

# DE- AND RE-STRATIFICATION OF THE URBAN TISSUE: PETER EISENMAN'S CITIES OF ARTIFICIAL EXCAVATION PROJECTS

Željka Pješivac<sup>1</sup>, Novi Sad, Serbia

The study investigates the concepts of stratification, destratification and restratification of the urban tissue in Peter Eisenman's *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects. The main thesis of the study is that Eisenman's *Cities of Artificial Excavation* performs a transgression of the three fictions on which classical and modern architecture were based by introducing narrative layers of non-classical fiction using strategies of relative destratification, that is, strategies of destratification and associated restratification of the urban tissue. This is a specific type of narrative de- and restratification based on a process, that is, on the concept of the disjunctive synthesis of real and imaginary or artificial narratives, which brings into question the traditional concept of (narrative) stratification, the concept of origin, the question of the beginning and end of a narrative line, and the question of true and rational, namely, the traditional line of influences of layers of the past on the layers of the present and potential future. For Eisenman, the layers of the present and potential future do not have to be based on the influences of fixed and unchangeable, *a priori* layers of the past. On the contrary, they have the potential to change the structure, meaning and significance of the layers of the past. In a wider context, this approach is related to poststructuralist perspectives that aim to break down the established mental structures of thinking and design and provoke different approaches to architectural and urban design, that is, different physical experiences, and the meaning and significance of the built environment.

**Key words:** stratification, destratification, restratification, Eisenman's *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects.

## DE- AND RE-STRATIFICATION

The term stratification<sup>2</sup> is etymologically derived from the Latin words *stratum* (layer or cover) and *ficere* (make), which gives us *stratum + ficere* meaning to cover with a layer. "In the figurative sense, a layer needs a frame, a base material, or an additional layer in order to carry out the function of 'cover'" (Schultz, 2010).

In sociology the term "stratification is used to characterize a structure of inequality where (a) individuals occupy differentiated structural positions and (b) the positions are situated in layers (or strata) that are ranked hierarchically according to broadly recognized standards" (Durlauf and Blume, 2008). In political science, the concept of stratification refers to the "vertical structuring of the

members of a society on the basis of socially relevant characteristics that influence the behavior of people toward each other" (Krämer in Schultz, 2010). Geology uses the term stratification to analyze and interpret the arrangement of different materials (Schultz, 2010). In most contexts, the layers below are treated as older, and those above as younger layers (Ule in Schultz, 2010). The order and composition of the layers contains information related to the development of certain geological formations. "The chronological component of the succession of sedimentary deposits and the process of a mechanical change of this stratification is an essential component of the definition" (Schultz, 2010). Archeology also highlights the chronological succession of each layer (of culture, society, settlement) in relation to the other layers. In psychoanalysis, there are different theories concerning the stratification of the human personality. Sigmund Freud developed the concept of the "writing pad" to explain the interaction between the layers of the conscious, unconscious and subconscious. Almost all of this research concentrates on investigating the influence of past layers on present layers, whereby the older layer (for example the unconscious layer in psychoanalysis) is treated

<sup>1</sup> Bate Brkića 9, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
zeljkapjesivac@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> The interpretative key regarding the concept of stratification here is adopted from the theoretical framework constructed as a part of the research of Anne-Catrin Schultz on Carlo Scarpa in the book *Carlo Scarpa Layers* (Stuttgart - London: Edition Axel Menges, 2010), and it has been further developed by the author.

as immutable and universal. This situation is similar with regard to understanding the concepts of stratification in the context of architecture.

