the National Socialist system: (1) an open system, based on conflicts of interest between several authorities; (2) an immense population traffic, characterized by large-scale fluctuations and internal changes; (3) a network structure, torn between centralization and expansion, and paralleled by a set of imperatives oscillating between protection of the integrity of the state and annihilation of the integrity of its "other"s; and (4) an architectural program drifting between consistent modeling and spontaneous innovation. In the middle of all this was the camp – which was, after all, a locus, a space.

[49] See Van Pelt (1994), for an introduction into one of the most authoritative voices on the relationship between architecture and Auschwitz. Also see Lane (1968) and Taylor (1974) for two early considerations of the relationship between National Socialist architecture and politics. A rather more recent account with an art-historical emphasis is provided by Scobie (1990).

4.2. Camp as a Space of Exception

Before anything else comes the "exceptional" character of this very space opened up by the camp. In Giorgio Agamben's analysis, the historical examples that fall under this category cover a very wide range.[50] What Agamben finds to be common in all these cases is the transformation of an apparently harmless space into a delimited space, marked by the suspension of the normal order. "The camps are born not out of ordinary law . . . but out of a state of exception and martial law" (Agamben, 1998, p. 167). In the earliest Spanish and English examples, for instance, what made possible such a transformation was the extension of a state of emergency that was linked to a colonial war to cover an entire civil population. This allows Agamben to abstract the Nazi *Lager* not as *the* model but *a* model whereby a mechanism, the like of which could also be seen elsewhere, found its clearest manifestation.

The specific juridical basis for internment in the case of *Lager* lied in *Schutzhaft*, which was a juridical custom of Prussian origins classified as a precautionary police measure. It allowed people to be taken into "protective custody," irrespective of whether they were involved in any criminal behavior as long as they were found to compromise the security of the state. *Schutzhaft*'s origins went back to the Prussian law of 1851.[51] Therefore, Agamben argues, the proclamation of the "decree for the protection of the people and the State" (*Verordnun zum Schutz von Volk und Staat*) in 1933 by the Nazis was a perfectly legitimate practice, consolidated by previous governments. The only "slight"

[50] Agamben's examples include *campos de concentraciones* created by the Spanish in Cuba in 1896; the *concentration camps*, into which the English gathered the Boers toward start of the twentieth century; the winter cycle-racing track, in which the Vichy authorities gathered the Jews before consigning them to Germans; the stadium in Bari, into which the Italian police provisionally herded all illegal Albanian immigrants in 1991; the *zones d'attentes* in French international airports, in which foreigners asking for refugee status are detained; ethnic rape camps in the territories of former Yugoslavia, etc. (1998, pp. 166, 169, 174).

[51] But an even earlier origin can be traced back to the Prussian laws of 1850 on the "protection of personal liberty." In all these cases, the juridical foundation of *Schutzhaft* was based on the Article 48 of the Weimar constitution. This article legitimized the announcement of a state of exception, which allowed the suspension of a series of constitutional articles related with personal liberties (Agamben, 1998, p. 167).

problem was the fact that this decree remained in force for twelve years, until the end of the Third Reich. Agamben diagnoses this situation very aptly as the confluence between the juridical rule itself and a state of exception, which normally refers to an external and provisional state of factual danger (pp. 167-8).

For Agamben, it is necessary to grasp this constitutive relationship between the state of exception and the concentration camp if one wants to understand the nature of the camp. The novelty of *Schutzhaft* lied in its disengagement from its original basis so as to become the basis of every normal situation. The novelty of the camp, along the same lines, was the association of a state of exception (i.e. a temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger) with a permanent spatial arrangement that remained outside the normal order: "The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule" (pp. 168-169). Or, in other words: "The camp is thus the structure in which the state of exception is realized *normally*" (p. 170).

Once the coupling of the camp with an extraordinary rule that paradoxically becomes ordinary is recognized, the space of the camp gains an as much paradoxical status. It is a delimited space that lies outside normal juridical order, but nevertheless is not simply an external space. There is a double movement: first, something is excluded in the camp; but, even before that, "what is first of all taken into the juridical order is the state of exception itself" (p. 170). That is to say, the exception is no longer decided on with reference to the recognition of a given factual situation (i.e. danger to public safety), but this situation is produced after the fact as a consequence of the very decision on what the exception is. That is why every question regarding the legality or illegality of the events that took place in the camps simply becomes nonsensical because "the camp is a hybrid of law and fact in which the two terms have become indistinguishable" (p. 170).

Hannah Arendt locates at the center of totalitarian rule "the principle according to which 'everything is possible'" (p. 170). Elaborating further on this observation, Agamben adds that everything in the camps became truly possible not only because the

law was completely suspended, but also because the law and fact were completely confused. This comes to mean that the moment one entered the camp, one moved in "a zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exception and rule, licit and illicit" (p. 170) in such a way that concepts like right and protection no longer made sense. This situation was even more complicated in the case of a Jew entering the camp. Since Nuremberg laws already deprived him of his constitutional rights as a citizen, the Jew was completely denationalized at the time of the Final Solution. Insofar as he was stripped of every political status and reduced to what Agamben calls "bare life," the Jew was the living proof of the camp's paradigmatic stature as *the* biopolitical space *par excellence* (pp. 170-171). In the camp, power confronted pure life without any mediation – no act committed there could any longer be considered as a crime (p. 171).

One last aspect that needs consideration is the National Socialist theory that posited the immediate and perfect source of law in the word of Führer. What Agamben diagnoses to be traditionally omitted by historians of law is that, in the law issued by Führer, the formation and execution of a rule could no longer be distinguished. He was living law as he spoke (p. 173). Insofar as the central principle of *Führung* was to be "a concept of the immediate present and of real presence" (quoted ibid.), the decision concerning whether a thing or a fact is apolitical was a specifically political decision. The decision made at the present simultaneously decided on the thing's presence. The camp was the space of this absolute impossibility – of deciding between fact and law, between rule and application – where, however, a decision nevertheless was made. Every time a guard or a camp officer acted, what confronted him was not an extra-juridical fact to which he could simply apply a discriminatory rule. In every single gesture, he rather drew a discriminatory line and enacted the decision on bare life, by which the German biopolitical body was actualized. The act of separating the Jewish body was the act of producing the German body; and the production of the German body was the application of a rule that was formulated at the time of its application (pp. 173-174).

Consequently, if the reality of the camp essentially derives from the materialization of the state of exception, and from the creation of a space in which bare life and juridical rule enter into a zone of indistinction, then, Agamben argues, it is possible to talk about the production of a reality as such every time we are face to face with a similar structure, irrespective of how it is called, where it is located and what type of crimes it makes possible. Hence Agamben's long list of camps, extending from stadiums to airports, regardless of their location in specific German, Spanish, English, Italian, French, or former Yugoslavian experiences. In all these cases, what confronts us is the transformation of a "normal" space into one that is characterized not only by the suspension, but also by the contingency of the norm. Hotel Arcades in Roissy, for instance, is not only "a space in which the normal order is de facto suspended," but also a space in which the acts committed there can be evaluated only with reference to "the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign" within its confines (p. 174).

4.3. The Camp as the Locus of Absolute Power

The high level of architectural, geographical, and cultural variation pointed out by Agamben finds a very precise counterpart in the specific context of the Nazi system. As mentioned before, early imprisonment facilities were instituted in already-existing places, among which no one single distinguishing building-form dominated the others (Feig, 1981).[52] The extent of this variation is revealing as much as troubling – in the sense that the camp was primarily defined by a function much before it was an architectural type. It was based on a series of abstract principles, most important one of which was the articulation of a boundary that sealed off the camp universe from the outside. In its capacity to transform any space into a camp, the *Schutzhaft* therefore was the most distinguishing architectural component to be found in this system, however

[52] These early examples included: a barren brewery in Oranienburg, a broken-down powder factory in Dachau, the Castle of Lichtenburg in Prettin, two jailhouses in Werden and Sonnenburg, a workhouse in Brauweiler, an old vessel in Bremen, a cloister in Breitenau, a provincial poorhouse in Moringen, and the fortress of Oberer Kuhberg in Ulm, etc. (Sofsky, 1997, p. 49).

discursive. In identifying the rather more material extensions of these principles, the following sections will be relying on Sofsky's depiction of the properties of "absolute power" as these take shape in the architectural composition of the camp.

4.3.1. Spatial Contrast: External Zoning

In contradistinction to early instances, the geography of the modern camp was based on the principle of complete erasure – of the natural or artificial past – in accordance with a rigorous blueprint. This was thanks to the consolidation period that brought about a completely rationalized ordering of space from 1936 on (pp. 30-34). Fortified walls were replaced by barbed-wire fences, cells by blocks, and enclosed rooms by open areas. Inside the boundary was a strict localization of activities and a dissociation of functions according to specified zones (Sofsky, 1997, p. 48). Signs of this clear division are reflected in every single aerial photograph taken of the camps (Figure 4.1).

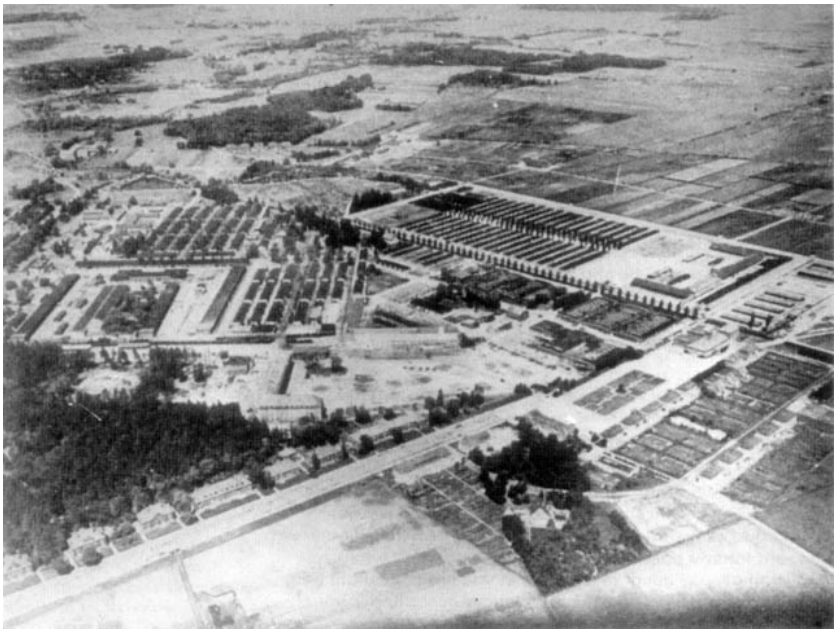

Figure 4.1. Aerial photograph of Dachau Concentration Camp (retrieved from <<www.scrapbookpages.com>>).

On the prisoner side of the wire was a spatial order of total control, characterized by

density and clarity of vision. Abiding by a rigidly orthogonal geometry of uniformity and homogeneity, this was a primitive settlement that consisted of a serialized bunch of wooden, or occasionally stone, barracks. These barracks not only served as housing facilities but also included the kitchen, the stockroom, the laundry, the bathing and disinfection quarters, the infirmary complex, and the quarantine area for the newcomers (p. 48). Ranging in size between the fifteen acres of Dachau and the four hundred and twenty acres of Birkenau, this microcosm allowed no irregularity and no escape from visibility.

Located immediately on the other side of the fence, on the other hand, was the administrative quarters which mainly encompassed branch offices of all *KZ-Inspektion* departments (pp. 106-108). Functioning as extensions of central bureaucracy, they also served like a buffer zone between the camp universe and the external world. Although generally characterized by good quality housing and green environments, the living quarters of the SS had their own hierarchy of ranks in reserving villas for the commanders, wooden residences for the officers, and barracks for the guards (pp. 103-107). Also located outside the perimeter were "workshops, factory halls, and agricultural enterprises, a heating plant and a fire-extinguishing pond, . . . a brothel and a movie house, mess halls, an infirmary and dispensaries, a jail and a crematorium," along with "garages, shooting ranges, a sports field, and a dog kennel for the patrols" (pp. 48-49). A self-sufficient town, with its own infrastructure.

Between these two separate universes, access was restricted to a minimum in both directions (Figure 4.2). During daylight, the so-called "large cordon" (patrols on foot) surrounded the entire area while at night the "small cordon" (spotters in observation towers and perimeter patrols) enclosed the prisoner camp. The inmates were only allowed in the area between the two cordons during the day, as they spread out across the entire SS-sphere according to work zones (pp. 185-186). The guards and officers on the other hand virtually never spent any time in the prisoner-side, leaving it to the SS

rapport commanders and block leaders to be in touch with the inmates – especially at night (pp. 131-132). Besides that, the prisoner camp was usually empty during the day, with only a few number of inmates working at the infirmary, kitchen, laundry, and the stockroom. The barbed-wire thus "guaranteed that there would be social distance, and a spatialized contrast, between personnel and prisoners" (p. 50).

Figure 4.2. Double-fences between administration and prison camp at Auschwitz (The image by David Blair; retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, <<www.wikipedia.org>>).

4.3.2. Seriality: The Field System

The prisoner camps were characterized by a field system based on a rectangular division of sectors. Neatly separating rows of blocks from each other, this system made it much more manageable to segregate different groups and functions from each other, and perform self-preserved transfers. This way, for instance, it became possible to enclose women in one single sector in Majdanek, which was made up of six disparate fields, and ship them off to Ravensbrück when the time came (pp. 50-51). The most expansive version of this field system, where each field constituted a camp within another camp, was to be found in Birkenau – originally intended to embrace four sections covering a

total area of more than 1.5 million square meters (Figure 4.3). Only two sectors of this original plan found their way into realization in the form of BI and BII, which were later on divided by fences into several sub-sectors:

> BIa and BIb, the women's camp, contained sixty-two brick housing blocks, along with ten blocks for washing facilities and toilets . . . BIIa, with its sixteen stables, served as a quarantine camp. . . . BIIb was the "family camp" for those deported from Theresienstadt; BIIc was the "depot camp" for transports from Hungary; BIId was the camp for able-bodied men; BIIe the camp for Gypsy families. BIIf took in the sick: it was a special field with twenty-five hundred places in beds and common bunks. . . . Sectors BIIb through BIIe all had the same layout and equipment: a kitchen with four blocks for washing and latrines, plus thirty-two stables, arranged in two staggered rows, one behind the other. (Sofsky, 1997, p. 51)

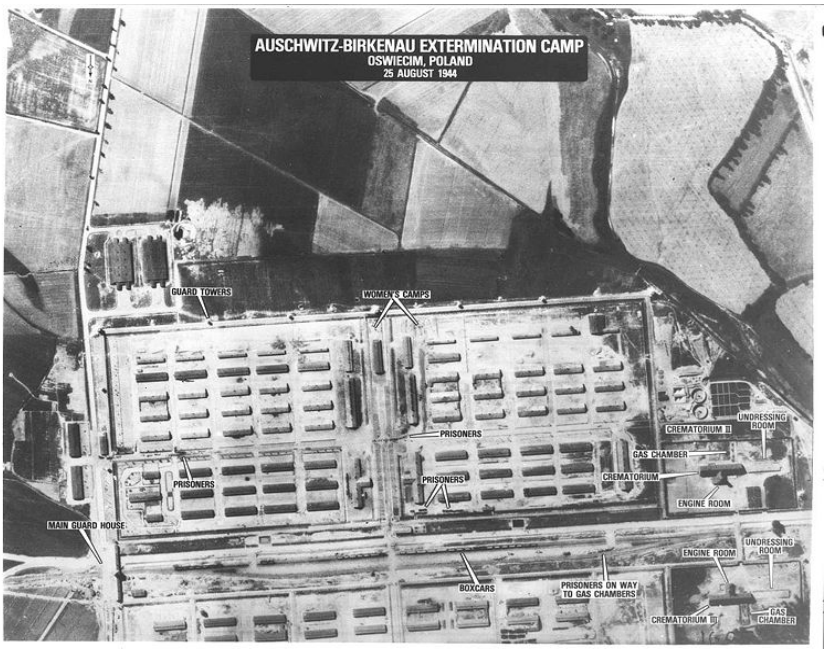

Figure 4.3. Aerial photograph of Auschwitz-Birkenau, 1944 (Van Pelt, 2002).

The grid pattern proved useful in many other respects. First of all, it guaranteed order in zones that separated masses and functions. Since the inmate population consisted of thousands, the coordination of human traffic and the economic use of a limited amount of space were both major problems (pp. 75-76). Leaving only the roll-call square as an

open space for daily inventories, the rest of the field had to be standardized in rectangles and used to the last inch in order to secure efficiency and smooth operation (p. 78). The rectangular order also allowed for an easy, serial multiplication with simple adjustments and extensions when needed. And finally, the grid left no blind spots. It enabled each threshold and alley to function as a double-check point, securing visual clearance towards front, back, and the sides. This provided for both the watchtower personnel and the fence patrols a comfortable means of surveillance so that no one single individual could come near the boundaries without authorization (p. 52).[53]

4.3.3. Social Differentiation: Internal Zoning

Laid on top of the analytical structure of the grid plan, on the other hand, was a synthetic cartography of social relationships which by no means was as monolithic or isomorphous (pp. 118-121). There was always a hierarchy of housing conditions, ranging between stone blocks near the roll-call area and the mass-housing blocks in slum areas. The former were reserved for functionary prisoners whereas the latter were for the lower classes of inmate society. The former allowed individual possessions, such as bunk-beds and footlockers, whereas the latter, overcrowded, left no room for personal space (Figure 4.4).

