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# FOUCAULT AND ARCHITECTURE

Paul Hirst

The reputation of the French philosopher Michel Foucault has grown dramatically since his death in 1984. Three biographies have recently appeared<sup>1</sup> and the interest in the drama of his life threatens us with the paradox that they undermine one of his central arguments — that intellectual work should not be subordinated to the figure of the author. Many of his most substantial texts of the 1960s are in danger of becoming marginal. Yet it is these very texts, together with *Discipline and Punish*, which contain analyses and concepts that have real value for architectural thought. In fact, save as a fashionable point of reference,<sup>2</sup> these arguments have had little effect upon architectural discussion, in obvious contrast to those of his contemporary Jacques Derrida. The purpose of this essay is to help remedy this situation by attempting to reverse the relative neglect of Foucault's earlier work, and to draw out some of the points that are relevant.

## ARCHITECTURE AND THE STATEMENT

Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is relevant to architects because it breaks down the barrier between the common-sense category of objects and that of discourse — words, explanations, programmes, etc., which are held to be *about* objects. In architecture this yields the stubborn and conclusive distinction between buildings as objects, and architectural theories, programmes and teaching that are *about* buildings. This installs a split between architecture and architectural discourse. The building is an object or non-discursive entity around which float the words of discourse. Foucault challenges this distinction: a discourse — a 'discursive formation' — refuses the obvious distinction between a brick and a word; both may be elements of a discourse. Two issues are at stake here: firstly, the meaning of the concept 'discursive formation' and, secondly, how this may be applied to architecture.

Discursive formations are patterns of order in statements, quite distinct from the familiar unities of authors, books, and intellectual schools. Foucault's vocabulary and method dispose of much of the supposed intellectual apparatus of the history of ideas. He challenges the very concept of idea and its location in the mind of a subject, as well as the notion of influences whereby ideas pass from author to author. Discursive formations extend beyond that product of the age of humanism, the author, and beyond the province of 'humane' learning.

Central to Foucault's concept of discourse is his definition of the statement. Discourse is conceived of as forms of order and inclusion/exclusion of statements. The statement is defined in a way that separates it from either a sentence or a proposition. Statements are not discursive in the narrow sense of being linguistic. Consider the tabular form of presentation. A table can be more than just a convenient visual device illustrating an otherwise discursive text; it can be a crucial and constitutive form of order within a discursive formation. In the eighteenth century the classificatory natural history of Buffon and Linnaeus conceived of the whole of living nature as a tabular series of places, an order — conventional or natural — within which all living beings can be situated as part of one exhaustive description/classification. This discursive order extends beyond books, in the systematic layout of museums and collections, and in the practices of observing and classifying living beings themselves. Likewise, buildings or groups of structures can be regarded as statements, and their relations to discourses specified.

Foucault extends the concepts of statement and discourse from their confinement within the realm of ideas. Discursive formations can be complex structures of discourse-practice, in which physical objects and activities are defined and constructed within the domain of a discursive formation. Thus practices of observing

and recording observations can be regarded as part of the order of statements: that is, observing, drawing and presenting become discursive activities.

In *The Birth of the Clinic* Foucault is concerned with the development of an observational-clinical medicine at the end of the eighteenth century. Here his main categories are the body and the clinical gaze. The body is a *discursive* object for Foucault, not a *natural* object. It is the abstraction of the structures and processes enclosed by the skin into a distinct domain, separated from climate, diet, regimen and mode of social life. Previous medical systems had considered man in a space of humours and harmonies. Disease was predominantly perceived as a function of the environment and the mode of life, and the body was merely the locus of these complex determinations. Clinical medicine isolates and observes bodily states and processes. Its observational 'gaze', the product of definite discursive and institutional conditions, is part of an order of statements that proceeds from observations in a clinical context to establish disease entities and aetiologies. It is a gaze none the less; observation produces results that are not reducible to their discursive conditions, and lead to new statements, the systematic recording of what is seen.

In Foucault's analysis statements are not regarded as the free products of the mind. Rather, they have 'surfaces of emergence', that is, particular institutional conditions of knowledge within which it is possible for statements to appear. 'Statements' are not produced by human subjects in general; rather, the statements characteristic of definite discursive formations emerge from what he calls 'enunciative modalities', or constructed subjects specific to the discursive formation.

Foucault moves from author-as-subject towards a view of the subject as agent/effect of a discursive formation. 'Enunciative modalities' mean that only certain subjects are qualified and able to speak in particular ways, that certain statements cannot be made by everybody or anybody. Thus the judgement of insanity or clinical observation becomes the function of particular statuses, those of psychiatrist and doctor. The clinical observation of the body develops within, and requires the institutional site of, the teaching hospital. Likewise, the determination of insanity becomes the function of the asylum. Knowledge and the subjects who produce it are connected with particular institutional conditions and forms of power. Foucault's earlier works thus anticipate in important ways the conception of power-knowledge developed in his later works.