In the context of architecture, it is possible to speak about formal, representational, material, spatial, graphic, polychrome, tectonic, programmatic, narrative, conceptual and other forms of stratification. Spatial stratification, for example, refers to the succession of spatial sequences (Schultz, 2010). (For example, if we look at the dining room through the door and if the window with the flowers is behind the dining space, the space in between the wall with the door and wall with the window with flowers is the first layer, the space containing the window with the flowers is the second layer, and the landscape in the garden that can be seen through the window is the third layer. These zones “can be experienced simultaneously or are at least visible in the form of vistas and their effect is combined, as opposed to that of completely separated suites of rooms” (ibid.)). Material stratification corresponds to the geological meaning of this term (ibid.), and in opposition to the spatial stratification, which is defined by space in between layers, it refers to the superimposition of the layers of material of a certain element of architecture, that is, to the distribution of material plans side by side or on top of each other in a particular element of architecture (for example, a facade composed of brick, airspace, insulation, hollow clay block and plaster as different material layers). Just as the position and order of geological layers or strata says something about their age and their origin, the position and formulation of material layers or strata in architecture may contain information about their function (for example, load-bearing, decorative, illustrative or symbolic) and origin (ibid.). Narrative stratification refers to the layout or disposition of elements – certain forms of representation (material, stylistic, formal) that carry a message exposed in a given chronological, linear, cause and effect relationship (for example in the form of a decorative frieze on the facade of a building). Spatial stratification, as well as material and narrative stratification, serve not only to create space but also to formulate a certain atmosphere that links tradition and the past with the present. They make visible levels that chronologically follow each other, and “what was there earlier remains in existence like a kind of palimpsest and begins a communication with the newly added elements” (ibid.). The dominant approaches to research and design remain in the domain of unidirectional lines – the lines of influence of layers from the past on the layers of the present and the potential future.

Peter Eisenman toys with this line of research and construction of the role, sense and meaning of the narrative layers of the built environment. By introducing an artificial layer, he questions the truthfulness of the layers of the past and their *a priori* existence as unchanging and eternal, and points towards a line of investigation and influence of the layers of the present and potential future on the layers of the past. By analogy with numerous poststructuralist thinkers (such as Derrida, Benjamin and others) he brings into question the concepts of the origin, beginning and end of a specific line of narrative (and the wider event and process), as well as the linear and reversible concepts of

narrative history, by introducing a narrative layer of non-classical fiction. The relationships between layers of urban tissue for Eisenman are not based only on the concept of stratification, but rather on the concepts of destratification and restratification.

With reference to the investigations of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the concept of layer in this study will refer to an “actualized system with homogenized components operating at or near equilibrium/steady state/stability” (Bonta and Protevi, 2006). The concept of stratification will refer to the processes of centralization, hierarchization, binarization, linear causality, segmentation and sedimentation of free movements of signs, particles of matter, bodies, territories, etc. The concept of destratification will refer to an intensification that produces a molecularization of matter, that is, to the decentralization and dehierarchization of signs, particles of matter, body, territory etc. By analogy with Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophy, I will make a distinction between the concepts of absolute and relative destratification. Relative destratification is about the movement of material into an assemblage, and absolute destratification is about reaching the plan of immanence, a condition of “unformed matter”, in other words, it refers to a release of singularities or potentials from conditional ordering. Relative destratification is inseparable from a certain degree of restratification, a movement of transition and a new combination (of signs, particles) within a destratified layer. It is a specific form of interweaving a content as well as an expression of different layers of the past, the present and the potential future, of different traces of culture, society and architecture. The main thesis of the study is that Eisenman bases his *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects on the concept of relative destratification, that is, on the strategies of destratification and the accompanying restratification of urban tissue, namely, in the *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects Eisenman performs a transgression of the three fictions on which classical and modern architecture were based by introducing narratives (narrative layers) of non-classical fiction using strategies of destratification and restratification. He thus shatters the strong logocentric discourse of Western culture, the tradition of priority, the notion of fixed and unchangeable origin and authoritative chronology, and catches the dominant/major narrative (of history) in the act of becoming minor; the narrative of the present (or even future) in the act of becoming the narrative of the past, and the real in the act of becoming imaginary or potentially artificial.

Narrative in this study is understood: (1) as a form of representation bound by sequences, space and time, function and historical citations; (2) as a structure, a particular way of combining parts to make a whole; (3) as a process of narration or story-telling, the process or activity of selecting, arranging and rendering the “material of the story” (in this case the layers of the city and architecture, the material aspects of architecture that carry some kind of message, function, sense and meaning) in order to achieve specific, time-bound effects on the observer, but also (4) as a story, discourse or ideology. “A narrative requires a narrator and a reader in the same way in which architecture requires an architect and a viewer. A narrative, therefore, is not only

the content of the story that is narrated, or the way in which it is interpreted by readers, but also the way in which it is structured and presented to an audience by an (authorial) entity, a writer, a film-maker, the curator of an exhibition or [in this case] an architect"<sup>3</sup> (Psarra, 2009). The relationship between narrative structure (on the conceptual, formal and spatial level) and perceptual experience, i.e., between the field of abstract relations and the physical experience of the architectural space, and all of them towards the formation of cultural mechanisms of "power" is the essential aspect of this study. How the transgression of narrative stratification of architecture is performed on the abstract level of formal and spatial relations, how it is perceived in the physical, cultural and social space of embodied experience, and how it conceptually and perceptually affects both man and society are the key questions in this study. Let us turn now to Peter Eisenman's *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects.