Such social differentiation was not limited to housing. Encounter between the sexes, for instance, was made impossible; the hospital block and medical care was only within the reach of infirmary *Kapos* and other prisoners authorized by SS doctors; some living quarters were deliberately left without food when desired. Although excessive violence

[53] Although sounding similar, such optical liability was quite different than the surveillance patterns of disciplinary power as exemplified by Foucault's reading of the Panopticon. For a reading of Dachau that still abides by the Panoptic paradigm, see Marcus (2006a). As opposed to the individualizing capacity of discipline, the camp operated through condensation of individuals in a mass. Dividing space into aggregates and plots rather than small compartments, it eliminated the individual's sphere of action by packing people into compact and crowded units. It intensified, rather than blocked, social interaction; and in this way it completely annihilated, rather than thrived upon, any possible liberty of movement. In other words, it left individuals at the mercy of the perpetual and smothering presence of their fellows. Although such a massive state of crowding was frustrating for the guards, it also made visual control a lot easier to operate since all it took for a prisoner to turn into a target was to leave the herd.

and torment itself was an arbitrary and everyday feature of camp life (pp. 224-226), actual infliction of death always took place out of sight, in encapsulated quarters such as the jail, the quarantine section of the infirmary, and the blocks reserved for medical experiments. The inner zones therefore were a secondary means of imposing misery and managing death in such a way as to turn some blocks into places of indirect extermination within the camp. Prisoners, even when permitted or invited, tried avoiding these undercover death-pits (p. 53).

Figure 4.4. Mass-housing blocks at Auschwitz
(retrieved from <<www.annefrankguide.net>>).

Actual sites of methodical mass killing, however, were located even further outside the prisoner camp's perimeters (i.e. the "Station Z" of the Sachsenhausen camp) (pp. 242-243). These death zones included gas chambers, stone pits, shooting grounds, liquidation facilities, and crematoria. Only accessible by the *Sonderkommandos*, these areas were kept as low profile as possible, away from the everyday routine of the camp (pp. 228-229). Rendered harmless by the surrounding flower beds and tree rows, these death factories constituted zones of absolute mystery for the ordinary prisoner, for whom death nonetheless was always in the air or lied always in some time near future

(pp. 53-54).

4.3.4. Absolute Isolation: External Boundary

Since the camp, structurally speaking, solved the overall problem of internal division in terms of zones and fields, but not small-scale compartments, the most important and binding security element working in favor of the integrity of the system almost naturally turned out to be the line that demarcated the external boundary. This meant an absolute isolation from the outside, even if there were occasional cases of escape and smuggling of goods or news (pp. 159-160). An isolation as such first and foremost served the institution of that space of exception, as argued by Agamben, whereby legal and illegal were confused and violence was freed from all reference and restraint (p. 224). Marking out a sphere of power that was impossible to violate neither from the inside nor the outside, this boundary installed the camp as a visible but sequestered house of death and torment in the middle of public domain. Once inside the barbed-wire fence, anything and everything was possible (p. 228). The world beyond it, however, was meant to step by step vanish from both immediate vision and distant memory.

That's why it is not surprising to see that boundary-articulation was a multi-layer matter of specialties, combining physical obstacles, material technology, and manpower, in the specific context of the camp. In Dachau, for instance, the camp compound was surrounded by a quadruplicate system that looked more like a breakwater than a simple partition (Figure 4.5):

> In front of the wire fence, charged with high-voltage current at night, there was a low, slatted fence that marked out the "neutral zone." Whoever entered it was shot down without warning. Directly behind it ran a concrete wall three meters high that surrounded the entire area of the camp. Patrols moved in the area between the wall and the internal fence; these patrols maintained eye contact with the two sentries posted on each of the four watchtowers. Machine guns were pointed at the camp from all directions. Searchlights illuminated the grounds at night. Every corner could be lit up brightly and brought under fire at will. . . . After modernization, the entire area was surrounded by a high wall and encircled during the day by the *Große Postenkette* [large cordon]. Patrols with dogs scoured the areas in

between. The prisoner camp was enclosed by a moat; then came the concrete wall with the wire fence and watchtowers, a path for the nightly patrols, and a double row of electrified barbed wire. Finally, there was the death strip, covered with white gravel to make any shadow readily visible at night. (Sofsky, 1997, p. 56)

Figure 4.5. Fence system at Dachau (retrieved from <<www.holocaustresearchproject.org>>).

Although circumstances required modifications depending on size and location, this general scheme was more or less repeated throughout all camps (Figure 4.6). Whatever the case, architectural elements were never left by themselves to do the job, but were always supported by a biotechnological chain of guards, sentries, patrols, and dogs at all times. It was only with the reassurance of the large cordon during the day and the small cordon at night that the camp boundary was trusted to be perfectly closed.

It is also for this reason that the camp perimeter was the physical and symbolic site of a constant struggle between inmates and personnel. All acts that came to mean a breeching of the boundary (i.e. smuggling of secret messages, attempting to escape or commit suicide, occupying the neutral zone besides work, tampering with the barbed-

wire, walking around the death strip, etc.) – be it intentional or not, be it successful or not – were subject to severe punishments. These punishments were usually performed on the roll-call square as exemplary for the others (p. 219). Especially in cases of suicide, the system was at pains to make sure that these acts of "free-will" never attained success – even though, in theory, the guards couldn't have cared less about the death of the inmates by their own hands. This was because a short-circuiting of electric power meant a short-circuiting of absolute power, since an inmate throwing himself onto the wire was an insult for a system that established itself on that very locus (pp. 57-58). Such glorification increased the status of the boundary as taboo, the protection of which was officially systematized by camp rules and regulations. The guards always had to be prepared to react and use firearms without hesitation, not because they were insanely criminal, but more because the use of warning shots was rigorously prohibited and subject to punishment itself. Power had to act, immediately, without warning, and no questions asked (p. 110).

Figure 4.6. Double-row barbed-wire fencing with death strip, Auschwitz (retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, <<www.wikipedia.org>>).

4.3.5. Juxtaposition of Contrasts: The Gatehouse

The boundary being as insurmountable as it was, the only place where it seemed to open up was the camp gate, which was anything but an opening. On the practical side, it welcomed novice prisoners while functioning as a check-point for the control of daily traffic. On the symbolic side, it provided a transitory hinge between the barracks and the SS domain while inscribing at the same time the termination of all liberties (p. 59). Architecturally speaking, it was usually an undecorated, two- or three-story structure, made of brick or wood, and possessed no special qualities. It conventionally incorporated a tower in the center for the main guard, a passage underneath, two symmetrical wings, a balustrade-protected level for the guards, a triangular roof, a clock, a flag, and finally a group of lights, speaker units, and machine-guns directed towards the roll-call area (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. Gatehouse at Dachau (retrieved from <<www.scrapbookpages.com>>).

Enclosed by the wings was a sentry room, and the offices of the camp commander and the rapport leader. The microphone located in one room made sure that the orders reached every corner of the camp via loudspeakers of varying sizes. The searchlights

illuminated the extensive space of the roll-call area at night, and brought about a full-scale visibility to the field. The speakers penetrated the ears, and the machine-guns threatened to kill at all times (p. 60). Much before these threatening features took effect, however, the gatehouse already hovered above all other camp structures. Even when its bulky character was replaced by a lighter frame or a skeletal outlook, the hovering impression was always at work since the gate highlighted, even mocked, the prospect of a transgression never to take place (p. 167) (Figure 4.8). Once one was in, there was no way out again, alive or dead. A mocking effect as such was also multiplied by inscriptions of completely out of place mottoes that hyperbolized the true meaning and content of the camp. In Buchenwald, these inscriptions read "To Each His Own" and "My Country – Right or Wrong"; in Dachau, it was "Work Sets You Free."

Figure 4.8. "Arbeit Macht Frei," Dachau (retrieved from <<www.scrapbookpages.com>>).

Besides its symbolic, functional, and regulatory status, the gate was also a public site of torture and anguish. It was a habitual sight that the newcomers would receive their first blow of excessive violence as they passed through the gate in rows of five. In these dramatized rites of passage, they would sometimes end up simply being beaten, or else

be enforced to pause in incertitude for hours, regardless of weather conditions (pp. 237-238). It was also the case that older inmates with rather more minor offenses would find their place in front of the gate. Having to stand there for hours, without motion, without speech, they were meant to be drained of all signs of resistance and collapse (p. 218). This was a technology of static torture, silence, and restricted vision, which required no other equipment than the inmate's own body, facing the sidewalls of the gate, in the middle of open expanse. It paradoxically took place at that exact point which was characterized by the juxtaposition of a transitory passage, the omnipotent sound of the loudspeakers, and the wide-open vista of the tower (pp. 63-64). The contradictory core of such mechanics of torment revealed itself most clearly in the mornings or evenings, when thousands of prisoners marched to the beat of the camp routine through the gate. While inevitably indifferent to these sculptures made of flesh, this monotonous and uniform parade collectively saluted not only the rapport leader, not only the gate, but also the material expression of an immaterial power structure, which fed upon as well as produced bodies in states of extreme powerlessness and vulnerability (pp. 220-221).

4.3.6. Spatial Order: The Block Conduct

Finally came the blocks, which were basically of two types as a rule. Standard barracks covered about four hundred square meters each – encompassing two wings, day-rooms, washrooms, toilets, and dormitories with two-level iron or wooden bunk-beds (Figure 4.9). Prefabricated military stables on the other hand were less equipped – incorporating only latrine buckets as sanitary facilities and three-level wooden bunk-beds. Beds in standard barracks usually were meant to accommodate two people each while those in army stalls were intended to fit at least fifteen prisoners – in times of overcrowding, this number went up to forty (pp. 66-67).

These two different housing conditions most importantly indicated class inequalities and social mixtures among prisoners since, in an environment where everything else

became a luxury, personal space turned out to be the most important privilege. Ranging between functionary prisoners and camp outcasts, the differences between classes were reflected in all sorts of space-assignments (pp. 145-147). These in turn decided how much a prisoner was to submit (pp. 118-121). Some had their own territory, however small, stretching out at their disposal while others had to combat for a few centimeters of elbow-space (p. 68). Such differentiation was effective for two reasons: (1) it created a heterogeneous atmosphere of rivalry, and thus obstructed the establishment and maintenance of social bonds among the prisoners (pp. 123-126); and (2) it gave rise to a graduated distribution of power by turning some prisoners into accomplices (pp. 97-98, 114-115). Spatial order was both the means and ends to this double-sided differentiation and gradation. The first sharpened contrasts, the second enforced gray areas. A contradiction as such meant only one thing in spatial terms: one either had space, or didn't.

Figure 4.9. Prisoner barracks at Dachau (retrieved from <<www.ushmm.org>>).

In another context, spatial order was also a means of abuse and conduct management. When prisoners slept in anything other than their shirts, when lockers were not in appropriate order, when a table was not shining, a cupboard was not cleaned, the floor

was not groomed, a stool not brushed, weeds not pulled off; all these were occasions for terror (pp. 68-69). Getting the beds ready and wrinkle-free for the morning inspection was a special case among these numerous opportunities. Even if the "fault" was individual, the punishment was usually collective – which made it everyone's responsibility that the block demeanor was not disturbed in any way (pp. 218-219). Such block order practices were important, again, for two reasons: (1) in this way, power was able to circulate through space without the actual involvement of the personnel (pp. 149); and, (2) power was assured that there was always enough number of occasions to get involved – since the expectations were almost impossible to meet, especially in an environment of such large-scale crowding and social mixture (pp. 215-216). The first of these principles made the presence of power unnecessary, but the second necessitated its presence. Put differently, in the camp, power itself perpetually exerted its force over spatial order as means of instituting chaos while chaos perpetually disrupted spatial order and invited power to re-exert its force. The result was the transformation of mistreatment into an end in itself (p. 69).

4.3.7. Dissociation: Overcrowding

One last aspect of the camp universe is the way in which crowding effected both the relations between inmates and an inmate's relation to oneself. The prisoners in a camp society were coerced into dissociation not only because they were compressed against each other in the smallest space possible, but also because they had no chance to choose against whom they would be compressed. Total anonymity and mass formation gave rise to an intensified state of sensitivity towards very basic spatial needs, and this in turn brought about a ceaseless conflict between all inmates (pp. 154-156). The camp was an environment in which all personal distance was annihilated, all norms of territorial recognition were suspended, and all action lost its reciprocity. As a result, every inmate had to put up a fight for every inch of distance (p. 70).

Overcrowding also affected the sensory foundations of social reciprocity – instead of

vision and hearing, it was touch, smell, and heat that counted. It constantly jeopardized not only personal possessions (p. 161) but also the very boundaries of the self, which was overcome by the sheer presence of others. Even in the face of a collective and organized effort, violation of these boundaries was inevitable. A particular and daily cause of torment was generated by "forced motionlessness" (p. 71) – a natural result of hundreds of inmates laying side by side, head to toe, unable to move without moving all together on demand. More irritatingly, this enforcement had nothing to do with the violence of the personnel. Inmates were encapsulated in cubicles made of the bodies of other inmates. There was literally no room for shame since the other was so close. But there was literally no room for community, either, since the other was so dissociate. One was desolate as much as oppressed, oppressed as much as desolate in the middle of an anonymous mass, densely packed but containing no internal cohesiveness or integrity between its fragments besides brief contacts based on instrumentality (pp. 157-160).

Figure 4.10. Mauthasen courtyard (retrieved from <<www.ushmm.org>>).

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To sum up, zoning introduced gaps between not only guards and inmates, but also

among several categories of inmates and SS personnel with reference to rank. Intensifying and giving material form to contrasts within the camp society, it instituted various sites of opposition between the personnel and the prisoners. This it did by disseminating activities and by separating accommodation, work, and demise. By structuring the camp in serial and functional fields, it transformed empty space into a domain for constant surveillance; it forged fields of survival, death, and killing; and it thus turned the camp into a technology of social segregation and corpse-production. The external boundary established the camp as an exceptional space, characterized by the normalization of the state of exception and rendered absolutely distinct from the outside. In its multi-layer structure, it was not only an impermeable obstruction but also an untouchable taboo, which in turn served as the emblematic site of a constant struggle between the prisoners and the SS. The gate, on the other hand, had its own series of contrasting meanings and functions as the only single point in the boundary that allowed transition. It was not only a passage, but also a check-point; it served not only as a registration desk, but also as a site of public humiliation; it was the symbolic locus not only of power, but also of powerlessness. Spatial order as it took shape in the blocks was the most exquisite technology of the camp universe. True, it did not immediately kill; but, perhaps worse, it graduated. It tampered with and intensified social contrasts, but itself diminished the distinction between perpetrator and victim. It prescribed order, but itself diminished the distinction between order and chaos. It constricted people into a compressed mass, but itself diminished any possible means of reciprocity. Instead of all these divisions, spatial order brought about a blurring of boundaries and an extended gradation.

In appropriating all these means, absolute power overwhelmingly did spread from the perimeters of the camp into every sector in the field, every block in space, every encounter between bodies, and every single self. The ultimate bodily product of an absolute power as such was the *Muselmann*.

4.4. *Muselmann*: The Living Dead of the Camp

The camp enforces upon anyone approaching it as an epistemological object an essential lacuna that lies at the heart not only of bearing witness, but also of every experience. Agamben conveys the nature of this lacuna with reference to the testimonial accounts of two camp survivors.[54] One account comes from Primo Levi: "Witnesses are by definition survivors and so all, to some degree, enjoyed a privilege. . . . No one has told the destiny of the common prisoner, since it was not materially possible for him to survive" (quoted in Agamben, 1999, p. 33). And the other comes from Elie Wiesel: "Those who have not lived through the experience will never know; those who have will never tell; not really, not completely. . . . The past belongs to the dead" (quoted ibid.). According to these two accounts, the survivors are discharged of their authority over the truth of Auschwitz by the simple fact that they are not "true witnesses." The true witnesses are those who cannot bear witness anymore. For they are those who have hit the bottom without getting back up again – hence the title of Levi's late testimony: *The Drowned and The Saved* (1989).

Here, the distinction between at least three witnesses needs to be elucidated, if any. For one, there are survivors. They are the ones who are conventionally referred to as witnesses, but their testimony is bound to fail from the start. Second, there are those half-living half-dead figures, the true products and witnesses of the camp. To them, no convention applies; but they have nothing to say nor any instructions or memories to transmit even if they survive. Finally, there are the real dead. They are those who did not survive, and thus could not bear witness, although it is their testimony that would have counted the most if it was ever of avail. The puzzling terrain occupied by these figures leads astray any attempt at triangulating a subjective position in relation to the camp as a frame of experience. Since the dead cannot possibly speak back from the experience they

[54] For an instructive set of testimonial writings that establish the foundations of Agamben's investigation, see *The Survivor: The Anatomy of Life in Death Camps* by Des Pres (1980) and *Survival in Auschwitz*, also known as *If This Is a Man*, by Levi (1996).

have endured, the authorial status of every testimony has to oscillate between this impossibility and its closest approximation. Therefore, out of all three witnesses, the whole biopolitical space of the camp revolves around that one strange figure, who happens to have gone through this near-death experience but neither has totally died nor has totally come back. It is this creature, who inhabits the limbo between life and death, that testifies in his very own being to that which is untestifiable. "It" is the *Muselmann*.

The *Muselmann* had many names and definitions in the camp dictionary.[55] All these descriptions added up to a subject that possessed the life-repertory of what could only be called *an agglomerate bulk of breathing meat.* Until that point, all inmates first went through various stages of chronic hunger and physical frailty. Those who couldn't survive these fell into a state of bodily disintegration and decline in mental activity. Then followed loss of affection, intention, and self-consciousness. Finally arrived complete apathy and total subjugation. Having stabilized at this final vegetative stage, *Muselmann* emerges as that paradigmatic example of dispossession, of powerlessness, who inhabited a "moving threshold in which man passed into non-man" (Agamben, 1999, p. 47).

There is obviously no way that one could presume what went on in the consciousness of the *Muselmanner*. But insofar as their physiological misery was paralleled by a minimization of their domain of action and their social relations, it is not hard to assume that they were subject to a radical dissociation. They occupied the lowest ranks of social hierarchy in the camp. The faces of these lifeless selves were the sight of an unbearable abjection even for the survivors.[56] It was as if they constantly reminded the

[55] These designations include the "mummy-men" (Carpi quoted ibid., p. 41); a man of "unconditional fatalism" (Kogon quoted ibid., p. 45); "a staggering corpse, a bundle of physical functions in its last convulsions" (Amery quoted ibid., p. 41); "the dull-witted and aimless creature" (Ryn and Klodzinski quoted ibid., pp. 42-43)... When plural, Levi will refer to them as "an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead in them, already too empty to really suffer" (1996, p. 90). He continues to describe the "faceless presence" of this cadaverous body as that of an "emaciated man, with head dropped and shoulders curved, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of thought is to be seen" (ibid.). Also see Fraser's "Dead Man Walking" (1999) and Norris's "Giorgio Agamben and the Politics of the Living Dead" (2000).