Foucault differs from the history of ideas as conventionally conceived not merely in his attention to fields beyond the province of 'humane' learning, for of course there are histories of medicine, of natural history and of psychiatry, but because he links discourse to what must otherwise be regarded as the 'extra-discursive', the domain of the object. He integrates investigative practices, observation and the products of observation within the discursive field. When an entity is not a word, conventionally it cannot be a statement, but is designated an object, no longer part of discourse. In Foucault's concept of statement, investigative practices or transformational activities and their constructed objects are linked together.

This defines Foucault's importance for the analysis of architecture. He enables us to treat as statements and as part of a discourse entities that are neither spoken nor written. Constructed objects can be considered as components of a discursive formation. The practices of the construction, inclusion and exclusion of objects can be related to the rules and patterns of such formations. We can thus bridge the gap between theory in architecture and spatial constructs, not merely by treating constructs as examples of a theory, but by examining how discourses enter into construction and how, in consequence, buildings or planned environments become *state-*

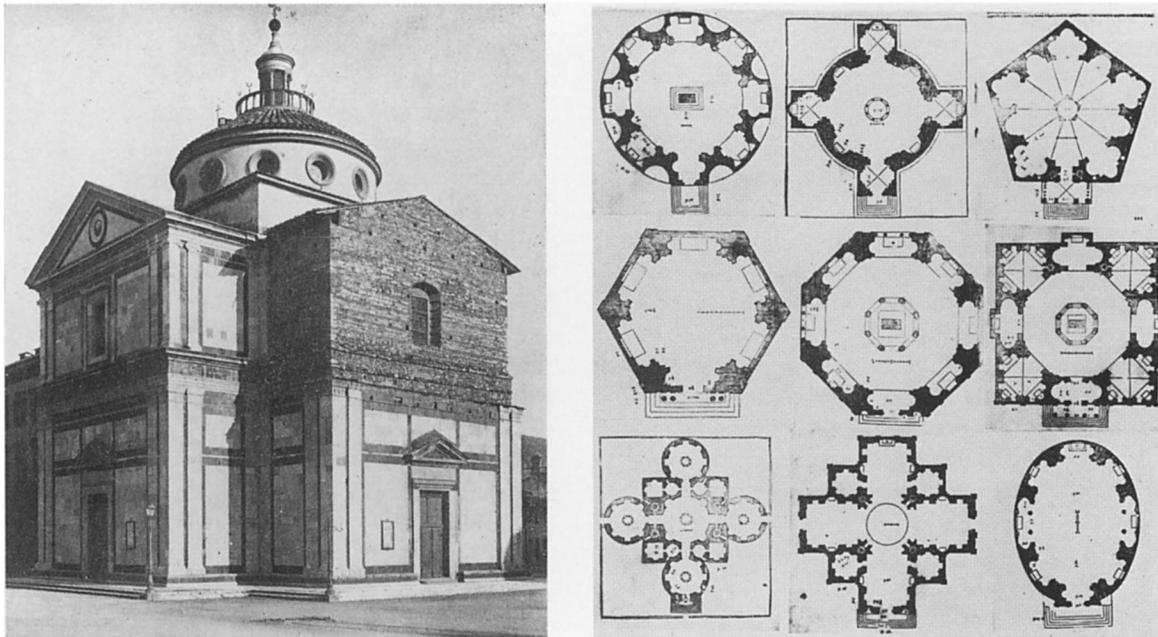
*ments*. Here is the possibility of a link between a discursive formation, the institutional conditions in which it becomes a practice, and the products of that practice — on the model of *The Birth of the Clinic*. We can supersede the problem of the 'gap' between intellectual influences on architects and the practice of construction. Foucault's approach avoids the problem of the declared intentions of the architect-author, and side-steps the cul-de-sac of their absence.

As an example we will consider the question of the 'influence' of Neoplatonic theories on Renaissance architecture, using Rudolf Wittkower's *Architectural Principles of Humanism in the Renaissance*. This book is controversial precisely because critics have challenged the extent and specificity of the influences Wittkower perceived. Some claim that his account of Palladio is overstretched because it philosophizes an eminently practical architect, whose constructions were undogmatic and non-conceptual and whose 'intentions' in relation to these buildings are unknown. Foucault is useful because he supersedes such issues of author-intentions, influences-structures, enabling us to pose questions not merely about discourses *on* architecture but about discourses *in* architecture.