### PETER EISENMAN'S CITIES OF ARTIFICIAL EXCAVATION

*Cities of Artificial Excavation* comprises a series of projects that architect Peter Eisenman developed on various locations between 1978 and 1988 based on a critique of the three fictions on which Western classical and modern architecture were based: the *fiction of reason*, the *fiction of representation* and the *fiction of history* (See: Eisenman, 2004).

The *fiction of representation* is the fiction of representing already valued architecture or parts of architecture. Renaissance buildings (buildings that essentially aim to revive classical culture – Roman and to a lesser degree Greek), for example, acquired their value by using historical references, historical citations, or certain valuable historical elements of classical architecture (such as the use of classical rows or typology of architecture). "The *message* of the past was used to verify the *meaning* of the present" (ibid.). In other words, narratives of the past were considered eternal, universal and unchangeable. Modern architecture on the other hand moved away from the Renaissance fiction of representation by asserting that architecture should not represent another architecture, but should instead embody its own function (ibid.). With the deductive conclusion that form follows function, modern architecture considered that buildings should express their function, i.e. manifest the rationality of the processes of their production and composition (ibid.). This reduction to pure functionality was not abstraction, but an attempt to represent reality (ibid.). (For example, a simple column without decorative elements, such as a base and capital, closely resembles a real column – a column as a load-bearing element more than a classical column, that is, it expresses more clearly its function as a load-bearing, structural element of architecture.) Thus, while the fiction of the representation of Renaissance architecture referred to the representation of an already valued architecture, the fiction of representation of modern architecture was based on the representation of reality or functionality. The functional aims of modern architecture thus replaced the "orders" of the classical composition of Renaissance architecture as the starting

point for architectural design. In other words, the idea of function in modern architecture was put as a proposition of origin or as a self-evident starting point analogous to the typology and historical citations of Renaissance architecture (ibid.). Indeed, Eisenman's architecture opposes the fiction of representation of classical and modern architecture, rejecting the need to refer to historical citations and typologies on the one hand and functionality on the other; that is, transgressing the original fixed starting point for architectural design, or, in other words, transgressing the existence of the (architectural) origin. Eisenman's architecture is directed not only towards the expressible, metric, measurable, visible, linear, rational and real, but more towards the inexpressible, non-metric, immeasurable, invisible, non-linear, irrational, and even artificial.

The *fiction of reason* is the fiction of privileging the rational as true. Whereas representation (of historical "citations") was seen as a simulation of the meaning of the present through the message of antiquity, reason was a simulation of the meaning of truth through the message of science<sup>4</sup> (ibid.). The truth was reduced to reason and rationality. "If an architecture looked rational – that is, if it represented rationality – it was believed to represent truth" (ibid.). The values were thus based on the concept of rationality, or causality (for example, in modern architecture it was expressed through the maxim that "form follows function"). As Eisenman states, "nothing had really changed from the Renaissance idea of origin. Whether the appeal was to a divine or natural order as in the fifteenth century, or to a rational technique and typological function, as in the post-Enlightenment period", this fiction "ultimately amounted to the same thing – to the idea that architecture's value derived from a source outside itself" (ibid.). Indeed, that which was outside itself was what was *a priori* and uncritically accepted and applied in architectural design as true, rational and valued. Eisenman thus questions not only the fixed and unchangeable origin or starting point (the fiction of representation) in architectural design, that is the fixed message and meaning, but also the issues of truth and reason.

The *fiction of history* refers to the fiction of the linear, cause and effect temporality of narrative history. From Antiquity to the Middle Ages, time was perceived as unchanging and eternal, atemporal and cyclically repeatable. "In the mid-fifteenth century the idea of a temporal origin emerged, and with it the idea of the past. This interrupted the eternal cycle of time by positing a fixed point of beginning" (ibid.). But the pursuit of the origin of a time turned, paradoxically, to a time-bound concept of history as a source of timelessness (ibid.), and the atemporal. By the nineteenth century this process of historical change was seen as dialectical (ibid.). With dialectical time came the idea of the *zeitgeist*, a cause and effect rooted in a presentness that aspired to eternity (ibid.). In its polemical rejection of the history that preceded it, the Modern Movement attempted to "build" a different concept of time from that which is rooted in the eternal and universal. "In seeing itself as superseding the values of the preceding architecture, the Modern Movement substituted a universal idea of relevance for a universal

<sup>3</sup> The word order in the listing has been changed in relation to the original text.