[56] "In a final stage of emaciation, their skeletons were enveloped by flaccid, parchment-like sheaths of

other prisoners what they were about to become, if not now, at least in near future. And as they abandoned their surroundings and their own selves, the others abandoned them as well – which meant that they went through a social death much before they died a physical death (Sofsky, 1997, p. 202). It was also the case that their apathy was the catalyst of a vicious circle. Their helplessness was interpreted by the functionary prisoners to be a form of indolence or silent resistance. They constantly and unavoidably transgressed mandatory prescriptions of block conduct. Their passivity, taken as an insult against the fundamentals of absolute power, always provoked more violence. In the end, they turned into the markers of an unbearably extended and taboo-like threshold between life and death – too dead to be called alive, too alive to be called dead.

In speaking of the *Muselmanner*, Levi says at some point that "one hesitates to call their death death" (quoted in Agamben, 1999, p. 70). In this brief remark, what characterized the *Muselmanner* and differentiated them from all the other possible forms of subjectivity becomes crystal clear. For what individuated the *Muselmanner* was not that their life was no longer a life (in this, they were equal to all camp inhabitants), but rather that their death was no longer death. As beings whose single repertory of life corresponded to "not dying," they were paradoxically unable to die a proper death, so to speak. The *Muselmann* as that which is incapable of the ultimate point of incapacitation – death... This is what enables Agamben to state that "where death cannot be called death, corpses cannot be called corpses" (p. 70) with reference to the way in which SS officers referred to corpses as *Figuren*[57] (p. 51). The *Muselmann*, with this final turn, becomes the living example of a "figure" of pure powerlessness insofar as it is a figure incapable of even the least of all incapacities, let alone resistance.

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skin, edema had formed on their feet and thighs, their posterior muscles had collapsed. Their skulls seemed elongated; their noses dripped constantly, mucus running down their chins. Their eyeballs had sunk deep into their sockets; their gaze was glazed. Their limbs moved slowly, hesitantly, almost mechanically. They exuded a penetrating, acrid odor; sweat, urine, liquid feces trickled down their legs. The rags that covered their freezing frames were full of lice; their skin was covered with scabies. Most suffered from diarrhea" (Sofsky, 1997, p. 199).

[57] When describing how other witnesses confirm the impossibility of looking at the *Muselmann*, Agamben also speaks of how SS could not name the *Muselmanner*: "under no circumstances were they to be called 'corpses' or 'cadavers,' but rather simply *Figuren*, figures, dolls" (Agamben 1999, p. 51).

CHAPTER FIVE:
Confession

Any study on the confessional has to begin with the recognition that the confessional box, as a solid and central piece of church furniture, is a relatively new phenomenon. Although early accounts of confession conventionally go all the way back to fourth- and fifth-century A.D., the institutionalization of the confessional act itself had to wait until the thirteenth-century. To be able to situate this process of institutionalization in the broader context of Christian experience, however, this chapter will first begin with Foucault's analyses of early Greek and Christian "technologies of the self." This is mainly because his reflections on, and differentiation between, these two distinct practices offer the fundamentals of a historico-critical outlook on the subject. They also provide for an opportunity to project the relations framed by the confessional box back into the specific terminology of self's relation to itself. The establishment of a basis as such will be followed by a jump forward in time to the sixteenth-century world of Counter-Reformation, which is a period when the first glimpses of the confessional as a rather more concrete model can be seen.

5.1. "Technologies of the Self"

As briefly shown in Chapter Two, Foucault's conception of the relation between subjectivity and truth demonstrates an observable shift during the last period of his life. Accordingly, his earlier conceptions centralize how the subject, in its relations to a series

of theoretical-scientific discourses (such as economics, biology, psychiatry, and medicine), is entangled in power/knowledge structures that take the form of various truth games. Here, Foucault's main points of emphasis are coercive practices and fields of knowledge. But in his later work, he orients his analysis towards conceiving of the same relationships in terms of an ascetic practice of self-formation. "Asceticism" in this context comes to mean practices of the self upon the self, "by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1996, p. 433).

The initial formulations of this late interest can be traced through a series of short essays from "Sexuality and Solitude" (1997, pp. 175-184) to "The Ethics of the Concern for the Self" (1996, pp. 432-449). Finally taking its most mature form in a seminar given at Vermont University in 1982, titled "Technologies of the Self" (1988a, pp. 16-49), Foucault's main objective throughout these texts turns out to be studying those forms of understanding through which individuals know themselves. He identifies four major types of techniques for developing such knowledge. The first type, *technologies of production*, is related with techniques that permit one to produce, transform or manipulate things. The second type, *technologies of sign systems*, is related with techniques that allow us to appropriate signs, meanings, and symbols – signification in general. The third, *technologies of domination*, are those techniques that refer to modes of objectification, which determine individual conduct and impose upon the subject certain ends and objectives. Finally, the fourth are those *technologies of the self*, which enable individuals "to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, their own souls, their own thoughts, their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves" (Foucault, 1997, p. 177). Although hardly ever functioning separately, each one of these technologies refers to a particular set of practical reason that is permeated by a distinct power structure. They each imply certain modes of training and shaping of individualities (Foucault, 1988a, p. 18). Especially important in the fourth type is the way in which these self technologies imply a set of

obligations to truth (i.e. discovering the truth, being enlightened by truth, telling the truth, etc.), all of which lie at the foundation of the constitution and transformation of the self (Foucault, 1997, p. 178).

Keen on studying power relations with reference to the self's way of acting on itself, Foucault sketches out the development of a hermeneutics of the self in two historically contiguous contexts: (1) Greco-Roman philosophy of the first two centuries of the early Roman Empire, and (2) Christian ascetic practices and monastic principles as developed in the fourth and fifth centuries of the late Roman Empire. Although the main interest of this chapter lies in how Christian confessional practices figure in Foucault's analyses, it seems appropriate to first go through the Classical Greek technologies of the self in order for the differentiation between two contexts to come to the fore.

5.1.1. Technologies of the Self in Classical Greece

In classical Greek cities, there were two major ethical precepts that regulated practices of individual and social conduct. The first derived from an ancient principle, *epimeleisthai sautou*, which came to mean "take care of yourself," whereas the second was known as the Delphic principle, *gnothi seauton*, which meant "know thyself" (Foucault, 1988a, p. 19). Taking note of the fact that ancient philosophy is usually associated with the Delphic principle, Foucault capitalizes the tension between these two precepts and shows how the traditional hierarchy between the two was inverted over time. "Know thyself," he says, was misleadingly exaggerated to the point of taking precedence over "care of the self," although the former was simply a technical advice to be followed when consulting with the oracle while the latter was a rather more comprehensive and abstract principle concerning life in general (p. 19).

Foucault argues that the reasons behind this subordination are two-fold. On the one hand, the moral basis of Western society, founded as it was upon a Christian tradition and a secular tradition of morality, legitimized the marginalization of the self.[58] On the

[58] The first of these, the Christian tradition of morality, privileged self-renunciation over self-care as it

other hand, a whole philosophical lineage extending from Descartes to Husserl privileged the thinking subject so as to make knowledge of the self the first step of epistemology proper. Since morality insisted on the self as something that can and must be rejected, while philosophy insisted on the self as something that can and must be known, "know thyself" easily came to obscure "care of the self" throughout history (p. 22). Despite the wide scope of a subordination as such, Foucault argues that the principle of the care of the self continued to maintain its value for at least eight centuries from Socrates to Gregory of Nyssa. Throughout this lineage, the primacy of the care of self as a principle not only preceded, but in fact brought into operation the Delphic maxim (pp. 20-22).

As a network of obligations and services to one's soul, self-care was a form of meditation and preparation that involved moments of active leisure to be set aside for a retreat into oneself. It took various reflective forms such as "taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed" (p. 27). In fact, taking over the role of oral culture in traditional political life, writing constituted the foremost variant of caring for the self. As administrative structures and bureaucracy of the imperial period increased the status of writing in the political domain, and as Plato's dialogues gave way to forms like the literary pseudo-dialogue and correspondence, the self became the object of a constant writing activity well before Augustine's autobiographic *Confessions* of the fourth century A.D. (p. 27). This resulted in the opening up of a whole new field of experience of the self in the first and second centuries. During this period introspection took on an ever more detailed style as exemplified by Seneca's and Marcus' meticulous concern with details of everyday life, movements of the spirit, and self-analysis. Writing, in short, promoted "increased examination and vigilance of one's moods and so intensifie[d] and widen[ed] how people thought of themselves and promoted self-understanding and self-

associated the act of taking care of oneself with immorality, selfishness, and an attempt to escape from all rule. The second, on the other hand, the secular tradition of morality, relied on external law as it sought the rules for acceptable behavior in relations with others, but not with the self.

mastery" (A. C. Besley, 2005, p. 371).

An exemplary investigation into Marcus Aurelius's letter to Fronto, written in 144-45 A.D., shows the way in which how various trivial eccentricities of everyday life, the relation between body and soul, and the examination of conscience at the end of the day, all began to take on a considerable importance. More importantly, this particular genre of epistles exemplified by Marcus stressed deeds rather than thoughts. This was one of the major differences between imperial periods and later monastic practices. A similar emphasis on things done rather than things thought can also be seen in Seneca, whose letter-writing practices prefigured the diary-writing habits of the Christian era (Foucault, 1988, pp. 29-30).

In Plato's *Alcibiades I*, dialogue was identified as the legitimate method of discovering truth in the soul. It was justified by the concept of memory, and reflected the soul's assumption of a mirror relation to itself. In the Stoics of the imperial period, however, a pedagogical type of relationship, which prevailed in the pre-Platonic world of the Pythagorean culture, re-emerged. In this new pedagogical game, the emphasis was on silence and listening. Master spoke, and the disciple listened – but he listened not to the voice of the master, but to the voice of reason through the master so as to think about it afterwards. The art of listening, articulated in detail by Plutarch in an exemplary treatise, became the positive condition for guaranteeing the acquisition of truth and reason in the self (p. 32).

There are other differences between Stoic practices and previous themes of contemplation of the self as well. For the Pythagoreans, for instance, the examination of conscience was charged with the idea of purification. Since sleep was taken to be a kind of encounter with the gods, one had to purify oneself before going to bed (p. 33). In the Hellenistic and early imperial periods, however, examination of conscience took on new meanings and values. Seneca, for instance, used terms related with administrative

practices as if he was taking stock with a mnemonic device. For him, faults were simply "good intentions left undone" (p. 33). This granted the rule the status of a means of doing something correctly – rather than a means of judging what has happened in the past. Seneca

> is not a judge who has to punish but a stock-taking administrator. . . . He sees that everything has been done correctly following the rule but not the law. It is not real faults for which he reproaches himself but, rather, his lack of success. His errors are of strategy, not of moral character. He wants to make adjustments between what he wanted to do and what he had done, and to reactivate the rules of conduct, not excavate his guilt. (pp. 33-34)

Such differences in the tone of self-examination will be important, again, when comparing Seneca with Christian confessional practices, which looked for "bad intentions" and obliged the penitent to memorize laws in order to discover sins.

Up until this point, Foucault engages with only two Stoic techniques of the self: letters to friends and examination of the conscience. The latter included "a review of what was done, what should have been done, and a comparison of the two" (pp. 34-35). But he eventually takes up a third technique, *askesis*, which was "not a disclosure of the secret self but a remembering" (p. 35). He later on evokes (4) "the interpretation of dreams" as a fourth (p. 38). In the first two techniques, the main emphasis was on the subjectivation of truth. There was no deciphering of the self but only a comparative memory of things that were done and things that should have been done. Along the same lines, *askesis* emerged not as the renunciation, but as a progressive reviewing of the self with the main aim of accessing the reality of this world. It was a process of preparing and intensifying subjectivity that corresponded to a mastery over the self. A mastery as such was obtained less by repudiating reality than by acquiring and assimilating truth. This preparation process (*paraskeuazo*) took two forms: *melete* referred to a philosophical meditation concerned with rehearsing one's thoughts and discourses about how to respond to imaginary situations; *gymnasia* referred to a physical training concerned with sexual abstinence, physical privation, hardship, and other purification rituals. Both techniques corresponded to a test situation, the former in thought the latter in action.

They both aimed at the ultimate objective of self-mastery (pp. 36-37). Finally, there was the technology of the interpretation of dreams, the nineteenth-century Freudian connotations of which are to be recognized all too well. Despite their relatively marginal position in antiquity, the interpretative practices were still quite popular because of the association between the meaning of a dream and the announcement of a future event (p. 39).

5.1.2. Technologies of the Self in Early Christian Confessional Practices

In looking at the transition between pagan and early-Christian cultures, where one can see both continuities and discontinuities, the first point to note is that Christianity was a salvation religion. It allegedly delivered the believer "from one reality to another, from death to life, from time to eternity" (p. 40) by dictating a set of conditions and modes of behavior upon the individual towards a certain transformation of the self.

Moreover, Christianity was a confessional religion that dictated rigorous obligations of truth, canon, and dogma. Its characteristic truth obligations were manifold: the duty "to hold certain books as permanent truth," the duty "to accept authoritarian decision in matters of truth," the duty "not only to believe certain things but to show that one believes," the duty "to accept institutional authority," and so on (p. 40). In effecting these duties, faith did not suffice by itself; it had to be related with truth obligations of the self. These obligations involved: the duty of acknowledging who one was in terms of faults, temptations, and desires; the duty of disclosing these to God or to others, who held the position of bearing witness against oneself, etc. Only when coupled with obligations of self-disclosure (which dealt with truth, heart, and soul) could the obligations of faith (which dealt with books and dogma) have worked towards a purification of the soul. Although the sacrament of penance and the confession of sins were inventions that took shape rather later, it was still possible to see two such forms of disclosing the self in the first centuries of Christianity. These were *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis*.

Exomologesis, coming to mean "recognition of fact" (p. 41), was a practice that lasted at least until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whereby believers publicly acknowledged both the truth of their faith and their standing as Christians. Charged with a penitential meaning, the word directly denoted penitence as a status imposed upon someone who was guilty of having committed serious sins. Once the sinner asked the bishop for penance, which was precisely something that needed to be demanded, the process of purification required going through several stages. It comprised of an initial recognition, suffering (through fasting, rule-bound clothing, prohibitions about sex, etc.), and reconciliation. By publicly exhibiting his suffering, his shame, his humility, and his modesty until he was atoned for his sins, the individual bore the mark of *exomologesis* that prevented him from living the same life as others (pp. 41-42).

One crucial point is that a disclosure as such was not exactly a confession *per se*, but a variant. It relied less on verbal behavior, and more on the dramatic acknowledgment of one's status as a sinner and a penitent. The act of exposing one's sinfulness and the act of enduring one's penance were bound together and materialized in the same expression. Another crucial point is that this disclosure was not compressed in time as a once-and-for-all event, but was experienced as a way of life enacted at all times by submitting to a responsibility to show. Constant visibility to others, upon whose recognition the whole ritual relied, was the most important aspect of this uninterrupted process: "Exposé is the heart of exomologesis" (p. 42). A publicity as such fulfilled two paradoxically linked functions: (1) to rub out the sin, and (2) to show the sinner at his most naked. Even more paradoxical was the way in which the truth of the sin was not revealed in its being told, but in the exhibition of the true sinful being of the sinner, who therefore presented himself to be full of sins he did not explain.

The theories and practices of elaborating on penance took various forms such as the medical model (exhibition of wounds in order for receiving cure), the tribunal model of

judgment (appeasing the judge by confessing one's faults), and most importantly the model of death, torture, or martyrdom (preferring to die rather than compromising one's faith) (p. 43). Conceived in these terms, Christian penance began to take on the meaning of breaking with one's self, one's past, and one's world in such a way that self-revelation simultaneously became a self-destruction or renunciation. Instead of aiming at establishing one's identity, it aimed at marking the refusal of identity, the refusal of the self. It was a way of showing that one was able "to renounce life and self, to show that [one] can face and accept death" (p. 43). Whereas, for the Stoics, the examination of conscience, which lead the way towards self-knowledge, relied on a private memorization of rules; for Christians, the recognition of one's sinful being, which lead the way towards a violent dissociation from the self, relied on a public pursuit of penance. It was all the more symbolic, ritual, and theatrical.

A different but more important Christian technology of disclosing the self, which was reminiscent of pagan verbalization exercises, emerged in the fourth century: *exagoreusis*. One of its available forms was already proposed at the time by Chrysostom as an exact replica of Senecan style self-examination (i.e. morning accounts of expenses, evening accounts of conduct, examination of advantages and prejudices, etc.) (p. 44). With the introduction of monastic life, however, a totally different confessional practice took shape, based on principles of obedience and contemplation. In obedience, there was a lucid move away from a Senecan-type relation between master and disciple. In Seneca, this relation was rather instrumental and professional – once the disciple acquired an autonomous life through good advice, the relationship ended. Monastic obedience, in contrast, had no connection with the need for improving the self, but relied on a fundamental and permanent relation of total submission. There was no final autonomous state, but only the sacrifice of one's own will to the complete control of the master. Even after the disciple became his own director, the spirit of obedience to master was preserved. Even death was a matter of master's permission; or else it was considered stealth. Contemplation, as the second feature of monastic spirituality, on the other hand,

referred to the obligation of the monk to busy himself continuously with one single point – that is, God. As the supreme good, contemplation only aimed at insuring the sufficient level of purity required of the monk's heart to see God. The goal was "the permanent contemplation of God" (p. 45).

Taken together, these two principles formed into a new technology of the self, a clear exposition of which was provided by Cassian. This new technology, of allegedly oriental origins, concerned itself less with past actions of the day as in Seneca, but more with present thoughts.[59] Since it was the duty of the monk to continuously contemplate God, the actual course of his thought had to be under scrutiny at all times, with the permanent aim of discriminating between thoughts with reference to whether they lead to God. Where there was once a memorization of deeds regarding their correspondence with rules, there was now an attempt to stabilize the perpetual agitations of the spirit. The examination of conscience, which was based on the idea of a hidden eros, relied on scrutinizing every single thought in order to be able to discriminate against that which would mobilize the spirit, stimulate the desire, or distract attention away from God (p. 46).