### Neoplatonism, Resemblance and the Subject of the Temple

In *The Order of Things* Foucault contrasts the 'episteme' that governs certain key Renaissance discourses (in which the organizing forms of knowledge are a set of categories constituting forms of resemblance) with the subsequent and very different episteme that replaces it in the seventeenth century (in which the dominant organizing forms of knowledge are based on the concept of representation). In *The Order of Things* he examines the successive epistemes that provide a matrix in which groups of distinct knowledges have common methods and conceptions of objects. His concern is the overall organization of discourse that defines certain forms of existence of objects and makes ways of speaking about them possible. He prefaces the text with a quotation from Jorge Luis Borges, in which the latter describes the classification of animals in a Chinese encyclopaedia. They are classified in diverse and bizarre ways, for example as being innumerable, as being stuffed, as appearing as small as flies, and finally as being included in the present classification. To us such a scheme is incomprehensible because the animals appear to belong to distinct and incompatible orders. This is because it has quite different presuppositions from our own about what objects can exist and in what relations. Foucault then cites the Renaissance naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Treatise on the Serpent*, which does something analogous to the Chinese encyclopaedia, treating of snakes along with griffins, dragons and all sorts of mythological beasts as if they were in the same register. Foucault's point is that it is not because Aldrovandi is ignorant or stupid or unobservant that he does this, but because he has a quite different conception from our own of the order of knowledge, of the beings which are possible and of the status as knowledge of ancient and medieval texts in which such mythical creatures are referred to and described. It is in this spirit that Foucault goes on to reconstruct the dominant episteme of the Renaissance.

Foucault's concept of episteme is crucial in interpreting the intellectual role of Neoplatonism, and crucial to its relation to architecture. Neoplatonic thought has no concept of the 'sign', in which words denote things by representing or standing for them, and in which the sign and its referent are distinct registers. This absence enables us to comprehend the intellectual centrality of the key Neoplatonic doctrine of the interpenetration and respective mirroring of microcosm and macrocosm. That doctrine was 'influential'



1. Illustrations from the 1962 edition of Rudolf Wittkower's *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, showing the exterior of *S. Maria delle Carceri, Prato, 1485*, and centralized church plans from Serlio's fifth book on architecture, 1547.

beyond identifiably Neoplatonic thinkers. In this episteme the entire universe, from its smallest to its largest parts, from the humblest animal to God, consists in a series of resemblances, similarities and sympathies. There can be no concept of an arbitrary relation in which one thing, a sign, stands for and represents another. All relations are *real* relations, and all connections between aspects of existence reflect their respective natures. Hence symbolic relations both have significance and are real relations, or connections in nature. There is no space for the 'classical' gap between signs and existence.

Renaissance thought is hyperrealist. The world presented to knowledge consists of emblems, traces, signatures and resemblances. These are the marks of that network of spiritual-real interconnections whereby the whole tissue of existence is held together. From this follows the Neoplatonic linking of ideas and experience, and the doctrine of the Book of the World, whereby the world itself is conceived of as a language. Nature is intelligible in itself. This outlook is not confined to those who can be dismissed as devotees of magic and cabbalism such as Henry Cornelius Agrippa, or as misguided mystics, like Paracelsus. It also dominates the leading 'conventional' intellectuals of the Italian Renaissance such as Marsilio Ficino or Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and in architecture major figures like Alberti.

In this episteme there are no gaps between thoughts and signs, and signs and objects, as there are in Descartes and Locke. These latter use a notion of representation that is still identifiable in our modern conception of the sign, in Saussure, for example. For Locke a sensation is the 'idea', the mental register, of perceptions of things. Knowledge consists in perceptions of the world of things — sensations as mental events — and signs order and stand for such sensations. Knowledge depends on the conditions of perception, and signs are referential, but arbitrary in the selection of the particular signifiers that stand for things. In this double gap arises the classical 'problem' of knowledge, that is, the problem of the adequacy of the relation between ideas/sensations and the things thus perceived and, secondly, the adequacy of the relation between word and idea.

There is no such problem in the Renaissance episteme, or more specifically in Renaissance Neoplatonic theory. All relations are *real* relations — a world of visible or intelligible traces of harmony

gives access to the cosmic order. Neoplatonism has no *general* problem of knowledge, only a problem of the proper *use* of the faculty of intellect and of sensitivity to experience. This use may require *spiritual* preparation making the knower fit to uncover and understand the harmonies and relations of the world order. Instead of a problem of the adequacy of knowledge there is the need to sensitize the subject to knowledge, to create paths for the connection between spirit, intellect and experience.

For Renaissance thought a central question is how to *present* those traces of harmony and cosmic order — not to represent them but to make them immediately present to human subjects. In such presentation geometry has a privileged position as the fundamental mirroring of the natural order, since it is both an elaborated science of ordered forms and the present and manifest form of the order of the world. The figures of geometry correspond to the constitutive proportions of the world. The two fundamental proportional relations accessible to experience are those of the human body and those of the harmonic scale. Such devices provide traces and resemblances whereby man can be put into immediate contact with the divine. Hence the familiar Vitruvian figure has a philosophical significance belying the fact that it is a commonplace. Such figures and proportions are supra-intentional: they present the cosmic order, even if those who draw them do so merely from convention.