<sup>4</sup> This fiction was strongly manifested in twentieth-century architecture, but in fact achieved greatest prominence during the Enlightenment.

idea of history, analysis of program for analysis of history" (ibid.). The spirit of time in modern architecture was seen as contingent on the present rather than as absolute and eternal. Eisenman sees the concept of time not as eternal and atemporal, reversible, extensive time, but rather as temporal, irreversible, intensive time.

How does Eisenman make the transgression of these three fictions in specific *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects? How does Eisenman raise questions about the issues of the origin and starting point, truth and reason, and the atemporality of eternal and unchangeable time (of history/narrative)? In other words, how can we read the projects of *Cities of Artificial Excavation* as space-time concepts of the destratification and restratification of different urban layers, that is, as space-time concepts of disjunctive synthesis of different narratives of the (unrealized, possible or purely fictional) past, present and potential future?

Take, for example, the design for *Cannaregio West* (1978), which was planned to be built on the Cannaregio site in Venice. The project is based on three elements or three narrative layers that are brought into superposition: (1) the grid of Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital project that was intended to be built on the same location; (2) red objects of different scales composed of elements in the form of the letter L; and (3) a diagonal cut – line in the ground.

The grid of Le Corbusier's unrealized Venice Hospital project is articulated as a series of voids – holes in the ground, embodying the absence or emptiness of rationality, the absence of a potential (unrealized) past and the presence of artificiality. It is a narrative of non-classical fiction that represents a transgression of the fiction of representation (referring to the unrealized object) and the fiction of reason (referring to the absence of rationality – of the modernist grid as a rational form).

The red objects composed of elements in the form of the letter L (based on the variations of Eisenman's House 11a) appear in three different scales: the first is about five feet in height – smaller than a man, the second is the size of a house, and the third is twice the size of the second object, that is, larger than a house. The objects are not positioned above the ground, but in places cut into the ground, suggesting the play between the superficial and the repressed, the conscious and the unconscious, the figure and the ground. On closer inspection it is possible to see that these objects contain nothing. They are not *functional*. They are lifeless, solid blocks adjacent to the context, adjacent to the grid of Le Corbusier's unrealized Venice Hospital project. They represent a transgression of the fiction of representation of modern architecture (based on the representation of functionality and anthropomorphic measures as the initial starting points). Moreover, the play with elements in the form of the letter L is a play of additions and subtractions, that is, the fragmentation of the cube as the ideal, rational, closed form. The cube is thus broken up and experienced as something that can be unfolded in any direction, as an unfinished form caught in the processes of addition and subtraction, processes based not only on *logos*, but also on *nomos*, that is, the interweaving of repressed, unconscious (below ground) discourse which breaks up the strong logocentric order.

The third element of the *Cannaregio* project is a diagonal cut – a line in the ground, which links with the existing urban axis of Venice's bridges (the Ponte dei Scalzi and the Ponte dei Tre Archi). The diagonal line is thus, as Eisenman states, the topological axis of symmetry for the objects, but also a physical cut in the surface of the earth (Eisenman in Bedard, 1994). It suggests the existence of another layer, something "inside" that cannot forever be suppressed, thus performing a transgression of the fiction of reason.

Using the strategies of relocation, that is, destratification of the existing urban tissue by inserting the grid of the unrealized Venice Hospital project and restratification of the destratified tissue by the processes of condensation (placing objects of different scales), displacement and overlapping (of Le Corbusier's grid and the grid of red objects), and diagonal cutting, Eisenman plays with the temporality of narrative. By superposing layers of the unrealized past on layers of the present and the potential future, creating an interplay between the real and the imaginary or artificial, that is, the layers of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious, Eisenman undermines the tradition of priorities and the authoritative chronology and hierarchy of elements. This is not just a transgression of the fiction of representation and the fiction of reason, but also a transgression of the fiction of the temporality of narrative history. It is the construction of a space of potentiality, or of immanent unpredictability and disjunctivity.