This new technique of self-examination introduced a relationship of necessity between hidden thoughts and an inner impurity, and in this way laid the seeds of a Christian hermeneutics of the self, which thrived upon both the existence of a hidden inner thought and the existence of a self-illusion that concealed the secret (p. 46). Since what was impure and evil was believed to be residing in what was hidden and unstated, the only way out was confession: "to tell all thoughts to our director, to be obedient to our master in all things, to engage in permanent verbalization of all our thoughts" (p. 47). By confessing, the monk submitted to the master's ability to know, his experience and wisdom to recognize, and therefore to give better advice. Even if there was no

[59] For a rather more detailed reading of Cassian's conception of morality, see "The Battle for Chastity" (Foucault, 1997, pp. 185-198). For an opposing account that traces Senecan/Stoic "aesthetics of existence," see "Self Writing" (Foucault, 1997, pp. 207-222). For a comparative account, in relation to power, see "The Confession of the Flesh" (Foucault, 1980, pp. 194-228).

reciprocity, such that the master did not reply at all, the fact that the monk expressed his thought already brought in the effect of selection and discrimination. In strict contrast to Stoic self-examination, the Cassian monk thus engaged in a hermeneutic relation towards both the master and his own self in the form of a confession, which now was "a mark of truth" (p. 48). Since, however, this ideal of perpetual verbalization could not actually be realized to the fullest, the end result was the fabrication of everything that could not be expressed into a sin. The scrutiny itself became, in a sense, the producer of sin.

* * * * *

In sum, the two major technologies of self-disclosure that took shape in Christian ascetic culture were *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis*. The first involved "a dramatic expression of the situation of the penitent as sinner" whereas the second involved "an analytical and continual verbalization of thoughts carried on in the relation of complete obedience to someone else" (p. 48). However different they may be, what was crucial for both cases was a supreme belief in the impossibility of disclosure without renunciation – renunciation of the self in *exomologesis,* and renunciation of the will in *exagoreusis*. It is a convergence as such in the theme of renunciation that differentiates these two early Christian confessional practices from classical Greek practices of asceticism. In the latter, the goal was establishing a specific relation to oneself, through self-mastery, towards a full-force confrontation with the world; whereas, in the former, the goal was self-repudiation towards a total detachment from the world.

It is crucial at this point to note that Foucault's studies on sexuality, and thus those on technologies of the self, are based on a conception of power as "government" in the general sense of the term – government of children, government of souls and consciences, government of a household or a state – rather than a conception of power as "biopower."[60] Along these lines, Foucault interprets confession of sins as acts of "truth-

[60] As Paul Patton effectively demonstrates in detail (2007, pp. 203-218), the concept of biopower does

telling." These require "not just that the subject tell the truth but that he tell the truth about himself, his faults, his desires, the state of his soul, and so on" (Foucault, 1987, p. 81).

The importance of the connection between these two notes cannot be overestimated since it is only against the general problem of government in the background that confessional acts of truth come forth as problems of self-examination, in which one is required not simply to obey but to reveal what one is by stating it. It is only with reference to this connection that the paradoxical coexistence of prohibitions against sexuality on the one hand and strong incitations to speak its truth on the other gains significance in *The History of Sexuality*. It is only with reference to this connection that Foucault is able to comprehend confession (*aveu*) as encompassing "all those procedures by which the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his sexuality which is capable of having effects on the subject himself" ("The Confession of the Flesh," 1980, pp. 215-216). And, finally, it is only with reference to this connection that one can recognize the role of self-renunciation in constituting confession as a historically singular form of experience.

5.2. The Borromean Confessional: A Social Experiment

not in fact play that much of a major role in Foucault's work. An observable shift from the notion of biopower towards that of government can be followed throughout Foucault's course notes titled "Security, Territory, and Population" (1997, pp. 67-71), "The Birth of Biopolitics" (1997, pp. 73-79), and "On the Government of the Living" (1997, pp. 81-85). Besides these course lectures between 1976 and 1979, the notion of biopolitics is engaged by Foucault mainly in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* ("Right of Death and Power over Life," 1990a, pp. 133-159), but afterwards largely disappears so as to leave the floor to other issues such as pastoral government, reason of state, and the science of police. These issues certainly encompass many others overlapping with the domain of biopower; but nevertheless they put the emphasis more on a rather more specific art of governing the activity of subjects than on the way in which power addresses the lives of citizens. From 1979 onwards, the shift in the conception of power from the problematic notion of "biopolitics" to "governmentality" is almost complete, so as to culminate as early as the 1982 essay titled "The Subject and Power," even before volumes *I* and *II* of T*he History of Sexuality* – both of which were originally published in 1984. This shift is not as radical of a break as some do assume – for an exemplary and very influential account, see Miller (1993). It rather involves a substantial rewriting in the light of Foucault's deepened analysis (Hartmann, 2003). But nevertheless the difference is there. See "Governmentality" (Foucault, 2000, pp. 201-222) and "'O*mnes et Singulatim*': Toward a Critique of Political Reason" (2000, pp. 298-325). Also see Ojakangas' "Impossible Dialogue on Bio-Power" (2005).

As seen above, the confessional practices of early monastic life were related to three modes in particular: dependency to the master, self-examination of one's own conscience, and exhaustive and obligatory descriptions of one's mental impulses. These three modes, more or less, defined Christian technologies of the self insofar as they relied on the disclosure and renunciation of the self. As also made clear by Foucault, however, it was *exagoreusis*, the technique based more on verbalization, that continued to define Christian experience. It lasted not only until seventh century but also continued to rise, along with the inauguration and institutionalization of penance, from thirteenth century onwards. It was in this century that Canon Law turned its performance into a yearly obligation, under the name of Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation.

Even then, and throughout the rest of the Middle Ages, confessions were simply heard, out in the open, in a sanctuary by a seated priest – a position that manifested his authority as a figure of spiritual medicine and judgment. The kneeling penitent, on the other hand, basically rested at his side for absolution, with a bent head displaying humility and repent. (Anson, 1948, p. 159). There were no intermediary apparatuses screening the interaction, just as there were no cubicles isolating the scene of penance from the rest of the congregation (Figure 5.1). As summarized by Thomas Cardinal Cajetan, the traditional elements of comportment operated on these four levels throughout the Middle Ages: (1) intellectual recognition of one's status as sinner; (2) behavioral submission toward divine authority as it was manifest in the body of the confessor; (3) verbal expression of fear and dread in the face of Christ; and (4) physical expression of humbleness via the act of kneeling down and avoidance of eye contact (De Boer, 2001, pp. 92-93).

Figure 5.1. Woodcut depiction of pre-16th century confession (Senior, 1994).

In the sixteenth-century, however, some "extraordinary social experiment" made its appearance in the Counter-Reformation world:

> In the aftermath of the Council of Trent, and at its behest, numerous Italian church leaders tried to enhance the scope and effectiveness of their governance of lay society, drawing especially on the help of confessors. The need to do so was felt to be deep and urgent if the Catholic Church was to re-establish loyalty and order in a society riven by religious conflict and disagreement. That in turn proved essential in an age of confessionalism, in which religious faith and political allegiance were largely overlapping concepts. (De Boer, 2001, p. ix)

The explicit call of the fourteenth session of Council of Trent (1545-1563), for the restoration of a disciplined, pious, and faithful Christian community based on confessionalism, invigorated a number of responses. They all relied upon diverse strategies of controlling and managing social order. Among these, the one model that comprehensively reached for the moral self-judgments of its subjects, and left a lasting

imprint on both contemporary and subsequent practices, was orchestrated by Carlo Borromeo, who occupied the archbishopric of the archdiocese of Milan between 1564-1584.

During his post, Borromeo initiated the production of a massive amount of normative texts to be used as guides in manners of confession, public worship, and social conduct in general. His main objectives included the development of a code of public demeanor and speech, the encouragement of an overall penitential mode of being, and the reinforcement of a series of segregations such as those between men and women, clergy and laity, and the sacred and the profane (De Boer, 2001, p. 3). Since it is Borromeo's "gaze" that is accepted to have generally overdetermined the historiography on the subject (ibid.), it is to this model that one can turn, which centralized as means to its ends the material manipulation of an age-old religious practice – confession of sins.

5.2.1. Main Principles of the Borromean Design

When it comes to historicizing common and everyday practices, there is no question as to the difficulty of drawing definitive lines. But it probably is not unfair to say that two very specific dates prove to be crucial turning points in the history of the confessional. The year 1576 was the scene of celebration of a commemorative jubilee in Milan, where the crowds of penitents met for the first time the newly installed confessional booths at the Duomo. Although the preceding decades had seen the sporadic and evolutionary use of confessionals throughout various regions of Italy, the jubilee had "marked their effective introduction in the Milanese diocese and their codification as standard equipment of the Counter-Reformation church" (De Boer, 2001, p. 84).

Consecutively, the year 1577 witnessed the publication of Borromeo's *Instructions for Church Fabrics and Furnishings*, co-authored by his episcopal associate Ludovico Moneta. Both men were quite fascinated by the study of architecture – Borromeo was reportedly an earnest student of the early Christian basilicas while Moneto was interested in

classical monuments and the themes of Vitruvian theory. But the book, which fundamentally consisted of normative instructions laying out the minimum requirements to be imposed upon all churches, was less an architectural treatise, and more an ecclesiastical guide (pp. 87-90). Feeding more upon moral, ritual, and disciplinary concerns, it aimed not only at the architect, but also the penitent and the priest so as to define the proper planning, care, and use of church buildings. Even when it directed the reader to the professional advice of the architect in matters of style and ornamentation, the text seemed to make no apparent distinction between decorum and conduct, between building and preaching, where the upper-hand in processes of decision-making always already belonged to the bishop (pp. 115-118).

While providing priests with meticulous instructions as to the appropriate operation of the sacrament, the book's equally detailed chapter on the confessional incorporated Borromean design as the first technically specified model to be published, and therefore is generally considered to be marking its "invention."

> In essence, the confessional was a wooden structure consisting of a chair (the confessor's seat) and a kneeling bench (for the penitent) mounted against one of its sides. Vertical panels enclosed the seat from behind and two sides, while leaving it open at the front. The whole structure sat on a large, low base, and was topped by a roof. Particular attention was given to the panel separating the seat and the bench: it had a small "window" closed off by a metal sheet with tiny holes and covered on the inside with a piece of cloth – in other words, the grille. At the front of the confessional, a narrow, vertical plank was constructed against the same dividing panel, extending partly to the side of the penitent, partly to that of the confessor. Finally, the confessor's space had a door made of bars or a large grille within a frame. (De Boer, 2001, p. 91)

The intention behind the whole scheme was clearly to give material shape and precision to the performance of the confessional ritual. In this sense, the Borromean design totally complied with the four traditional elements of the sacrament, summarized with reference to Cardinal Cajetan above (pp. 9-10). Borromeo had not only harmoniously followed but even fortified these imperatives by giving concrete shape to a setting that substantiated the execution of a traditional series of acts (Figure 5.2).

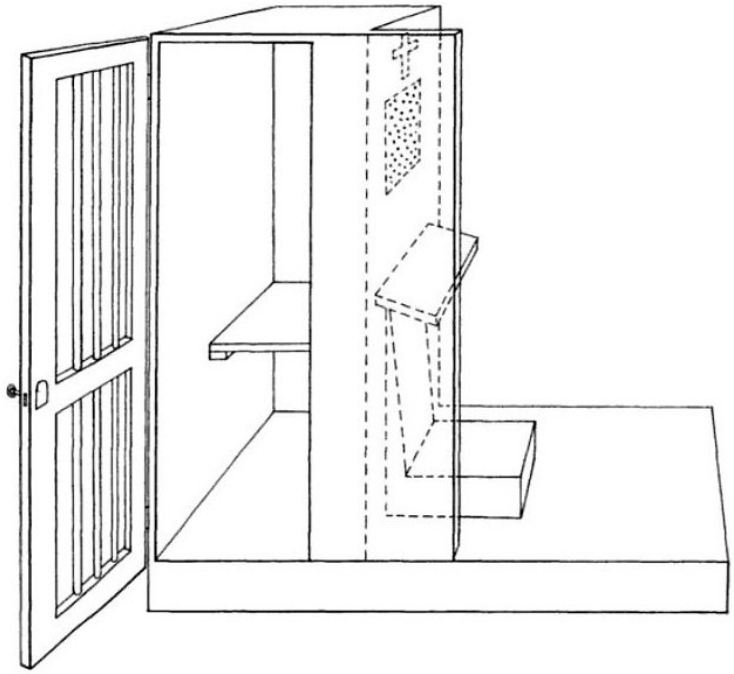

Figure 5.2. Sketch of the confessional as described in *Instructions* (De Boer, 2001).

While observing a continuity as such, it is also important to note that the Borromean model relied upon two distinctive and seemingly contradictory features. On the one hand, it guaranteed confessor and penitent to be physically isolated from the rest of the congregation and from each other while, on the other, it provided a public setting for the whole ritual of confession itself (Figure 5.3). Isolation principle already had its predecessors, as in the 1542-dated *Constitutions* of the Veronese bishop Gian Matteo Giberti, who required a board with a perforated window, called a *confessorium*, to be installed between the confessor and the female penitents (Figure 5.4). The First Provincial Council of 1565, which made further specifications by ordering the utilization of "seats in which the penitent and the confessor are completely separated by a panel" (qtd. in Boer, 2001, p. 94), popularized the adoption of analogous apparatuses throughout the rest of Italy, especially in the bishoprics of Syracuse, Brescia, Fiesole, Bologna, and Naples. It is therefore no surprise to see that the Borromean model found a very convenient nurturing ground in this widespread sensitivity of the time.

Figure 5.3. Illustration by Cesare Bonino, with confessional on the left (De Boer, 2001).

The second indispensable principle was the imperative of keeping the confessional completely exposed to public scrutiny. It was deemed appropriate for the booth to be provided with a door and a lock to keep undesirable intrusions, "to prevent laymen, vagrants, or dirty people from sitting and idly sleeping in it, when the confessor does not happen to occupy it, to the great irreverence of the sacred ministry which is exercised therein" (Borromeo quoted in Anson, 1948, p. 160). But during the confession itself, the door, or the substituting curtain as common in later practices, was to stay open.

Guidelines regarding the placement of the furniture complemented the concern over public exposure by insisting on the installation of the box in some open and clear space in the volume of the church, such as the nave or a side chapel.

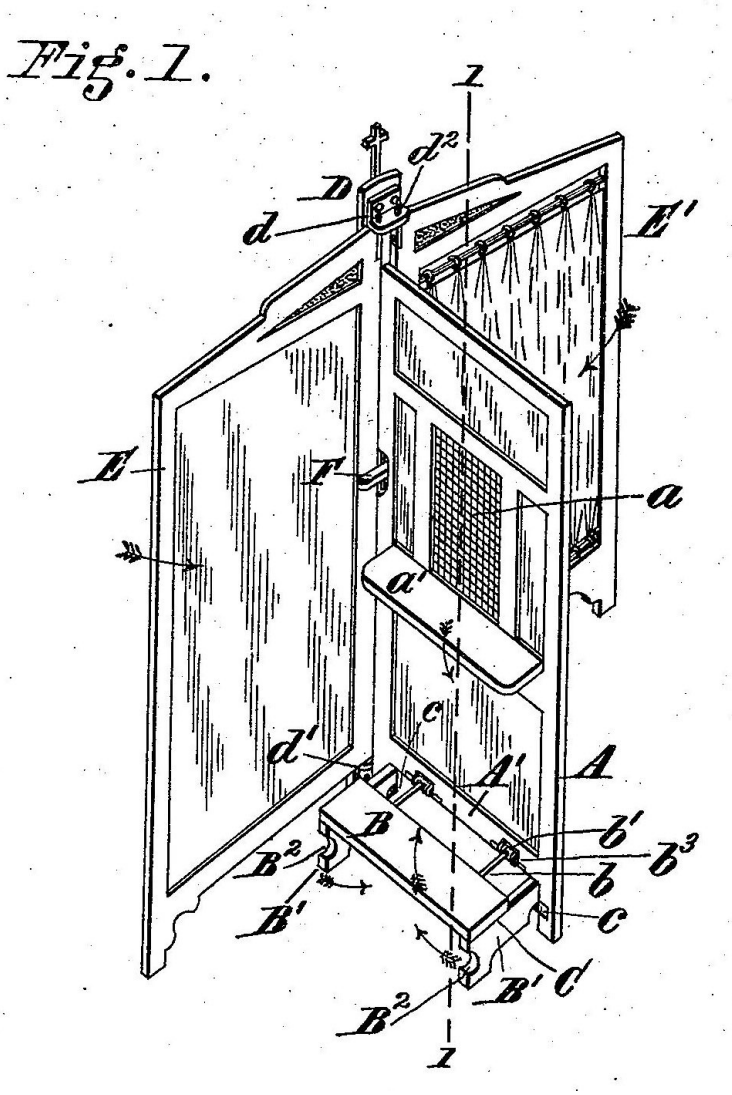

Figure 5.4. A contemporary version of a portable *confessorium* (retrieved from United States Patent Office, <<www.uspto.gov>>).

Instructions also permitted the positioning of the confessional at the entrance or a threshold as long as a series of railings enclosed the confessor from the other penitents: "By this arrangement, the chapel railings may be made to keep off such persons as would rush up without order to the sacred tribunal and place themselves too close to the person

who is engaged in making his confession, to the probable disturbance either of the penitent himself or of the confessor" (Borromeo quoted ibid., p. 159).

It is possible to trace the resonances of these two principles in Canon Law, where the only two points to be insisted in the design and construction of confessionals are summarized as follows: (1) "The confessional seat where women's confessions are heard must be situated in an open and conspicuous place, normally in a church, or public or semipublic oratory, set apart for women"; and (2) "The confessional must be provided with an immovable screen of fine mesh between the penitent and the confessor" (quoted ibid, pp. 161-162).