For the Neoplatonic architectural theorist the order of the world could best be revealed through conscious purpose, through the rationally planned design of the architect-adept. This systematizes experience, putting it at the service of intellect and the superior perception of cosmic order. Hence the philosophical and practical significance of an architecture that links science, art and spiritual concerns. Proportions in structures are the visible resemblances of the order of man and the universe. Geometrically planned and symmetrically proportioned buildings, in particular centrally planned churches (Fig. 1), have an expressive significance and a practical consequence that transcend those of mere form. They are not merely a stylistic device, the execution in brick and stone of an aesthetic idea; rather, they are the manifest presence and physical existence of cosmic order. This order, divined and devised by the intellect, is accessible to experience, in the physical presence of a building. This experience in turn produces knowledge. A definite

connection is established between intellect and experience; forms, though hinted at in experience, are perceived by the intellect. By making the intellect's grasp of form present and intelligible to experience through rationalized structures, a means is provided whereby the mass of common men may directly experience the immanent order of the world, which is God. The true architect should therefore be a theorist and an adept in order to design buildings — specifically churches — that produce certain experiential effects on the human subjects who approach and enter them.

Philosophy is integral to this conception of architectural practice. The value of the architect who is adept in philosophy and geometry, and therefore intellectually and spiritually prepared for his task, is thus quite distinct from that of the craftsman-builder or of one who merely follows formulas. The object of theoretical training is not simply a claim to social status and professional superiority; it is the spiritual-intellectual preparation for an eminently practical function. The task of the architect is not merely to build, but to create a space that has a direct effect on the subject.

Wittkower identifies the ways in which the theoretical concepts of resemblance or sympathy are active in the architectural treatises of the period. Palladio in his *Quattro libri* says, 'We cannot doubt that the little temples we make ought to resemble this very great one, which, by His immense goodness, was perfectly completed with one word of His' (preface to Book IV — cited by Wittkower, p. 23). The temple mirrors the world. Again, in summing up the central role of geometry and proportion in these discourses, Wittkower remarks that 'Renaissance artists firmly adhered to the Pythagorean concept "all is number" and, guided by Plato and the Neoplatonists and supported by a long chain of theologians from Augustine onwards, they were convinced of the mathematical and harmonic structure of the universe and all creation' (Wittkower, p. 27). He continues to use, although subtly and in a subversive way, the concepts of the conventional history of ideas. Neoplatonism is identified as a series of 'themes' to be traced as 'influences' in the architectural treatises of the period, and those 'ideas' correspond to aspects of structures. This opens him up to critics who locate such themes earlier in the Middle Ages and in discourses other than Neoplatonic ones, and who raise the problems of intentions, of whether or not architect-authors like Palladio had such ideas in mind when solving the practical problems of constructing villas. Foucault offers an intellectual means of avoiding such a methodological impasse.

Foucault links certain discursive forms to a dominant episteme. This is not equivalent to the 'spirit of the age'. Such spirits are ambiguous. Precursors can always be found to locate ideas earlier than proposed by a particular concept of a *Zeitgeist*. Ideas different from the supposed ruling spirit and co-present with it can be cited to disrupt its unity. Nor is an episteme equivalent to school. It governs a disparate complex of discourses, and it is in no sense unitary. Rather, it operates through a complex network of rules of inclusion and exclusion that do not prohibit the co-existence of statements which may appear thematically diverse, or which have — to use the vocabulary of influences — precedents and anticipations. The questions to be asked about divergent forms or precedents are the following: (i) What are the *limits* to discursive diversity within the episteme? How do statements, apparently diverse when considered as 'themes', co-exist? In what relations of parallelism, contrariety or combination do they coexist? (ii) Do statements that appear thematically similar occupy the same discursive positions? If not, in relation to what discursive formations are we to identify their significance?

Foucault's definition of a discursive formation is necessarily complex:

Wherever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, wherever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*. (*Archaeology*, p. 38).

Thus, apparently similar statements, considered as linguistic propositions, may occupy radically different places in different discursive formations. It is not enough to say that the Middle Ages approached the 'problem' of proportion. The questions to be asked are *in what way*, in relation to what unities of discourse, and in relation to what practices?<sup>3</sup> The Middle Ages had a certain access to the knowledges of antiquity and hence to geometry and concepts of proportion. Panofsky showed in *Renaissance and Renaissances in Western Art* that there were several rediscoveries of antiquity, yet this in no sense undermined the notion of a distinctive Italian Renaissance.

Neoplatonism cannot be treated exclusively as a school. Conceived of as such, it tends either to be accorded too much general influence, or to be confined to the limited circles of those few artists whose interests were explicitly philosophical. The search for Neoplatonic themes and influences in Renaissance art and architecture can be narrowed or widened. Narrowed, for example, by raising the question of explicit intentions and of evidence for them, demanding, in effect, an elaborated programme before the role of certain concepts is conceded. Widened, by finding Neoplatonic themes and symbolism underlying every image and every aspect of Renaissance art and thought — as in the speculations of Edgar Wind.