Alternatively, we can take the plans for a residential block developed and realized between 1980 and 1986 on a site enclosed by Kochstrasse, Friedrichstrasse, Charlottenstrasse and the Berlin Wall in the Friedrichstadt suburb of Berlin. In this project, Eisenman (the Eisenman/Robertson Architects) builds spaces expressing the disjunctive synthesis of different narratives, ideologies and discourses by superposing: (1) the narratives of memory – represented in the traces of the absent city wall of the eighteenth century, the foundation walls of nineteenth-century Berlin, the remnants of the twentieth-century grid projected upwards in the vertical walls of the existing buildings, and traces of the Berlin Wall; and (2) the narratives of anti-memory represented by the Mercator grid – an artificial grid inserted into the existing urban tissue of the city. In this context, the anti-memory is not the opposite of memory, but rather an "other" to the narrative of memory understood in the conventional sense of the term. By introducing an artificial grid, we could say that Eisenman undermines the ground plane on which so much of Enlightenment history is based. Not only is the fiction of history (the fiction of linearity, the existence of the fixed starting point and origin) disrupted, but so too is the fiction of representation (by the lack of classical references and modernist functionality), as well as the fiction of reason (by the introduction of an illogical, irrational component within the urban tissue). We are dealing here with the creation of a location of intensive overlapping and erasure by strategies of destratification and restratification of the existing urban tissue, in which traces of (an artificial) past change the content and expression of the layers of the present and, *vice versa* the artificial layers change the



content and expression of layers of the past.<sup>5</sup>

Finally we shall take the example of the unrealized *Chora l work* project for a garden in the La Villette park in Paris (1985-1986), which represents a still more developed phase of Eisenman's investigation of *Cities of Artificial Excavation*. The project was developed in collaboration with Jacques Derrida. The urban layers which are superposed are: (1) the urban tissue of the La Villette in 1867; (2) the urban layers of Paris in 1848, when walls were built at this location; (3) the urban layers of Paris at the time of Tschumi's La Villette project; and (4) the layers of Eisenman's *Cannaregio* project.

What is new here in relation to the types of transgression of the fiction of representation and the fiction of reason is the construction of a special kind of space made possible primarily by a unique type of transgression of the fiction (of temporality and spatiality) of history. Namely, Tschumi's *La Villette* park project and Eisenman's *Cannaregio* project contain traces of the absent grid of Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital project; furthermore, the chosen site in Paris and the *Cannaregio* site in Venice were also both once abattoirs. In other words, all three layers (Tschumi's *La Villette* park project, the location of the park La Villette in Paris and Eisenman's *Cannaregio* project) contain certain common elements.

Thus, "site A contains the absence of location B and C; site B the absence of A and C, and so on. Each site has the absence of the other sites as a trace – in one sense the memory and in another the future. The viewer will always have presence, memory and immanence [...]" (Eisenman in Kipnis and Lesser, 1997).<sup>6</sup> We thus have here a play on the direction or course of narrative which shatters any tradition of priority or authoritative chronology. This play between the past, the future and the present (of the narrative layers of the site) can be expressed in different achronological times. As Derrida states:

Let me be specific about the idea of different times. We are talking about La Villette in 1867, when an abattoir occupied the site of the park, about Paris in 1848, before the abattoir, when the walls of the city occupied the site, and about Park in 1968. We are also talking about the time of Tschumi, the time of Venice and the future: the superposition of Tschumi with the past suggests a trace of the future. Now, let's talk more about place. Each site will contain, through superposition, a part of the other sites, as well as the notion that A, B and C are one site at a different scale. The three can thus be read as a whole, as a unity – as A with pieces of B and C, B with pieces of A and C, etc. Each site speaks of another place at another scale of activity, so there is also the site of *Cannaregio*, which was itself the site of an abattoir, as well as other places which operate parenthetically. (Ibid.)

"Finally, [...] we can say that each site is a tissue of three layers, in which tissue 1 interacts with tissue 2 at another

<sup>5</sup> The interweaving of "grids" is analogous to the *moiré effect* in painting (Francois Morellet 4 *double grids*: -1+1, -2+2, 1961) or to *feuillete* in music (Arvo Pärt, *Festina lente* for example). For the investigation of the relation between Eisenman's grids and *moiré effect* in painting see: Yve-Alain Bois, "Surfaces", in Bedard, op.cit., 1994.