5.2.2. Borromeo: A Confessional Individualist?

Clearly, these two rules brought about a significant change in real-life practices of the sacrament, which beforehand included not only confessions in the privacy of monastic cells but also home-consultations (Figure 5.6). The implications of these changes are the subject of various interpretations, most of which follow the well-known hypotheses stipulated by John Bossy's "The Social History of Confession." Here, Bossy argues that, during the sixteenth-century, it was possible to observe a displacement from the social to the personal in the socio-religious function of confession. This was a transformation from "the field of objective social relations" to "a field of interiorized discipline for the individual" (Bossy, 1975, p. 21).

Throughout the Middle Ages, he states, the sacrament was a matter of collective ritual with a focus on resolving conflicts that brought about disruptions to the concordance of the community at large. In that sense, it was an "annual settlement of social accounts" (p. 25) that provided reconciliation of the penitent to the church as a communal body, but not directly to God. This was arguably still the case even after the Lateran Council of 1215, where this situation was seemingly reversed so as to foreground and institutionalize the principle of reconciliation to God, rather than to the community.

Bossy's counter-evidence, asserting the continuity of a social modality, comes from the influential statements of Johannes Gropper. Gropper was a member of the Council of Trent and argued in 1551 that "while mere contrition reconciled the sinner to God, only confession could reconcile him to the church" (quoted ibid., p. 23). These declarations, coupled with communal implications found in some other examples from Henry Charles Lea's *A History of Auricular Confession* (1968), allow Bossy to continue arguing that the pre-reformation practices of the sacrament still embodied a social dimension.

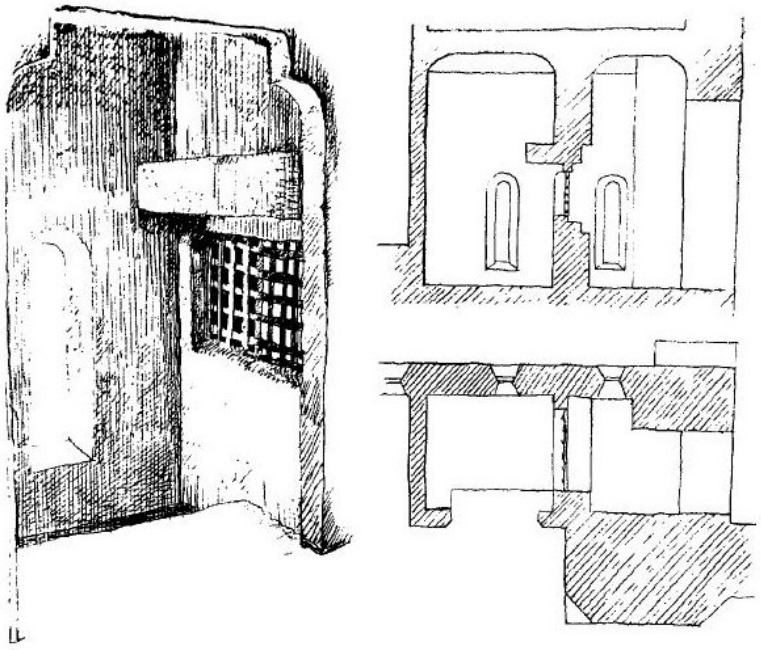

Figure 5.5. Grille separating men's from women's cloister (Senior, 1994).

With the onset of Counter-Reformation in the sixteenth-century, however, he identifies a solid inclination to pscyhologize the sacrament, which begins to conceptualize the sin as something that takes place in the mind. While mainly drawing on other sources such as the *Devotio Moderna*, which privileges the examination of conscience and systematic meditation over confession, Bossy ironically finds the intentions of this psychological school gain concrete form in Borromeo's *Instructions*, where confession is on the contrary centralized by even more physical means. "If by 'social' we mean what we have

been meaning so far, I think Borromeo had a limited sense of the social dimension of sin. His historical reconstruction was vitiated in principle by the assumption that the reconciliation to be procured by the sacrament was a reconciliation to God and not to the community" (Bossy, 1975, p. 29). This is further proved by Bossy's observation that the most embodied and interactive gesture of the ritual, the confessor's laying on of his hands on the penitent's head in order to impose penance and absolution, becomes impossible to perform in the Borromean confessional because of the intermediary panel (p. 29).

For Bossy, finding a concrete echo of this privatization tendency in the Borromean model was not a contradiction for three reasons. First, rather than a pastoral model of persuasion, Borromeo still abode by a juridical model of the sacrament, as prevailed at Trent, and thus drew on the inquisitorial powers of a judge to investigate the sin and impart penalties. Second, Borromeo meant to avoid the sexual dangers of the face-to-face confessional on possible grounds of transgression and scandal, which would compromise the general aims of his measures in disciplining behavior inside and outside the church building. This concern was also apparent in his idealization of distinct confession stalls for male and female penitents, one to be placed in north and another in south navels, even to the point of legislating the confessional as compulsory only for women. And finally, Borromeo obviously aimed for an overall isolation of the sacramental act from the rest of the mass so that the penitent could feel free to receive instruction and denounce his/her neighbors, when necessary, in the privacy of the confessional booth. Putting all of these reflections together, Bossy comes to the conclusion that Borromeo was a "confessional individualist" (p. 30) responsible for the overall transformation of the execution of the sacrament towards an irreversible privatization – insofar as he made the aspirations of the psychological school available to laymen at large.

5.2.3. Between Privacy and Publicity

Bossy's privatization hypothesis finds frequent allies among historians of early modern Catholicism, in whose eyes the confessional emerges as a marker of anonymity and seclusion, especially considering the fact that individual exercises of the spirit gained much primacy during the period. But, as seen in the two Borromean principles above, isolation and public exposure simultaneously came to act against each other in the confines of this model. Insofar as they brought about less an amplification and more a diminution of privacy in the confessional encounter, these two disjunctive traits required the claims of a hypothesis as such to be, if not completely rejected, at least complexified.

In trying to deal with this newly acquired dimension of visibility and publicity, Wietse de Boer chooses, in his rather more recent *The Conquest of the Soul* (2001), to place a stronger stress-mark on the category of gender. After all, as its prehistory stood witness, one of the most significant accelerators of the initiation of Counter-Reformation was the possibility that the "priests might become personally or sexually involved with the women whose confessions they heard" (De Boer, 2001, p. 97). It was thus not uncommon at the Council of Trent to discuss occasions of sexual misconduct, which were considered by Tridentine fathers as a poisonous matter and cause of shame (pp. 5-6). The act of tempting a woman's abstinence during confession was already conceived as abuse for quite a long time. But, from 1561 onwards, the Pope permitted it to be measured as a formal offense – a crime of solicitation, which now required the interference of inquisitorial prosecution rather than being left to the mercy of inconsistent anxiety attacks of a professional circle (Lea, 1968, pp. 382-393). This allows Boer to pinpoint that the installation of confessionals in churches was a virtually perfect manoeuvre of preventing that very occasion the occurrence of which called for penalization, if left to be tackled after-the-fact. This observation is important not only because it draws attention to the otherwise obscure link between the confessional and the Spanish Inquisition, but also because it expresses the effect of an enlightenment, on behalf of priests and confessors, that "the gravest of sins could be provided not only by games, dances, and Carnival, but by a sacramental act" (De Boer, 2001, p. 97).

Boer's remarks gain a special meaning especially when seen in the context of frequent references, found in sacramental manuals, to confession as giving rise to potential "occasions for sin." As a disciplinary technology of investigating, reckoning, and surveying sins, the confessional was intrinsically perceived to be hazardous and connected with peril. It always embodied for the confessor the risk of being left with a "stained soul" (*Avvertenze* quoted ibid, p. 100). "The fear was, then that the healing of souls might revert into its opposite, and in particular that the sin of lechery would be aroused by the very fact of being discussed, whether in the priest or the confessing sinner" (p. 101).

It was thus paramount that the confessor interrogated his subjects with discretion. Recollection of as many details as possible was necessary for the establishment of guilt; but the linguistic transaction itself was as much to be guarded in order to "avoid indicating in a shameful way what is shameful to hear" (p. 101). In fighting against the constituent but undesirable dangers of the sacramental encounter, the recommended use of an impersonal and methodical vocabulary found its somatic equivalence in the materiality of the Borromean confessional. On the one hand, it went without saying that the confessional, by effectively containing the intimacy of the event without leading towards any sense of corporeal proximity or touch, encouraged the disembodiment of the ritual in general. While sharing this observation with Bossy, Boer insists on the other hand that the restrictive detachment of the two participants was offset by an equally dramatic display of the confessional act itself in the unrestricted space of the church (p. 103) (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6. "The Confessional"; Oil-painting by Giuseppe Maria Crespi (De Boer, 2001).

In fact, the counter-reformers' sensitivity towards sensory engagement was not limited to touch but also extended to cover vision. The medieval imagery had already paved the way towards foreclosing the possibility of eye-contact by requiring the penitent to be positioned at the confessor's side. For the penitent, this was seen as a way of facilitating the overcoming of shame. It also underlined the mediating position of the confessor by reminding the penitent that, at all times, he was in fact pouring his insides to God. Such foreclosure was also at the service of the confessor, however, since the sacrament was based on a theory of vision that took the senses to be moral trouble zones, which rendered the soul susceptible to outside influence and corruption. By the sixteenth-century, the biblical association of the woman's face with "a blistering wind" (Antoninus quoted ibid., p. 104) was already in place so as to have called for, first, Giberti's

confessorium and, later on, the Borromean grille. Both apparatuses allowed the confessor to be engaged in verbal exchange while keeping him exempt from potential risks of vision-based blasphemy and seduction.

5.2.4. Predecessors and Later Interpretations

The Borromean confessional owed its brilliance to an ability to fulfill two contradictory functions in one single stroke. For its users, it brought about an exclusively oral and auditory field of experience that was devoid of vision while, for its bystanders, it summoned a counter-invitation to an exclusively visual field of experience that was devoid of speech and hearing. It was through the juxtaposition of two exclusive fields as such that a strictly private event was simultaneously transformed into its opposite, in the sense of being rendered liable to public examination. In this sense, it can be said that the Borromean confessional was a perfectly diluted, hybrid offspring of the two early Christian technologies of the self, *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis*, as identified by Foucault – a point omitted by many scholars in trying to come to terms with this contradiction. This is especially true when one considers that *exomologesis* favored the visual exposure of one's status as sinner to the public and that *exagoreusis* foregrounded the verbal exposure of one's insides to the confessor in private.

It is possible at this point to give voice to objections raised by the laity at large against the Borromean model's way of jeopardizing the seal of confession (pp. 119-120). These complaints were met by a number of local solutions – such as the complete dismissal of onlookers from the proximate neighborhood of the confessional, or the installation of low or folding doors in front of the confessor's compartment so as not to obstruct the view. There was always that narrow piece of timber, which was already included in the original design and was fixed against the front-side of the intermediary panel. Although disputable, it not only precluded the confessor and the penitent from touching each other but also provided a minimum of visual shelter, without compromising overall exposure, right at a point where the two participants were nearest together (pp. 105-

106). It is also possible to take a historically broader look at further elaborations of this model – as exemplified by built-in versions or the double-face confessionals with grilles on opposite sides, which enabled successive penances to be performed without disruption (Anson, 1948, p. 163) (Figure 5.7). In cases as such, it was always obligatory for the designers to ensure "that both grilles can be shut on the inside with wooden shutters closing that side where the confessor is not hearing a penitent" (Letter of the Jesuit general quoted in Boer, 2001, p. 122).

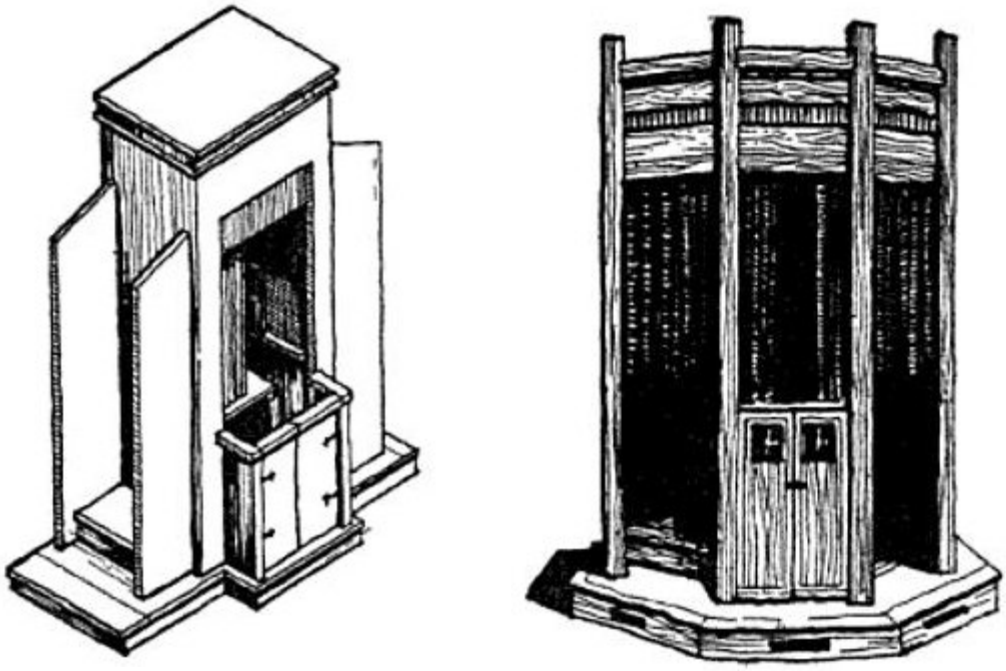

Figure 5.7. Double-confessional models with half-doors or curtains (Anson, 1948).

Some other more complex types involved separate circulation patterns for the confessor and the penitent while reserving a complete room for the confessor to spend time between missions (Anson, 1948, p. 164) (Figure 5.8).

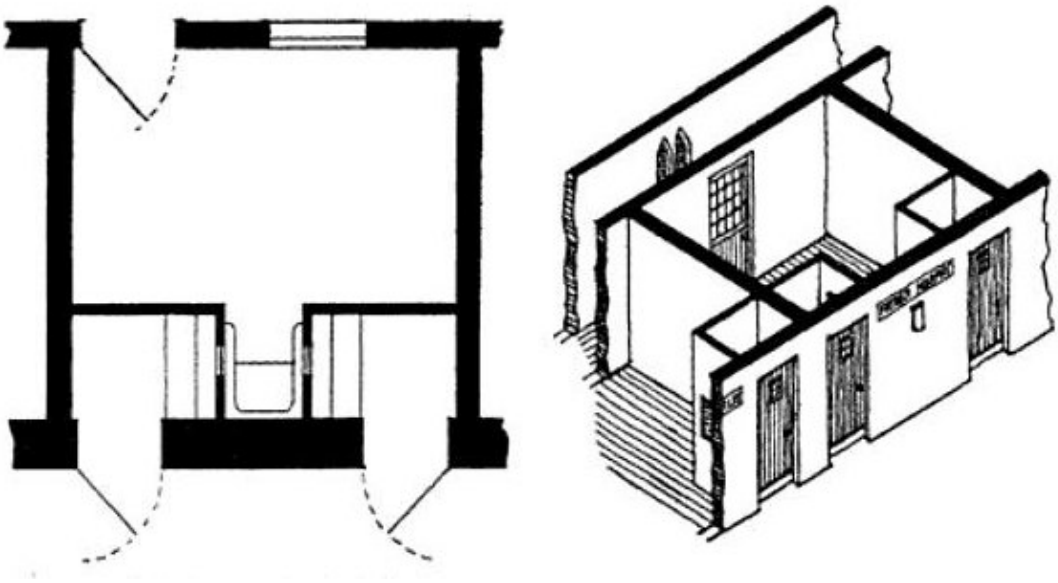

Figure 5.8. Double-confessional with room attached (Anson, 1948).

All in all, and in echoing Boer, the totality of these solutions only expressed the squaring off of a delicate account "between publicity and privacy" (2001, p. 106). But the general premises of the Borromean model remained intact, to be established later on as an ideal of proper religious conduct. What is most interesting is the way in which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century interpretations of Borromeo's *Instructions* repositioned the confessional even more towards the center of the church space, in conformity with the worship etiquette and canons of the era. Contradictory as it may seem, the effect of spectacularization generated by these Baroque confessionals can perhaps be read as a sign of extreme fidelity to their Borromean origins, since their strong iconography and heavy woodwork not only juxtaposed a disciplined body with theatrical strategies of disclosure, but also literally framed and eroticized this supposedly "most secretive of judicial acts" (Figure 5.9). It is in this sense that they can be seen as the living witnesses of an era of intensive confessionalism, which was at the same time responsible for the production of a piece of equipment that massively administered, rather than alleviate, an affair as personal as the sacrament of penance.

Figure 5.9. Built-in confessional at St. Fedele (De Boer, 2001).

CHAPTER SIX:

Limit-Experience and Architecture

The prevailing argument throughout the preceding chapters has been revolving around three fundamentals. (1) Every field of experience is characterized by an immaterial series of historically specific structures that ontologically precede its subjects. These structures, at their most basic, entail the domains of knowledge formations, power relations, and relations to self. (2) Architectural frames (as exemplified within the confines of this study by the camera obscura, the camp, and the confessional) accommodate and give material form to these a priori structures of experience by formulating a virtual series of regimes of contact – almost in the sense of a collective epistemological, political, and ethical unconscious in built form. (3) Contact regimes, in this sense, define a range of possibilities available to the subject in terms of relating to his/her surrounding, relating to another, and relating to himself/herself. They are actualized in and through relations, and in this way bring forth various bodily repertories of being (as exemplified by the corporealities of the observer, the *Muselmann*, and the penitent).