Foucault offers a route out of this impasse. Neoplatonism can be considered as a complex discursive formation within a dominant episteme, the crucial aspect of this episteme being the relation between knowledge and the world, the mode of existence of objects. It can thus be linked with, and yet differentiated from, a complex of discourses and practices: hermetism, cabbalism, natural magic, the revival of mathematics through the use of Pythagorean and Neoplatonic doctrines, astrology, alchemy, and the search for emblemata. All of these discourses share three decisive characteristics, common rules of formation of statements: (i) Concepts of resemblance, harmony, sympathy, etc., that postulate analogous modes of existence of objects and of the relation between knowledge and the world; (ii) A common relation to antiquity as the authentic source and the prefiguration of knowledge. Knowledge thus proceeds by *recovery*; (iii) That knowledge generates practices of transformation, practices that are not technologies in the modern sense, but entail a distinct relation between subject and the world, a relation in which the world as spirit-existence and the subject as spirit-intellect are brought into harmony. Thus the notion of humanism in these discourses entails something very specific, something quite different from the modern humanities. Humanism involves subjective and spiritual transformation, and human learning is predicated on the discovery of the relations of resemblance between man, the order of the universe and God.

The highly particular practice involved in such humanist architecture is the transformation of human subjects through geometrically organized space. This transformation is spiritual and it entails a privileged place for church architecture. Medieval churches also seek to establish a relation between man and God, but the relation posited in the geometrically planned church is distinct from that of the earlier period, and is mediated through the experience of harmony.

Taking the Renaissance episteme and its central category of resemblance we can see why the centrally planned and geometric

church structures of the Neoplatonic architectural theorists have to be considered as 'statements' in a highly particular sense, and why this practice of architecture is a specific one. We can also see why, in relation to this episteme, intentions are irrelevant. This is because spatial, geometrical and harmonic relations have *significance in themselves*. They are not merely a rendering of ideas, but are the presence of real relations of resemblance.

Buildings can serve as a means of acquiring knowledge through experience. The structure is an experience-effect. Churches with certain forms and features can produce the effect of piety, the recognition of God through the sympathies present in his temples, and the correct presentation, through experience, of his plan. This is no mere subjective experience of space, but a set of effects which go beyond the building, to the world and its creator. Alberti means something highly specific by the statement 'Without such sympathy between the microcosm of men and macrocosm of God, prayer cannot be effective' (cited in Wittkower, p. 27). It means that the church is both a statement and a transformatory device. This is not just a 'statement' in an architectural theory, but also a concrete discourse-practice in architecture. Certain forms such as the circle are regarded as inherently symbolic and spiritually consequential. They are privileged not merely in an aesthetics of impressions, but in a doctrine that links experience, knowledge and religious belief.

In order to estimate this discourse as a practice, its own presuppositions cannot be set aside, for to do so is to convert the buildings accessible in these terms into either a non-statement or another statement, just as to view music as a sequence of sounds without inherent meaning would radically transform a Monteverdi mass or opera into a statement of another class. The episteme of resemblance and the theory of the consequentiality of geometry/harmony cannot be set aside if we are to link architectural theory and 'practice'. To do so is to sever the specific relations of discourse and practice that it should be our object to recover.

In the Neoplatonic discourses, the virtues of the study of geometrical form and of the planned execution of the purest geometrical forms are evident. But for all the stress on the theoretical training of architects, the discourses undercut any privilege to intention. Certain forms, irrespective of their origins, *are* privileged because of what they are and what they signify. Neoplatonic theory provides, therefore, a means of discounting intentions, of considering structures in terms of their forms and effects, and not merely their originating ideas. This route can be used with allegedly 'practical' architects like Palladio to ignore intentions and to consider structures themselves as 'statements' identifiable by reference to a discursive formation. This goes beyond explicit theories in architectural treatises.

## POWER-KNOWLEDGE AND THE PRISON

Certain of Foucault's later works enable us to consider his treatment of the relation between a new form of power and a new class of specialist structures, which both developed towards the end of the eighteenth century. The key theoretical innovation here is the systematic linking of the categories of power and of knowledge to form a hybrid, 'power-knowledge'. This Foucault regards as both the consequence of and the condition for the rise, from the eighteenth century onwards, of forms of 'disciplinary power'. Such forms are the distinctive feature of modern practices of control over the transformation of subjects. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* focuses on an account of the development of the modern prison. It is concerned to challenge the widely accepted Enlightenment view of truth and power as inherently opposed forces. This opposition depends on what he calls the 'juridico-discursive' concept of