<sup>6</sup> The sentences are here put in the present time in opposition to the original text written in future time.

site, and so on. [...] These three tissues superpose and interact with each other so that if you pull one tissue out of site A, it interrupts sites B and C. There is thus neither time nor place, but analogy" (ibid.). This is not about the relationship between the figure and the ground, or the question of origin, but something that might be called a tissue of free-floating signifiers. This is a special kind of building of a receptacle, that is *chore*, as a field of vectors of directions rather than dimensions and metric determinations, as a field of open intervals, disjunctive diversities or becomings. In this field we hear only the resonance of different texts (urban layers), like a piece of music (hence one of the possible inspirations for the title of this project *chora l work*, in translation "a work composed of L elements for a choir – a musical ensemble of singers"), which are superposed onto or under each other in a seemingly impossible, unrepresentable topology – a surface that is impossible to see but is possible to hear, a surface that echoes with the internal reflection of many resonant layers. What we have here is the creation of an invisible layer in which all other layers reverberate without knowing which comes before and which comes after.

#### CITIES OF ARTIFICIAL EXCAVATION AS A FIELD OF IMMANENCE

Using de-stratification and re-stratification strategies for the urban layers of the suppressed, imaginary or artificial past, present and potential future, Eisenman thus builds a *quarry* rather than a *palimpsest*, a kind of intertext (i.e. intertextuality) rather than a collage-montage text, that is a special kind of textuality whose integral elements are not only the outer, *real* elements of the text but also those artificial elements which Eisenman calls *graft*.

As opposed to a collage or a montage, which lives within a context and alludes to an origin, a graft is an invented site, which does not so much have object characteristics as those of process. A graft is not in itself genetically arbitrary. Its arbitrariness is in its freedom from a value system of non-arbitrariness (that is the classical). It is arbitrary in its provision of a choice of reading which brings no external value to the process. But further, in its artificial and relative nature a graft is not in itself necessarily an achievable result, but merely a site that contains motivation for action – that is, the beginning of a process. (Eisenman, 2004)

Unlike a palimpsest based on the overlapping of a surface, which even if it was previously hidden or erased, still exists as a grain and even as a permanently readable trace of a previous text, the operation of scaling by condensation and displacement of the *quarry* erases successive inscriptions. The palimpsest, like Freud's "writing pad" produces traces as outputs that should be integral elements of the following layers. They are inaccessible to inputs, moderation, modulation or diminution (Whitehead, 2009). This requires a passive model of memory, i.e. memory that is not subject to revision or re-transcription. In Eisenman's *quarry*, the artificial layers modify the past layers, breaking the tradition of hierarchy and chronology and, we could say, making an active model of memory possible.

As Eisenman states, the "trace is unconcerned with forming an image which is the representation of a previous

architecture or of social customs and usages; rather, it is concerned with the marking – literally the figuration – of its own internal processes” (Eisenman, 2004). The trace “signals the idea that there is a reading event [...] trace signals the idea to read. [...] It signifies an action that is in process. In this sense a trace is not a simulation of reality; it is a dissimulation because it reveals itself as distinct from its former reality. It does not stimulate the real, but represents and records the action inherent in a former or future reality, which has a value no more or less real than the trace itself” (ibid.).

Hence, while the palimpsest preserves traces as unchanged and timeless, the *quarry* shows that traces of the past are not eternal and unchanging, but are interwoven with layers of the present and the potential future in such a way that the layers of the present and the potential future have potential to change the structure, sense and meaning of layers of the past. While the palimpsest preserves a linear, causal chain of events, a linear concept of narrative temporality, the *quarry* seeks to present a non-linear, irreversible temporality of narrative. This is thus not about investigating layers (or texts) of the past and changing their meaning by displacing them in different contexts, but about changing the actual content, structure and morphology (of content and expression) of the layers of the past with traces and layers of the present and the potential future. It is about building a special field of potentiality, a field of immanence, by means of relative destratification, or a combination of destratification (inscription of the new traces in the stratified layers) and restratification (their re-inscription).