As reductionist as this whole scheme may sound, the key terms to be emphasized here are "structural" and "virtual."[61] For none of these structures, contact regimes, and

[61] Deleuze makes a distinction between the couple possible-real and the couple virtual-actual with reference to Bergson. In Deleuze's terminology, the possible is defined by its not being real. However, both the virtual and the actual are real, nevertheless different. He gives the name "realization" to the process of transition from the level of possibility to the level of reality; and the name "actualization" to the process of transition from the level of virtuality to the level of actuality. For details, see Boundas (1997) and Pearson (2005). A distinction as such is important for my purposes mostly because the virtual-actual couple replaces the temporal irreversibility of the possible-real continuum, and turns

repertories – all together forming modes of subjectivation – are absolute and transcendental causes in themselves, but rather are immanent[62] realities that give rise to various, sometimes contradicting, experiences. Nonetheless, they are measures of possibility; they define the rules of what is possible (to say, to see, to do, etc.). In similar terms, although it cannot completely rule over causes and determine the effect, an architectural frame is that facilitator which provides room for a threefold process of determination to take place. This the frame does, first, by introducing gaps into an otherwise undifferentiated environment so as to open up pocket-spaces for those corporealities that do not immediately fit into a given environment (isolation); second, by subjecting the series of variable positions delimited by these corporealities to a process of sorting out so as to reestablish connections (selection); and third, by organizing the gap in such a way that the selected causes increase the degree of probability of an effect (arrangement).

This is what it means for architecture, however abstractly, to isolate by the wall, select by the window, and arrange by the floor – architecture as nothing but an interlocking of frames (Cache, 1995). Architecture figures, in other words, as a tripartite practice: (1) of constructing assemblages that isolate breaking points on the plane of composition; (2) of fabricating frames of experience in such a way that the frame emerges as the condition of possibility, the milieu, of an encounter – that is, a contact between two coexisting realities; and thus (3) of actualizing novel corpo-realities (not bodies *per se*, but bodily modes of existence – since bodies are by no means discernible from those regimes of contact in which they participate).

It should be further noted that, although attributing to the work-of-architecture the role of giving concrete shape to structures that are themselves non-formalized, this study is still talking about the architectural frame as an abstract machine, but not as a concrete

virtuality and actuality into contemporaneous realities that not only always influence each other but also allow movements in between.

[62] For "immanence," see Deleuze (2001b) and Agamben ("Absolute Immanence," 1999a, pp. 220-239).

mechanism. Insofar as the gap introduced by the architectural frame between causes and effects is indeterminate, insofar as one never knows how it will exactly be filled, the concrete function of a building or a spatial construct can always be transformed. A camera turns into a cinema; a brewery becomes a camp; a monastic cell turns into a confessional; the same frame "selects the same vectorial diagram, but in the interval the effect has changed" (Cache, 1995, pp. 28-29). In other words, the territory is not one of a restrictive functionalism (i.e. "form follows function"), where the function is said to directly lead to a form. The most that can be said, along the lines of a positive functionalism, is that *form frames function* while the body does the rest by giving further definition to the autonomous relations defined by the frame.

More importantly, however, even if the concrete function of an edifice can be transformed, this transformation, by itself, does not always conjure up the new – insofar as this ostensibly new effect is nevertheless the product of the same indeterminate gap. Surrounded as it is by various combinations of knowledge formations, power relations, and self technologies, the body is already "framed" at the level of corporealities and rationalities made available to itself by the experiential field in which it is embedded. In order for something altogether new to come about, the entire distribution of knowledge, power, and relations-to-self would have be transformed.[63]

To be able to make sense of the implications of this distinction, it is necessary first to go back to the two versions of experience defined in Chapter Two, and trace the intermediary movement of critical experience between these two versions. Further specifying the scope of an experience-centered architectural history in this light, it will then be possible to recapitulate the resonance between this scheme and the individual findings of the previous three chapters, especially concentrating on the modes of subjectivation and desubjectivation crystallized in each.

[63] See the special issue of *SubStance* on the question of innovation and novelty; especially Friedlander (1990), Girard (1990), Schlanger (1990), and Shanon (1990). Also see Protevi (2006) for a discussion of novelty in the context of complexity science and the problem of emergence.

6.1. From Experience of the Limit to Limit-Experience

In the context of the Trombadori-Foucault interview, the rather general name "experience of the limit" was given to those *possible experiences that conform with the boundaries of an experiential field*. In opposition to these possible experiences were "limit-experiences" – those *experiences that challenge the very same boundaries and push it towards a wholesome transformation*. This apparently handy opposition should not lead one to the conclusion that the problem of experience poses itself for a resolution, as a matter of choosing one over the other. There are no straightforward options to be favored or choices to be made, but only oscillations between these two movements in such a way that every limit-experience becomes the founding moment of another experiential field. Every time there is a rupture in the existing system, a new line of division is drawn; and every new line gives rise to an experiential field in which new modes of subjectivation and objectivation are incidentally laid out and regulated.

This observation sheds a new light on the problem of the relationship between architecture and experience. For, so far, this study has only been interested in how the work-of-architecture gives concrete form to experiential structures that are informal themselves. The oscillation mentioned above, however, means that there is another side to the whole problem. It needs to be asked whether architecture has anything to do not only with concretizing established structures, but also with establishing new ones; not only with modes of subjectivation, but also with modes of desubjectivation. If the work-of-architecture is ever said to be effecting the experiences of its subjects, the analysis of this effect has to take into account how architectural frames relate to both dimensions of experience.

6.1.1. Critical Experience

Crucial here is the role of critique as an intermediary movement between two types of

experience. For critical experience is what allows one to capture those mechanisms operating at the level of possible experience. It helps us "manage to detach ourselves from [these mechanisms] by perceiving them otherwise" (Foucault, 2000, p. 244). Critique, in this sense, grants anyone assuming it the possibility of disengaging from an existing limit, and in this way simultaneously offers both a comprehension of historical structures and a facilitation of limit-experiences. It accounts for an engagement with the present historical stratum that serves as a threshold between the past and the future – in order to ask "what can I see, or what can I say, differently, today?" But such resistance against the present state of things, historically specified as they are within the limits of a field of possible experience, does not entail a return to the past. It only means reactivating the past and exposing the body in its pure potentiality in order to allow something new to come about (i.e. in order for possible experience to reach its limit). Critical experience thus reinforces an engagement with historical conditions of experience, but only in order to disengage from what they are today, so as ultimately to be able to push the existing field of possibilities towards a limit-experience and be otherwise.

The main object of a critical experience as such is what Foucault calls "thought":

> By "thought," I mean what establishes, in a variety of possible forms, the play of true and false, and consequently constitutes the human being as knowing subject [*sujet de connaissance*]; in other words, it is the basis for accepting or refusing rules, and constitutes human beings as social and juridical subjects; it is what establishes the relation with oneself and with others, and constitutes the human being as ethical subject. (Foucault, "Preface to *THS*, Vol.2," 1997, p. 200)

Conceived in this way as laying out the groundwork for the composition of the human subject in the domains of knowledge, power, and self, thought leaves behind its exclusive connection with the realm of thinking, and begins to inhere in every mode of speech, vision, doing, and conduct. It is "the very form of action" itself (p. 201). This is a multi-layered notion of "thoughtful" experience, forms of which can be analyzed through practices. "Practice" here refers to those "systems of action *insofar as* they are inhabited

by thought" (p. 201; emphasis in the original).

With the introduction of thought, one comes back full circle and begins to be able to identify how architectural history can contribute to critical experience. On the one hand, there are everyday practices, those systems of action or forms of possible experience that are determined by historically specific structures of knowledge, power, and relation to self (thought). On the other hand, there is the work-of-architecture, which gives concrete form to these informal structures and actualizes their force by way of framing practices. Architectural history can serve a critical history of thought only when it analyzes architecture's own participation in the work of a priori structures, and in this way opens thought up to transformation.

But how is critical experience possible? How does transformation really take place? To be able to answer this question, a shift in focus back to how Foucault explains historical change is necessary.

6.1.2. Historical Change and The Critical Role of Architectural History

Not surprisingly, it is during the period of archaeologies that Foucault ponders the most upon the problem of dividing up historical continuities into separate segments – first in *The Order of Things*, and then in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

> If [a period] contains a principle of coherence within itself, whence could come *the foreign element* capable of rebutting it? How can a thought melt away before anything other than itself? Generally speaking, what does it mean, no longer being able to think a certain thought? Or to introduce a new thought? (1970, p. 50; emphasis mine)

How is it possible, he asks here, that "within the space of a few years a culture sometimes ceases to think as it had been thinking up till then and begins to think other things in a new way?" (p. 50). The best answer as to the source of such change that he can provide at the time is: "an erosion from outside, from that space which is, for thought, on the other side" (p. 50). This is an erosion made possible by the way in which thought "never

ceases . . . to begin anew" (p. 50), and continuously "contrives to escape itself" (p. 51). These modes of escape, however, themselves escape Foucault's methodical insights at the time. He lets them pass by, and continues positing and describing epistemological discontinuities without attempting to explain them. The only thing *The Order of Things* tells its readers is that the outside never is stable or universal, as it always varies in relation to "the dominant forms of a given regime of thought and practice" (O'Leary, 2008, p. 16).

But even as he backs up in the field of historical research, Foucault does not totally stop following in other fields the traces of that "foreign element," which lures thought into contriving to escape itself. During 1960s, characterized as they are by Foucault's epistemological concerns, the locus of this foreign element turns out to be the limit-experiences of avant-garde French literature. He traces the fundamental forms and categories of "the thought of the outside" throughout a series of writings on Sade, Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Artaud, Bataille, Klossowski, and finally Blanchot.[64] Yet, apart from these early literary writings, to which could be added his texts on Roussel and Magritte[65], Foucault later on almost completely discards the genre.[66] Nonetheless, the need to find an equivalent substance as motor of change persists in such a way that Foucault offers a different conception of the outside and a different conception of the foreign element in every single period of his own work. Following 1960s, throughout which a literary version of the outside takes shape around the idea of *transgression*, Foucault locates the engine of change in the realm of politics and associates it with the *capacities of the body as a source of resistance* in the 1970s. While 1980s are marked by the centralization of the *folding back of the self upon itself* as means of change in the realm of ethics, he in the meantime goes back to the problem of epistemological change and

[64] See "The Father's 'No'" (1977, pp. 68-86); "A Preface to Transgression" (1977, pp. 29-52); "Language to Infinity" (1977, pp. 53-67); "The Prose of Actaeon" (1998, pp. 123-135); "The Thought of the Outside" (1998, pp. 147-169); "Sade: Sergeant of Sex" (1998; 223-227). Also see Saghafi (1996), for Foucault's "passion" for the outside and exteriority.

[65] See "Speaking and Seeing in Raymond Roussel" (1998, pp. 21-32) and "This Is Not a Pipe" (1998, pp. 187-203).

[66] This is mostly because he presumably loses hope in aesthetic escapism, along with the idea of a redemption through avant-garde literature (Rajchman, 1985).

develops a new response to this problem by appropriating the category of *error*.[67] In all these instances, Foucault articulates the idea of limit-experience as *a transformative force that emerges from a necessarily perilous*[68] *encounter with a foreign element that comes from the outside* – an element that assumes the form of error, resistance, and action of the self upon itself at different levels of analysis.

In light of these differentiations, the role of architecture and the critical role of architectural history become even more specified. Insofar as thought continuously thrives to escape itself and tends to begin anew, structures of experience are subject to a ceaselessly rejuvenating movement that pulls them towards a non-formalized state of virtuality. Transformation, in fact, does not just occur to social fields and experiential structures, but is an essential trait of historical continuum. Architecture, on the other hand, pulls these structures towards a formalized state of actuality insofar as it gives them material form in accordance with three domains of experience – knowledge, power, relation-to-self. Architectural frames, in this sense, accommodate historically specific fields of experience not simply by representing or expressing them, but by immanently regulating the subject's relation to a series of foreign elements – error, resistance, and

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[67] Foucault's major reference point in theorizing error is Georges Canguilhem, for whom knowledge must be comprehended in terms of concepts that organize the environment in which one lives, with all its physical, sensual, intellectual dimensions. According to Canguilhem, every living organism is in constant interaction with its surrounding through a kind of information exchange, but the conditions of this exchange are not constituted by the organism. In other words, it is not concepts that are functions of the vividness of some presupposed "lived experience," from which they derive their meaning and substance. On the contrary, it is experiences that are the effects of a "conceptually structured environment" (Foucault, 1998, p. 475). The organism is mobilized on a territory in which it is able to have a range of lived experiences precisely because of the epistemologically anterior status of this environment. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that, for Canguilhem, epistemological creativity of an organism, its ability to know otherwise, originates from its capacity to *err*, to be in *error*. In the face of this capacity, conventional accounts of knowledge proceed with an entirely negative conception of error. In these accounts, error is that which takes one off from the path towards truth, with no positive epistemological function whatsoever (Gutting, 2002). In Canguilhem's biological view of life, however, error is first of all a deviant accident in the processes of coding and decoding. Taking Canguilhem seriously means, in very broad terms, that change arises only when the organism makes a mistake and deviates from the norms circumscribed by the environmental structure that defines its field of knowledge. In supporting this argument, Foucault states that "knowledge, rather than opening onto truth of the world, is deeply rooted in the 'errors' of life" (1998, p. 477), and that "error is the root of what produces human thought and its history" (p. 476).

[68] For the etymological relation between *experience* and *peril* and *pathos*, see Jay (2005, pp. 10-11).

interiority of the self. Inasmuch as the act of expelling these elements and forming an outside is the founding gesture of establishing a field of experience, architecture's relation to experience precisely lies in its role of regulating the subject's relation to these foreign elements and thus to outside. This does not mean that architecture is inherently conservative, or can be inherently revolutionary for that matter, but that it can be appropriated in ways that can serve both of these ends. The task of architectural history is to analyze this regulatory operation in view of a future that is yet to come[69].

The following three sub-sections resume the traces of a task so defined, as it respectively echoes the individual analyses laid out throughout the preceding three chapters.

6.2. World as a Space in which There is No Error

Chapter Three, with Jonathan Crary in the lead, tried to summarize the main coordinates of a specific subject-effect in terms of a duplicate contact regime materialized in the camera obscura model of vision. According to this model, which functioned as the paradigm of epistemological experience throughout the Classical Age, the observer was someone (1) physically withdrawn from the world and (2) mechanically disengaged from the actual process of seeing. As commensurate with this model, Foucault (1970) identifies the main project of Classical Age to be the construction of an analytical method that aimed at reflecting in perfect certainty the true order of the world. The two major presumptions of this method were that the world had a universal order and that this order could be perfectly mimicked by organizing its representations and signs into a systemic table. "It is on this table that the particular sciences took their place, but it is the possibility of that table which defines the most general structures of the episteme" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 19).

[69] For an instructive investigation into the ethical relation to a future that is yet to come in the specific context of experience, see Patton & Protevi (2003); especially Patton and Protevi's "Introduction" (pp. 1-14), Patton's "Future Politics" (pp. 15-29), Smith's "Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought" (pp. 46-66), and Lawlor's "The Beginnings of Thought: The Fundamental Experience in Derrida and Deleuze" (pp. 67).

Foucault's emblematic figure in this comparative ordering of things is unsurprisingly Descartes. In search of a method that would guarantee certitude, Descartes reduced all questions of identity and difference to questions of order. He first looked for finding simple natures in his subjects of analysis and then, building from these simples, tried to progressively explicate the most complex structures. Once he was confident as to his correct isolation of simples and as to the certainty of his method of building, Descartes could have progressed from the most simple to the most complex with perfect assurance. Primary here was the establishment of a serial arrangement between terms such that all difference could be represented as degrees of complexity. And the key to this organization was the "sign." What authorizes the analysis of things into their simple elements is an arbitrary system of signs that is capable not only of decomposing things into their origins but also of demonstrating how different combinations are possible (Foucault, 1970, p. 62).

What this sums up to within the framework of the camera obscura model is that the image produced by the camera was not any image but an ordered image. In other words, what the classical man saw when he looked into the live and flickering images generated by the camera was not a straightforward reproduction but a taxonomic grid that stretched over the exterior world. It is in fact possible to find one curious instance that testifies to such an image/taxonomy juxtaposition without having to go too far. The illustration that decorates Kircher's *Great Art of Light and Shadow*, which was noted in Chapter Three to be one of the most cited illustrations of the camera obscura, does not stand by itself on Kircher's pages but constitutes only one part of a triptych (Figure 6.1). In this triptych, Kircher juxtaposes in a comparative manner the well-known image of a portable dark room with two other, customarily omitted, illustrations: one is of a series of stones and the other is of an anthropomorphic landscape. The stones are inscribed by letters and faces, called "icons," which are inexplicably caused by an "occult trick of nature-the-painter" (Gorman, 2007). Conceiving of nature as a painter that acts by

itself, Kircher clearly sees in these "alphabet stones" the reflection of a magical order inherent to nature, which cannot be explained but at least recognized.