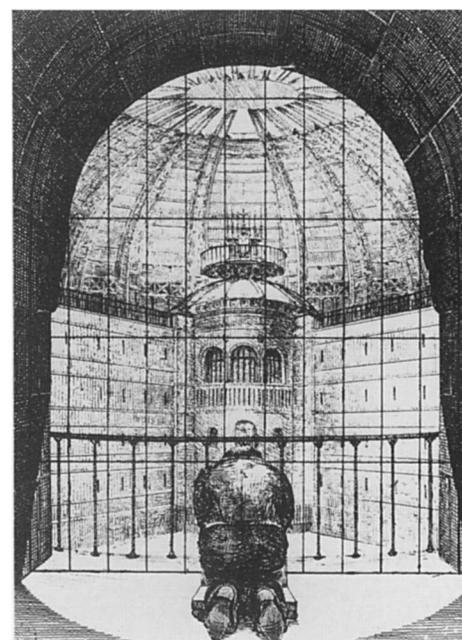
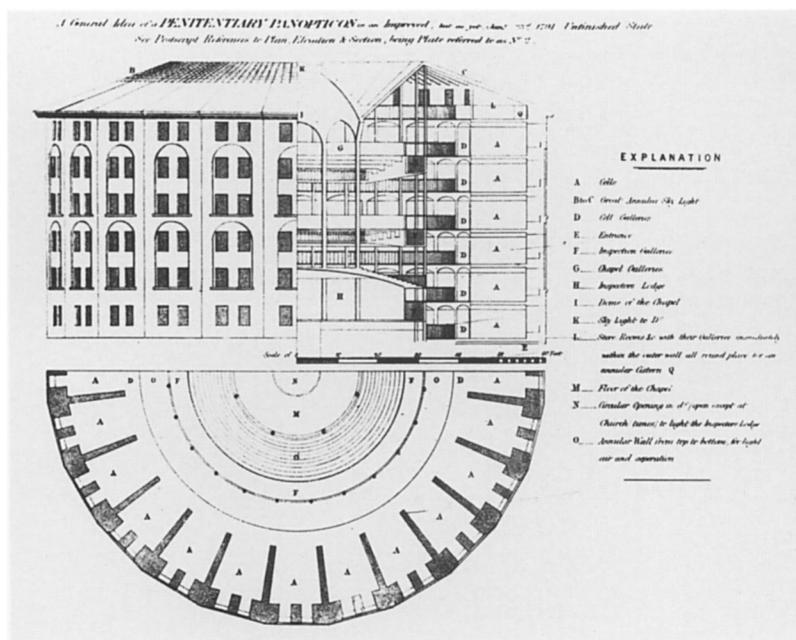
power, in which power is regarded as a possession — something that the sovereign subject possesses and others do not. This power consists in prohibition; it is the power to say no, to forbid, to suppress. Power is thus negative; it is a punitive relation between the dominant and the subordinate subject. It is possessed exclusively by dominant subjects and is a means of holding down and repressing subordinate subjects.

We can see why, in the juridico-discursive concept, the opposition between power and truth is perceived to be inevitable. Truth must be considered as a means of critique of power. Truth must at all costs avoid the corruption of power, because power is negative and it is the exclusive property of subjects who hold others down. Truth allied to power becomes corrupted by it, by the demands of limits to knowledge that follow from exploitation and oppression. In the Enlightenment critique of this conception of power, characteristic of absolutism, power is held to deny, to suppress truth, and to work in darkness and through secrecy. Truth, on the other hand, is universal and should be the property of all men. It brings enlightenment and promises emancipation and concord.

In contradistinction to this essentially negative and sovereign-centred view of power, Foucault argues that in the modern era power is necessary to certain knowledges, and knowledge is productive of power. This involves a new view of power and new types of power, the most important being disciplinary power. Power transforms those who are subject to it, and it uses knowledge as a resource in doing so. Far from being merely prohibitive, the controls of this new form of power are *productive*. Power does not merely draw on existing social resources in the form of a levy, but acts to create and multiply these resources. Power needs definite knowledges in order to be productive. And, vice versa, power is a crucial resource of certain knowledges. This is because power constructs the 'surfaces of emergence' that make discourses and knowledges able to function as such. Knowledge is implicated in institutions and in definite power relations. Thus clinical medicine is tied directly to the care for, and regulation of, the health of the poor. Clinical-observational medicine depends on large numbers of cases being brought into the hospital, on the separation and classification of such cases, and on the controls and forms of institutional order that make this possible. Clinical medicine uses the bodies of the poor as a resource, to be dissected for research and teaching. As a result of a large number of cases gathered together, the clinical observation of disease entities and the examination of the organic structures of cadavers make new knowledge possible. The hospital is not merely a site of care, but a machine of observation — a central institutional condition for the clinical gaze. The new 'surfaces of emergence' in clinical medicine thus depend on definite institutions, and on their social and organizational, and not merely their discursive, conditions of existence.