The attention of the viewer is in this way drawn away from the act of representation to the ways in which the object is constructed and conceived, that is, conceptualized. In opposition to traditional representational architecture, whose form has its referent in the human body, the vernacular environment, a previously formed classical system of meaning, an atemporal layer of the past or a specific functionality, Eisenman builds a form that reveal a complex matrix of disciplinary procedures and institutional apparatuses (Hays in Bedard, 1994). By strategies of destratification and restratification, and we could also say defamiliarization or estrangement (introducing, for example, a *graft* as a narrative of non-classical fiction, and also by condensation, displacement and scaling), Eisenman lays bare the processes of the object's production and the mechanisms of its representation, which thus become part of the content of its architecture and not merely its expression. The viewer is thus displaced from a stable, static or passive position of contemplation, and encouraged to take an active position, reflecting critically on the architectural environment, the institutional apparatuses and the mechanisms of the architectural work's production.

## CONCLUSION

Using strategies of destratification and restratification of the existing urban milieu, relocation of real and imaginary/artificial urban layers, and condensation (placing elements in different, specified scales), Eisenman achieves a transgression of the three fictions (the fiction of representation, the fiction of reason, and the fiction of

history) on which classical and modern architecture were based. In other words, by bringing narratives of memory and narratives of anti-memory, real and imaginary or artificial (*graft*) narratives, and narratives of classical and non-classical fiction (arbitrary and timeless, without *a priori* origin, sense and meaning, or non-representational, non-true, non-linear)<sup>7</sup> into synchronic relationship, Eisenman's *Cities of Artificial Excavation* projects transgress the language of classical and modern architecture. This results in the understanding of an urban tissue not as a palimpsest but as a *quarry*, not as a place of stratification, but as a field of immanence, a field of communication between incompatible elements of “narrative”. In addition, narrative layers are not mutually independent or indifferent to each other. They break through each other in a certain sense, register each other and change their content and meaning using strategies of relative, rather than absolute destratification. While absolute destratification would lead to the virtualization of narrative layers, to the absolute instability, unpredictability, non-sequentiality and non-directionality of a narrative, and the simultaneous existence of the past and the future in the present (to which the *Chora I work* is the closest), relative destratification is about movement within the actual allowing relatively unpredictable directions, logical and alogical relations. In Eisenman's case, it breaks down the established mental structures of thinking and design, and puts into question (linearity, influence, truthfulness, hierarchy of) existing and/or artificial layers of the past in relation to the layers of the present and potential future. Eisenman's strategies of destratification and restratification followed by the introduction of narrative layers of non-classical fiction are thus directed not only toward the provocation of different approaches to architectural and urban design, but also toward the provocation of different physical experiences and understanding of sense and significance of the built environment.

## Acknowledgements

This paper is a part of the research done within the project “Spatialization of Disjunctive Narrative Temporality: Case Study” financially supported by Provincial Secretariat for Science and Technological Development of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia, and conducted at the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Science, Department of Architecture and Urbanism in 2015/16. The author wishes to thank: Prof. Dr. Darko Reba, Prof. Dr. Radivoje Dinulović for their support, the two anonymous reviewers for their comments, and Dr. Philip Hepburn for his help related to the translation of her text into English.

## REFERENCES

Bedard, J. F. (ed.). (1994) *Cities of Artificial Excavation, The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978-1988*. Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture and Rizzoli International Publications.

<sup>7</sup> Non-classical fiction is not the opposite of classical fiction, but an “other” of classical fiction. Also, non-representational is not the opposite of representational, but an “other” of representational. For example, the element of the presence of the absent grid of Le Corbusier's unrealized project for the Venice Hospital does not indicate the lack of representation, but non-representational here refers to pointing out the reference that has not been actualized in reality but could be. The concepts of non-linear and non-true can be understood in a similar way.

- Bonta, M., Protevi J. (2006) *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Durlauf, S., Blume L. (eds). (2008) *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* 2nd edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eisenman, P. (1975) *Conceptual Architecture Symposium*; <http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/VIDEO/lecture.php?ID=2344>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2017.
- Eisenman, P. (2004) *Inside Out, Selected Writings 1963-1988*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Kipnis, J., Leeser, T. (eds.) (1997) *Chora L Work: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*. New York: The Monacelli Press.
- Price, C. (1975) *Conceptual Architecture Symposium 4/7* <http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/VIDEO/lecture.php?ID=2345>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 2017.
- Psarra, S. (2009) *Architecture and Narrative: The Formation of Space and Cultural Meaning*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Schultz, A. C. (2010) *Carlo Scarpa Layers*. Stuttgart and London: Edition Axel Menges.
- Whitehead, A. (2009) *Memory*. London and New York: Routledge.

---

Received July 2018; accepted in revised form December 2018.