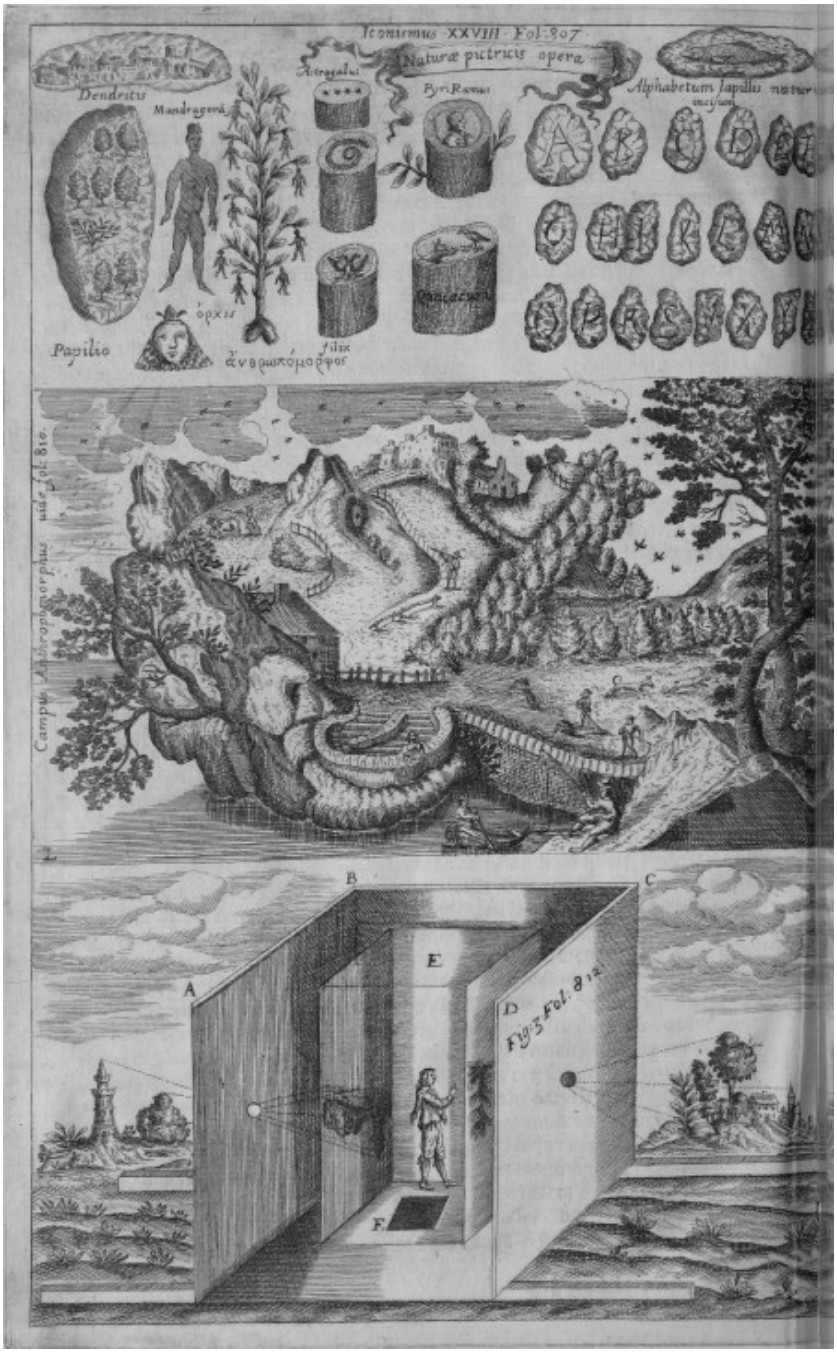

Figure 6.1. "Naturae pictricis operae," from A. Kircher, *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae* (retrieved from ECHO European Cultural Heritage Online, <<http://echo.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de>>).

The same order repeats itself in a different key in the illustration of the landscape, which this time depicts the profile-view of the head of a man lying on his back. Trees and rocks turn into hair, mustache, and beard; houses turn into teeth; walls turn into the outlines of the ear and the neck. It is almost as if, in one single stroke, a supra-order cuts through different realities and reveals itself in the form of an alphabet, a facial organization, and an image. It is simply too unfortunate that these two plates are usually cut out in almost all quotations, probably because the main interest of these citations lies in illustrating the camera. But an enlarged framing of the same page reveals that, when Kircher was describing the operation of the camera, he was already talking about an ordered series, or a series of orders, captured in a memorable visual juxtaposition. It is as much unfortunate that Descartes explicitly downplayed Kircher as an impostor whereas it was obvious that they in fact were players on the same epistemological field. However different orders they may refer to, Cartesian "signs" and Kircherian "icons" were "on the same page," so to speak.

There was, however, another curious detail as to the structure of this image and the order of things as described by Descartes. The Classical order of things was not one of man's own making. It was God who, existing by itself, created the world. The role of man was simply to give clearance to this order by representing it in a reliable and transparent medium. Man ultimately created neither the world nor the representations but only an artificial language, "a conventional ordering of signs," without filling them with meaning (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 20). The main task of the Cartesian subject, to think, therefore equaled to nothing but the accomplishment of a clarity about concepts.

Chapter Two already tried to show how Descartes accomplished this clarity and transparency by capitalizing the purity of reason at the expense of the idiosyncratic properties of the human sensory mechanism. As it took the senses to be unreliable, the Cartesian scheme necessitated man's whole corporeal being to be canceled out in order

for truth of the world to be known. In other words, the divided subject of the camera tried to stop his own bodily coordinates from shadowing his vision by erasing them from the field. The observer achieved this state of objectivity by isolating himself from the scene and allowing the camera (i.e. the mind) do the seeing (i.e. knowing). What he saw in turn, however, was not the field in its totality but the totality minus his own being. This isolation, therefore, paradoxically involved not only a withdrawal from the field but also a withdrawal from the image. The observer was able to represent the order of the world to himself in the form of an image only insofar as he drove his own effect on this world, his own bodily capacity to err, out of this image.

This paradoxical status of the cameratic image corresponds in Foucauldian terms to man's absence from the table. According to Foucault, the Classical episteme of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not allow man's activity of constructing the table to be represented on the same table. Even if, in God's hierarchy, there was a place for man insofar as he was the knower (i.e. a rational animal), there was no place for man insofar as he was the representer: "man as ordering subject could find no place on the table he organized" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p. 20). The Classical Age, therefore, could have no place for man as positing subject and posited object without its whole experiential scheme undergoing a radical transformation.[70]

In other words, if the essential experience of the Classical observer consisted of putting ordered representations onto a table, the one thing that the Classical observer could not achieve was to put his own activity, subsumed as an error to be eliminated, on the table so constructed. This achievement had to wait till the emergence of the observer in the field of experience as Man. Until that point, the repertory of the Classical man was

[70] The same paradox finds expression in Foucault's dense reading of Velasquez's painting, *Las Meninas*, which occupies the opening pages of *The Order of Things* (1970, pp. 3-16). Here, Foucault ascribes to this painting the function of representing representation as it operates in the Classical Age. *Las Meninas* represents, in other words, the world of representations laid out in the orderly fashion of a table in the space of the painting. What finds expression in *Las Meninas* are the three functions of representation (the producing of the representation – the painter; the object represented – the models and their gaze; and the viewing of the representation – the spectator). What does not find expression in *Las Meninas*, however, is the activity of representation itself.

defined by an image/table that was only made possible by the implosion of his own corporeality into the body of the camera. As long as he was bound to camera obscura model of vision, Classical man himself was an "observer" in the most profound sense of the term (i.e. the observer of an externalized life that took place in front of him, but not through him), but not an "experimenter."

6.3. World as a Space in which There is no Resistance

In *Homo Sacer,* Giorgio Agamben accords the camp the status of a biopolitical paradigm as the hidden matrix of a modernity in which we are still living. He also defines it essentially as a structure in which the state of exception turns into its opposite and becomes the rule. Wolfgang Sofsky, on the other hand, identifies the camp as the locus of absolute power, which was a type of power that completely differed from any other and emerged singularly in the camp. Chapter Four, with Agamben and Sofsky in the lead, has tried to substantiate the commonalities and extensions of these two claims by highlighting a series of architectural features and spatial configurations that characterized the camp such as zoning, the grid system, the boundary, the gate, the block, and the mass. As a mixture of all these, the ultimate bio-product of the camp turned out to be the *Muselmann*, whose only repertory of being consisted of "not dying" – as a body deprived of all capacity and humanity, including death.

Insofar as the camp was characterized by the loss of all norm, all camp inhabitants (be they guards or prisoners) were immediately located in a space in which everything was possible, and thus in which there was no such thing as wrong-doing. Simply because there was no norm to refer, there was no abnormality – the boundary between the two was eliminated. The experience manufactured by the camp, therefore, accommodated a mode of subjectivation that was deprived of any relation whatsoever to error. Hannah Arendt succinctly captures this essential condition as follows:

> The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted or sadistic, that they were, and still are,

> terribly and terrifyingly normal. . . . [T]his normalcy was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied . . . that this new type of criminal . . . commits his crimes under circumstances that would make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or feel that he is doing wrong. (quoted in Feig, 1981, pp. 14-15)

Once upon a time having identified his own corporeality as *the* error to be eliminated in order to be able to know the world (in the Classical scheme of camera obscura), the subject now found himself in a position, in the horizon of which there existed no possibility to err. With the establishment of the first camp, the category of error itself was brought to an uncompromising termination. In this sense, it is not hard to argue that the external boundary of the camp, already in its absolute posture, equaled a radical destruction of any possibility of a limit-experience in the domain of knowledge formations.

Yet, this argument requires the accompaniment of a series of reservations. Before anything else, the actual interest of this study in engaging with the camp was not based on its significance for knowledge formations, but for power relations. So, in the camp, the category whose privation matters the most is not error, but resistance – although the two are strongly connected. However, as soon as resistance is foregrounded, then a centralization as such is perplexed by the fact that *Muselmann* was the name of a subject figure who was withheld from not only a possible relation to resistance, but from any relation whatsoever. This makes it arguably redundant that one looks for a sign that the relation to resistance was eliminated from the *Muselmann*'s experiential horizon. For it becomes immediately possible to point out that there was no way for the camp to accommodate any limit-experience, let alone a political one, unless a totally external intervention from the outside was involved – which was the case at the end of WWII. Even if one manages to overlook this general objection on grounds that it does not totally eliminate the relevance of highlighting the specificities of the systematic overthrowing of resistance in the camp, then one would be immediately challenged by the fact that resistance did exist in many forms in the camp universe. The external

boundary was subject to violation number of times, even if success was limited; goods were smuggled; information was passed on; alliances were formed with resistance groups inside and outside the camp; work was sabotaged; uprisings and revolts were organized, etc. Even if nothing else, in the face of absolute power, survival itself could be considered a form of resistance. So could the effort to preserve a side of oneself, a bit of integrity, against all debasement.

But, all in all, none of these instances contested the fact that there was a core antagonism to the camp: the absolutely powerful against the absolutely powerless. First of all, the former allowed, in fact demanded, that the latter attempted to resist – it left gaps to be able to necessitate its own presence, sharpen its posture even more, and demonstrate for sure that there really was no way to resist. Furthermore, the rule of "everything is possible" cut through the line between the guard and the prisoner, and brought them into being as subject-effects of one and the same force. It acted not directly upon these figures, but upon the relation between the two so as to produce both as inverted reflections of each other. The position of the SS guards – which was literally a position without an essential content since prisoners in the form of functionaries and block leaders were its holders as well – emerged as the embodiment of pure actuality, an omnipotent power to act, with the possibility of holding nothing back in reserve. The position of prisoner emerged on the other hand as the embodiment of pure potentiality, with a minimized domain of action. In the end, both of these extremes meant one and the same thing: a total erasure of the idea of resistance from the experiential horizons of both figures. The whole regime was built upon those foundations, considering its determination to eliminate all political opposition, all social incompatibility, all racial difference, all "harm," all "pestis."

In *The Drowned and the Saved*, Levi expresses a curious feeling of despair that incarcerated the inmates at the moment of their release from the camp: "just as they felt they were again becoming men, that is, responsible..." (1989, p. 70). The boundary

between the inside and outside of camp marked not only the difference between being non-human and human, but also the difference between the possibility of there being anything called responsibility whatsoever. “Responsibility” is to be taken in both senses here: as responsibility in the sense of being charged with, and as response-ability in the sense of being able to respond. Neither had any existence in the repertory of the inmate (nor in the repertory of the guard for that matter – which could perhaps account for the frequently raised question of how an SS officer could smash the heads of some unknown children on one side of the barbed-wire and go home to play with his own on the other). The inmate could not measure, nor could he respond, to the extensions of his own actions and those of others. There were no extensions – “complete witnesses had already lost the ability to observe, to remember, to compare and express themselves” (p. 84). In another instance, Levi further describes the unbearable weight of the idea of being “chosen” (p. 82). He is just too aware of the fact that his survival had nothing to do with being chosen or having done good, for that matter. With no possibility of differentiating between right or wrong, truth or false, his survival was only a matter of chance. Hence, the ethical aporia of Auschwitz and the experience of being overcome by a strange feeling of shame that decorates the testimonies of a great many survivors (Agamben, 1999, pp. 89-99). In an environment where the definition of error became so slippery to the point of disappearing into indeterminacy, where the cause-effect relationship between action and survival was demolished, survival also disappeared into a matter as simple and complicated as that of pure contingency. One did not survive because one did good, just as one did not die because one did bad. Both definitions, good and bad, along with the possibility of all evaluation, lost their meaning in the whirlpool of blunt chance. The camp “gives the lie to the familiar notion that a human being's survival lies in his own hands” (Sofsky, 1997, p. 24).

Despite the whole outlook of tending towards total control, the camp thrived on the blurring of such boundaries. One absolute boundary that erased all the rest – between rule and exception, law and fact, guard and prisoner, good and bad, life and death, order

and chaos, possible and impossible, proper and improper, I and Thou, individual and mass, cause and effect, etc. Lifting up all thresholds, it locked all determination in one single twilight zone, a graduated line, a zone of indistinction. That's why it thrived on the mass. The mass was deprived of all possible internal connection that could bring forth a counter-attack, a resistance. It was serially juxtaposed; it consisted of individuals dissociated from each other; it left no room for social reciprocity and no room for action; it intensified tensions based on scarcity; it isolated; it left a free field for action for an absolute power to kill to take over. And power to kill did – in a way that drained the whole meaning of death. It produced corpses.

In this sense, the closing idea of Chapter Four – that the death of the *Muselmann* could not be called death – is not a paradoxically brisk or literary metaphor. It has its basis in an expression that manifests itself in the writings of a series of thinkers all of whom, independently of each other, identify the extermination camps in terms of "fabrication of corpses."[71] In summing up all these scattered formulations, Agamben himself states: "in Auschwitz, people did not die; rather, corpses were produced. Corpses without death, non-humans whose decease is debased into a matter of serial production. . . . pieces produced in a process of an assembly line production" (1999, pp. 72-73).

This study contends that this observation should be taken out of its direct association with the victims, and be extended to include the guards as well. The reason why is made clear by Agamben himself, through a series of comments on the testimony of one of the survivors. Salus's testimony, which renders the specific reality of the camp absolutely true and unimaginable at the same time, reads: "man should never have to bear everything that he can bear, nor should he ever have to see how this suffering to the

[71] Hannah Arendt lucidly points out that this is not a mathematical matter: "I don't just mean the number of victims. I mean the method, the fabrication of corpses and so on" (1993, pp. 13-14). Levi talks about how death becomes a "trivial, bureaucratic, and an everyday affair" in the camp (1989, p. 148). One physician of the SS, F. Entress, is said to have used the expression "conveyor belt" when talking of extermination (quoted in Agamben, 1999, p. 71). And, of course, there is the much-debated Heidegger: "Do they die? They decease. They are eliminated. They become pieces of the warehouse of the fabrication of corpses. They are imperceptibly liquidated in extermination camps. . . . and yet the essence of death is closed off to man" (quoted ibid., p. 74).

most extreme power no longer has anything human about it" (quoted ibid., p. 76). In response, Agamben adopts a double gesture: (1) in the camp, every inmate did bear everything that possibly could be borne, even without wanting or being obligated; and (2) this exhaustion of the possible didn't have anything "human" about it. The survivor's unease was the result of having sensed or felt within himself the imprint of that which is inhuman. It is this *capacity*, this pure potentiality to suffer, that so much discomforted the survivor insofar as his testimony concerned "not merely what was done or suffered, but what *could* have been done or suffered. . . . this almost infinite potentiality to suffer that is inhuman – not the facts, actions, or omissions" (p. 77).

If this capacity characterized the experience of the survivor, however, its inverse characterized the experience of the SS. For it is precisely the lack of this capacity that enforced the executioners to "unanimously continue to repeat that they *could* not do other than as they did, that, in other words, they simply *could* not; they had to, and that is all" (p. 78). A pure actuality with no reserve, with nothing held back. It is the very same lack of the very same capacity that motivated Eichmann to state that the executioners obeyed *kadavergehorsam*, like a corpse (paraphrased ibid., p. 78). They, Agamben states, certainly had to go through what they should not have had to go through as well – but, in any case, "they did not feel up to being capable of it," according to the eerie witticism of Karl Valentin (quoted ibid., p. 78). In the end, they remained "honest humans" incapable of bearing witness (almost none of the executioners testified to the facticity of the camp), whereas the victims could not help themselves bearing witness to their own having become inhuman, to having borne everything they could bear (p. 78).

To sum up, it needs to be recalled that the experience proper, limit-experience, is characterized by the encounter with a foreign element – with resistance in the domain of power relations. The emergence of the new is dependent upon this encounter. This study thus argues that – insofar as he was drained of resistance, insofar as he was stuck in

a state of pure powerlessness, to the point of being incapacitated of the single utmost incapacity (death) – the experience of the figure of *Muselmann* was the negative experience of an absolute limit (but not a limit-experience). Insofar as he was the ghostly inhabitant of the boundary between human and non-human, the *Muselmann* was the lifeless prisoner of a perpetuity, with no opening for a limit-experience whatsoever, even when alive. In an as much similar manner – insofar as he faced no resistance, insofar as he was stuck in a state of omnipotence, to the point of being incapable of measuring himself against a norm – the experience of the guard was the positive experience of the very same absolute limit. Insofar as he was the absolutely present inhabitant of the extreme core of "humanity," the guard was the as much lifeless prisoner of a perpetuity, with no opening for a limit-experience, even when free. These two figures both were the vegetative and corpuscular products of an anonymous game characterized by the principle of "nothing new under the sun." It is this incapacity, common to both the perpetrators and the prisoners, that makes one wonder who is more "alive" in this well-known image, by placing all four figures on the same line – the *Einsatzgruppe D* members watching, the member who is about to pull the trigger, the inmate waiting to be killed, and the bodies in the pit (Figure 6.2)?

This is what allows Agamben to state in *Homo Sacer* that "potentiality and actuality are simply the two faces of the sovereign self-grounding of Being" and that, "at the limit, pure potentiality and pure actuality are indistinguishable" (1998, p. 47). This is also what enables a comprehension of the function of camps in the system of Nazi biopolitics not merely as places of death or extermination but as a penultimate machinery of corpse-production. And, finally, this perhaps was the ultimate meaning of the need for a "*volkloser Raum*" (i.e. a space empty of people), formulated by Hitler in 1937 with reference to the entire Central-Western Europe (quoted in Agamben, 1999, p. 85). This "peopleless space," Agamben notes, did not simply refer to a geographical terrain with no inhabitants – on the contrary, the region in question was densely populated by different peoples and nationalities at the time. But it referred to an intensity that was capable of

persisting in every possible space. An intensity of concentric circles, at the core of which lied the *Muselmann,* and from the outer orbits to the inner layers of which one sees the transformation of peoples into populations and populations into *Muselmanner*. *Volkloser Raum*, put differently, was the name of that "driving force of the camp understood as a biopolitical machine that, once established in a determinate geographical space, transforms it into an absolute biopolitical space, both *Lebensraum* [life-space] and *Todesraum* [death-space]*"* (pp. 85-86).