Foucault does not merely link knowledge and power, whilst leaving the traditional repressive and sovereign-centred notion of power untouched. Power is not simply a global relation between the sovereign, who is the source of prohibitive power, and the subjects who are subordinate to this power. It does not proceed downwards from a single centre. Rather, the new power relations have no single centre, but are diffused through the whole social body in complex networks and diverse relations. Foucault refers to the need for 'micro-physics of power', which considers all the sites of its exercise and functioning and not merely the gross repressive forms associated with the State. Sites like hospitals, insane asylums, schools, etc., are considered as centres of power-knowledge.

For such relations Foucault introduces the concept of disciplinary power. Such power relies on surveillance, and not on repressive force. The surveillance of subjects is the way in which they are



2. Elevation, section and plan of Bentham's Panopticon, from *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, 1843.

3. Illustration from N. P. Harou-Romain's *Projet de pénitencier*, 1840.

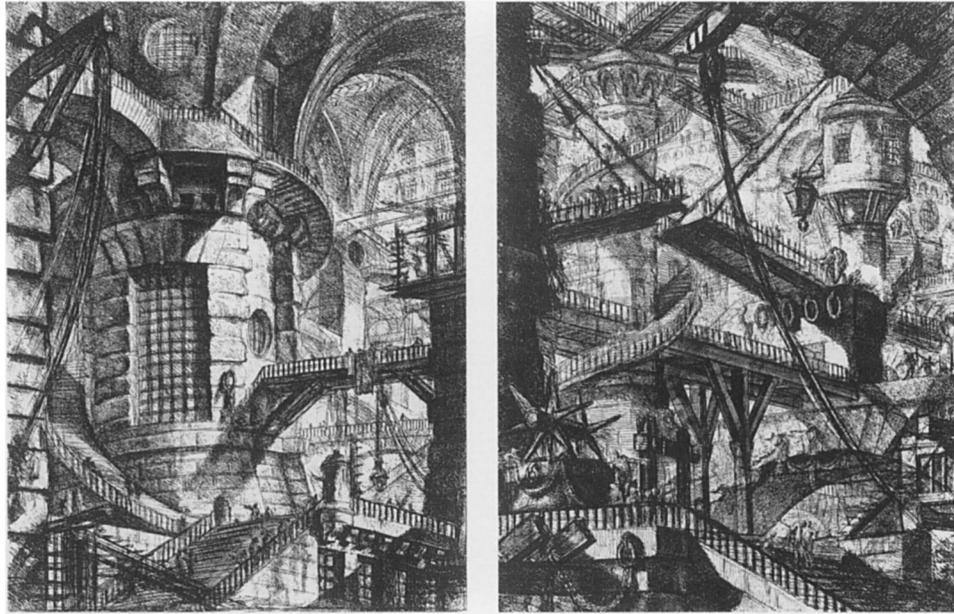
transformed. Surveillance requires for its functioning both knowledges and institutions ordered by knowledge. It depends on the isolation and specification of individuals such that its controls can be brought to bear and can effect the work of the transformation/construction of subjects. Individuals are isolated from social collectivities and from one another. Their conduct is subjected to continuous inspection and to norms of performance, a process Foucault calls 'normalizing individuation'. Subjects are constructed in institutions in such a way that they too become a resource of power — workers in factories, children in schools. They are transformed into beings of a particular type, whose conduct is patterned and governed, and who are endowed with definite attributes and abilities. Such forms of power do not act merely upon workers or the poor, but also upon the bourgeoisie themselves, through education and the transformation of the home environment.

The model of this form of power based on surveillance, which individuates and transforms, is the penitentiary prison. The archetypal form of such a prison as a system of power based on surveillance, where individuals are brought under what Foucault calls the 'eye' of power, is to be found in the English social reformer Jeremy Bentham's proposal for a panoptical prison. The Panopticon is a prison in which the conduct of all the inmates and all of its internal space are subjected to inspection by the directive staff. In the illustration shown here (Fig. 2) it can be seen that the Panopticon is a circular structure whose floors are divided into cells arranged around the circumference, which isolate the inmates, and at the centre of the structure is an inspection tower from which each of the cells on each of the floors can be observed. The principle is that light comes in through the windows or slits on the circumference of the structure, such that each of the cells is backlit, enabling the observer in the tower to see without being seen. To the inmate, the inspection tower appears darkened and he or she cannot see through the slits on the tower into its centre. The prisoner does not know whether he or she is being observed, yet must, at any given moment, presume himself or herself to be under observation. As a consequence, conduct can be governed twenty-four hours a day. One person moving up from the inspector's lodge and walking round in the inspection tower can see each of the galleries in the structure. Figure 3 shows an example of an inspection tower and a prisoner looking from his