Figure 6.2. An *Einsatzgruppe D* member about to shoot a prisoner at a mass grave, 1942 (retrieved from <<www.ushmm.org>>).

6.4. World as a Space in which There is No Self

In "Technologies of the Self," Michel Foucault identifies confessional practices as the heart of a Christian hermeneutics of the self, which consisted of two similar but effectively different technologies, *exomologeis* and *exagoreusis.* The first relied on the public exposure of one's corporeal being as a sinner, and the second relied on the private and constant verbalization of one's mental being as full of sin. Common in both cases was the theme of renunciation of the self – in God's eye, in the confessor's eye, in one's own eye, and in the public eye. Along the same lines as Foucault's observation that it was *exagoreusis* that defined later Christian confessional practices, John Bossy argues that there was a move towards the privatization of the confessional act, starting with sixteenth century. Wietse de Boer, on the other hand, tries to complicate Bossy's privatization hypothesis by underlining the fact that the confessional scene was literally a scene for others to watch as well. Chapter Five, with Bossy and Boer in the lead and Foucault in the background, tried to explicate this fundamental contradiction of the sacramental act as it took shape in the two principles of the sixteenth century Borromean confessional. Accordingly, the mode of subjectivation of the penitent was simultaneously defined by: (1) an isolation from the confessor and the rest of the mass in the privacy of the confessional; and (2) a public exposure in his sinful being.

Insofar as these two principles of the Borromean model demonstrated a consistent continuum with early Christian practices as analyzed by Foucault, the Borromean confessional bracketed out the category of the self and turned it into the outside of Christian experience. First, as in e*xagoreusis*, it relied on the assumption of an unconditional humility against the confessor that concerned every aspect of life. Second, this humility held a positive value in itself, without necessarily relying upon the confessor's individual qualifications and response. Not only was the confessor veiled and impersonalized, but also the institutionalization of the confessional interrogation brought with it a technical and methodical language that eliminated any possible

personal exchange between the confessor and the penitent altogether. Its forms of examination strictly followed the principles of *exagoreusis* in terms of differentiating from the theme of self-mastery prevalent in philosophical schools of antiquity – which also recommended perpetual watchfulness but only as a matter of deciding what must be done or recognizing whether one may have committed a transgression. What mattered for the Borromean confessional was to take hold of the thought, to grasp the origin of this thought, and subject it to a process of sorting out. It tended towards a perpetual verbalization of all the impulses of thought, rather than a simple statement of wrongs committed or a general exposition of the state of one's soul. These verbal expressions had their own intrinsic effect simply as a function of being addressed to an imaginary other. They implied a shift "from a physical semiotics of the flesh toward a hidden spiritual reality," from an asceticism of the body towards an asceticism of the soul (Senior, 1994, p. 83).

In this sense, it was true that the Borromean model's early monastic predecessors already accentuated the prototypically Christian significance of the grille as a separator between the "fallen" sexes, and that the confessional magnified even further the unattainable status of the opposite sex. It is all the more probable to conceive of the sacrament as a discursive and performative recognition of the Original Sin – that primordial state of fallen desire which conjoined the lovers in their separation. But what proves to be even more interesting is the underlying promise of surpassing this estranged status with the help of an unseen but vocal figure of authority (pp. 81-82). While concurrently representing not only the segregation of sexes but also the abasement of the body, the grille constituted a peculiar dialogue with a spectral figure, where the penitent spoke "the story of his sins into his ghostly father's ear without either seeing the face of the other" (Lea, 1968, p. 395). Especially regarding the process of sorting-out, it entailed a threefold mechanism of shame, which made one blush every time that a bad thought was expressed, every time that the happenings of the mind found material expression through the spoken word, and every time that the tempting and deceitful Devil

confronted that light which exposed the recesses of consciousness to view. Taken this way, the confessional altogether summed up to nothing but a constant externalization of the mystery of consciousness (Foucault, 1987, p. 83-84).

These three elements – unconditional humility, uninterrupted examination, and exhaustive confession – all together formed an indivisible ensemble, at the center of which lied the verbal manifestation of a "truth." This was a truth that hid in the depths of one's self and that had to be constantly contemplated. Most important of all, this manifestation, rather than serving one's mastery over oneself, resulted in the humiliation, mortification, and finally destruction of the self. As much as it was exposed, the interiority of the self became a foreign element to be produced by and expelled through the holes of the Borromean grille, as if it was a grinder, so to speak. The "I" of Christian experience, therefore, gave life to the intersecting repertories of an unblinking and egotistic Eye *and* an unstoppable and evacuating Mouth. "Obey," "Watch," and "Express" were his keywords while an Eye-Mouth as such was his whole being. Interestingly enough, the major production of this Eye-Mouth was nothing but sin. The confessional act turned every thought that could not be expressed into sin, by the very resistance of that particular thought to expression.

The immediate relation of the Borromean model to self-repudiation becomes even more explicit if the analysis is extended to include its exomologetic inheritage. As in *exomologesis*, the public dimension of the Borromean confessional operated without the necessity of stating those transgressions committed, but rather turned the confessional act into a collective and staged rite. The penitent acknowledged that he was a sinner before God and before the public, and entered into a scene that implied mortification, austerity, and repentance that was apparent at least during the sacrament itself – in garment, attitude, and comportment. This required no analytical relationship to the self, no verbal expression, but only the dramatic submerging of the self in sin and the exposure of the self as essentially sinner. It is true that the penitent's readmission to

society through a reconciliation took place right on the spot and, in this way, differed fundamentally from *exomologesis*, which elongated this process to a lifetime if needed. But the penitent still attested to this immersion in a manifestation that visibly binded him to the status of a sinner and prepared his deliverance (p. 82). The exterior surface of the confessional exposed his being to the world as nothing but full of sin while the interior surface of the confessional transformed his whole world into one that is made solely of a sinful being. In time and with practice, such repudiation of the self began to occupy the totality of the penitent's horizon so as to mark his every act.

Figure 6.3. Allegorical figure of "Penance," by Cesare Ripa (Senior, 1994).

To advance this argument, it is possible to consult with an allegorical representation of "Penance" as a consumed woman holding a grill, extracted from the seventeenth-century

aesthetician Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*. According to Ripa's own commentary that accompanies the image, the figure represented "an exhausted woman, with emaciated face, melancholy and poor dress, looking very intently towards Heaven, and holding with both hands a grill ('una craticola') which is used as a sign of true penance by the holy Theologians, for as the grill stands between the thing being cooked and the fire, so penance is midway between the sinner's pains and the love of God which causes those pains" (quoted in Senior, 1994, p. 83). In Senior's recapitulation, the way in which the grille is symbolized in this image not only marks the penal function of signification but also punctuates the humiliation of corporeality in the sacrament. While insistently separating the penitent not only from the confessor but also from God, the sign of whose love found material expression in the penitent's misery, the Borromean grille also evacuated and disqualified the self and the soul through linguistic mortification. In rather more Lacanian terms, Borromean grille placed "a barrier between the Imaginary, face-to-face encounter between priest and penitent and reduce[d] the encounter to the Symbolic" (p. 85). Turned into a sign as such, penance was the painfully pleasurable and pleasurably painful separation of the penitent from God and from himself.

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Two final opportunities are at bay with these last formulations. The first one of these opportunities relates to the possibility of gaining a better insight into the functioning of the camp and the camera obscura. It probably is clear by now that, when the camp is talked about in terms of corpse-production within the confines of this study, the main reference of such a claim is not the actual killings in a manner referred to by Arendt, Heidegger, and others. What is being referred, instead, is the production of those docile, half-living half-dead bodies – which were corpses not because they were dead, but because they were incapable of a limit-experience that characterized life. Insofar as it, almost necessarily, brought about an incapacity to relate to resistance, the camp experience fed upon a scheme that maximized the *Muselmann*'s power to be affected at

the same time as it maximized the guard's power to affect. The two maximizations added up to the same thing. Once this structure is understood, "to turn into a corpse" no longer refers to dying but to a minimization of one's capacity to live – to endure an experience so as to come out of it anew.

In the very same sense – if, that is, actual lifelessness took shape not in real corpses but in the incapacitated bodies of the *Muselmann* and the guard – then it should be clear that the actual lifeless body produced in the camera obscura did not belong to the image on the wall,[72] but to the observer in the room. The observer was looking at an image that bore no trace of his errorful corporeality, and he knew his world through this perfectly organized imagery that literally left him no room for change (i.e. no chance for "an encounter with the outside"). The common presumption that "images are, in their two-dimensionality, lifeless" looses all meaning in comparison to this other, perhaps more profound "murder" that takes place in the three-dimensional and obscure space of the dark room. It is only in this light that one can comprehend the strict correlation between the camera and the camp.[73] If the camera was an image-production technology, and if the camp was a corpse-production factory, what they both produced in fact were lifeless bodies that had nothing to do with "dead" images or "dead" bodies. The former, the camera, produced unable-to-err observers in opposition to a fully *pathos*-able nature outside; and the latter, the camp, produced omnipotent guards in opposition to impotent *muselmanner*.

A second opportunity makes it possible to draw out another correlation so as to recognize the confessional as an inverted camera obscura – a *camera candela* perhaps. If the observer of the camera obscura developed a knowledge of the world, by internalizing a vision that was exterior to himself (that of the apparatus); the confessing penitent

[72] For the connection between image and death, see Blanchot ("The Two Versions of the Imaginary," 1982, pp. 254-263), Barthes (1981), and Silverman (1996, chapter six).

[73] One can't help but wonder if Foucault could have realized how word-perfect he was in stating that "the camp was to the rather shameful art of surveillance what the dark room was to the great science of optics" (1979, p. 172). Although his reference here is not the concentration camp but the military camp, the truth of the expression rises above the context and reaches unpredictable heights.

made himself known, by externalizing the interiority of his self. If the observer withdrew from the world, so as to represent this world to himself in the form of an image from which error was eliminated; the penitent fully exposed himself, so as to project his image to the world in the form of a self that is absorbed in sin. In the former, the self is eliminated through the repudiation of error; in the latter, error is eliminated through the repudiation of the self.

EPILOGUE

In this final set of fragments, I will highlight a few motifs each one of which arises out of my reflections on the camera, the camp, and the confessional as concrete embodiments of abstract diagrams. My aim here is to summarize, in the form of a epilogue, the results of my efforts in situating the work-of-architecture as a technology of framing within a general scheme of experience.

The main motivation behind this study was to seek a general force behind the superficial flux of architectural history, conventionally defined as a history of architectural "works." In doing this, my first task throughout Chapter Two and at the beginning of Chapter Six was to compose a structural and two-fold scheme of experience, based on insights I extracted from Foucault's methodological premises. The first aspect of this scheme was the *experience of the limit* – which referred to those everyday experiences that establish and conform with the existing boundaries of an experiential field. The second aspect was the *limit-experience* – which referred to those experiences that challenge existing structures towards a wholesome transformation, by way of an encounter with an exterior element that essentially comes from the outside. My general aim was to expose and pronounce the architectural dimension of this general structure, to show how this two-fold scheme was governed and materialized by a frame-work that is ultimately architectural throughout.

I identified this architectural frame-work as *a three-fold practice*, defined by various functions (isolation, selection, arrangement), working procedures (organization,

framing, actualization), and constructs (assemblages, relations, bodies). I argued that architectural assemblages, at an initial level, organize an experiential field by way of introducing gaps and boundaries into an otherwise undifferentiated field. These assemblages, at a secondary level, act as frames of experience that define a selective range of contact regimes, possibilities of encounter between bodies. And these contact regimes, at a third and final level, arrange the field in which the body acts so as to actualize a family of bodily repertories of being – as an integral set of corporeal modes of existence. Following this general frame-work, I have tried to show in all three analyses throughout Chapters Three, Four, and Five how an environmental formation gave material form to a historically specific knowledge formation, a power relation, or a self-technology.

In each case, *a distinctive body or a set of bodies were isolated from their surroundings,* in all their physicality and plasticity, by a procedure abstractly characterized by an architectural frame. Camera obscura delimited the observer *from* an exterior world and *in* his relation to natural environment; the camp delimited the guard and the prisoner *from* the "normal" world and *in* their relation to each other; and the confessional delimited the penitent *from* the rest of the church space and *in* his relation to the confessor and ultimately to himself.

At a secondary level, *the means of this isolation took various forms that selectively fostered specific regimes of contact*. In the camera obscura, the observer was physically withdrawn from the natural environment and was externalized from the mechanism of seeing. In the camp, both the guard and the prisoner were encapsulated in a space of exception, itself characterized by a severe dissociation of acts from actors and by a confrontation between positions of pure power against those of pure powerlessness. And in the confessional, the penitent was placed in a private field of speech devoid of vision and touch, while the act of confession itself was placed in a public field of vision devoid of hearing.

At a final level, *these frames actualized in each a case a corpo-reality, a bodily reality that was characterized by a specific repertory*. The camera framed the observer in such a way as to eliminate his own effect and bodily capacity to mistake from the image of the world; the camp framed the relation between the guard and the *Muselmann* in such a way as to totally eliminate the possibility of social reciprocity from the experiential horizons of both figures; and the confessional framed the penitent in such a way as to immerse and drown the self in sin.

The architectural frame appears in all these cases as a limitation to experience. It might seem in this sense that architecture is immediately established as an apparatus of ideological stability and confinement, by which the subject is bound to the existing limits of an experiential field and is disengaged from any possible limit-experience. But this is not always and necessarily the case. What is more important is the way which the frame regulates the distribution of a body in relation to the environment, to another body, or to itself. This indeed is a constant paradox: The frame solidifies around the body only in order to facilitate the distribution of that body or bodies in a field, and to stand as the rule for a group of capacities that are naturally dispersed and non-subjective. It is this regulatory function and this process of externalization that enable architecture to take part in the conjuring up of the new as much as in ideological exploitation. What more, there is always a point in time when the nature of this dispersion begins to diverge and become redistributed again in a new space. It is precisely these points that we can associate with the limit-experience, with historical break or change – as if an architectural frame isolates not only bodies from their environment and from each other but also one historical layer from another. This means that every architectural frame distributes a specific way of seeing and speaking, a specific way of relating to another body, and a specific way of relating to and acting on the self in a historically singular and variable manner.

At the level of historical strata, the architectural frame emerges as the material

embodiment of knowledge formations, and acts as an epistemological unconscious in built form. It is surrounded by what Foucault calls the "archive" of a society, a culture, or a civilization. While itself immaterial, the archive acts like a general and audio-visual reservoir of knowledge formations and transformations. The archive defines the general law of what can be said and seen in a given culture; and the architectural frame actualizes this distribution of ways of speaking and seeing particular to each historical stratum. *At the level of strategic relations of power*, the architectural frame emerges as the material embodiment of relations between forces, and acts as a political unconscious in built form. It is cut through by what Foucault calls the "diagram" of a society. While itself informal, the diagram acts like an abstract function that coexists with the network of power relations specific to a social field. The diagram in this sense acts as the cause of concrete assemblages while the architectural assemblage itself actualizes the general distribution of power to affect others and power to be affected by others. And, *at the level of processes of subjectivation and desubjectivation*, the architectural frame emerges as the material embodiment of the action of the self upon itself, and acts as an ethical unconscious in built form. It opens up to the outside. While itself absolute, the outside functions like an irreducible exterior that operates beneath the codes and rules of knowledge and power. The outside in this sense grants the interiority of the self an absolutely exterior status that sometimes merges with existing structures and at others creates divergent paths, while the architectural frame materializes the ways in which the self folds back upon itself in a historically singular manner.

It is only with reference to this *three-fold process of actualization* that we can explain the constructive relation between the architectural frame and experiential fields in history. Saying that the frame is constructive means acknowledging that, in as much as it varies with every social field, the frame does not simply illustrate but fabricates history. Its role is not one of representing an already prevailing reality, but one of producing and maintaining a novel reality. If the architectural frame operates by regulating the relation between the seer and the seen, between power to affect and power to be affected,

between the self and its interiority, it does this only by presupposing an experiential field that acts as its cause. And an experiential field as such can become one only in and through the architectural frame. No experiential field without architecture, and no architecture without a field of experience, so to speak. It is the task of architectural history to recognize and expose the underpinnings of this relation as a critical enterprise. This is what it means for architectural history to place architecture along the lines of a general history of *techne* in the wider sense of the word, and relate architecture to a general history of rationalities that comprise of historical a priori structures of possible experience.

The foremost contribution of an architectural history so defined is to direct the disciplinary emphasis of architecture towards the space and experience of that which is everyday. A conceptualization as such relocates all phenomenology-based approaches to the problem of the relation between architecture and experience on an epistemological plane. Following a comprehensive repetition, rather than a word-by-word appropriation, of Foucault, this initial movement towards epistemology acknowledges that there is no authentic experience devoid of historical mediation and beyond knowledge. A second relocation moves us towards the strategic domain of power, whereby every experience is recognized to be entangled in relations between forces. And a third relocation gets us in touch with the absolute interiority of the self. Each one of these movements situates architectural history in direct contact with a critical investigation that focuses on the questions of "What can I know? What can I do? What can I be?" today.

In sum, it becomes apparent that one could speak of a Classical experience, a Modern experience, or a Christian experience only because a foreign element is simultaneously produced and expelled from the subject's field of experience by conditions specific to these historical strata. The camera evokes the world as an epistemological space in which there is no error; the camp evokes the world as a political space in which there is no resistance; and the confessional evokes the world as an ethical space in which there is no

“inside” to the self. It is by formulating these abstract schemes that one could establish a parallelism between the camera and the camp, and an inverted isomorphism between these two and the confessional. Nevertheless, in all three “boxes,” possible experience figures as something conditioned by architecture's regulatory role over its subjects' capacity to change. That is to say that: it is because the work of architecture effects the way in which its subjects relate to the outside that it does and can have a direct effect on experience. And if architecture is ever to revitalize its essential capacity for a thought and a life that is “outside the box,” a critical engagement with that very capacity to open up to the outside is precisely where it has to begin.

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