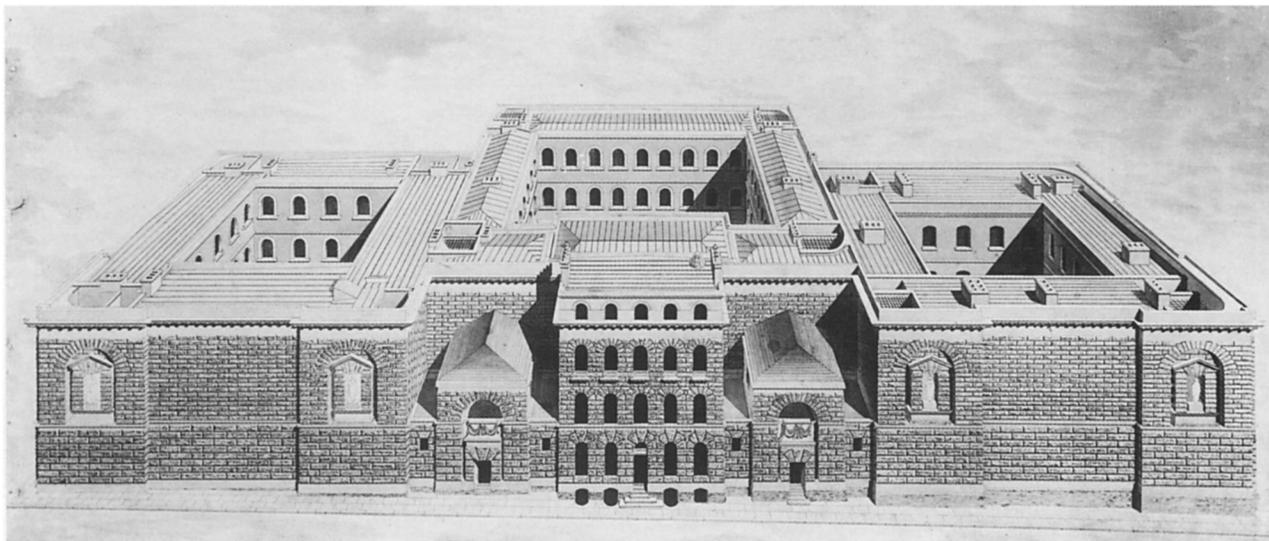
cell inward towards the tower — it is no accident that the prisoner is depicted in the attitude of penitential prayer.

Bentham called the Panopticon an 'idea in architecture'. Its principle is that the many can be governed by the few, and its object is, in his pithy phrase, 'to grind rogues honest'. This is achieved by the uninterrupted surveillance of conduct. When Bentham refers to an idea here, he means the concept of a structure. The idea is a construction, a space that makes possible both a certain discourse and certain power relations. The Panopticon is both a construction and a 'statement' in construction. It is the space and site of a certain form of productive power. The gaze of the inspector in the tower is a form of power-knowledge, productive both of control over subjects and of the remodelling of their conduct, just as the gaze of the clinician in the hospital is productive of observational knowledge.

Bentham's idea obviously did not spring from his head alone. Foucault treats Bentham's model of such a construction as an example of a supra-individual 'strategy'. A 'strategy' is a definite pattern of means and objectives which can be discovered operating across a number of sites. The prison — of which the Panopticon is a model — is but one of a series of structures embodying the surveillance principle. Bentham's initial conception of this principle was drawn from his brother's visit to the Military School of Paris, built in 1751. In this school the dormitories were so constructed that each pupil was assigned a glassed-in cell and, thus completely isolated from direct contact with his fellows, he could be observed by the supervising master. This made it possible to regulate the extra-curricular conduct of the pupils and to prevent unacceptable sexual practices — an example of the inspection principle that is by no means isolated. Diverse structures were being constructed in the mid-eighteenth century with the object of isolating and controlling individuals, for example barracks and military hospitals. Separation and inspection had the objective of both maintaining discipline and promoting hygiene — preventing the fevers that led to such high mortality in places where military personnel were crowded together. Great attention was paid not merely to separation of individuals and to supervision, but also to promoting the flow of air and the drainage of waste. Hence both internal arrangements and structures as a whole were being transformed with reference to the 'strategy' of inspection and separation.<sup>4</sup>



4. Two etchings from G. B. Piranesi's *Carceri d'invenzione*, c.1761.



5. Bird's-eye view of *Newgate Gaol*, c.1783, architect *George Dance*.



6. Exterior view of *The Retreat, York*, established 1792 (from *D. H. Tuke's Chapters in the History of the Insane, 1882*), and photograph of the interior (from *G. A. Tucker's Lunacy in Many Lands*).

Bentham's Panopticon is distinctive in that it is an elegant example of rationalizing the *whole* structure such that it corresponds to certain demands of use. It is built around the strategy of inspection, and in this differs from devices that are merely set up *within* an otherwise conventional structure, as in the military school or the systems of wards or pavilions in military hospitals, which were not wholly subordinated to the inspection principle. Thus it is a systematically *functional* architecture, a space organized by certain demands of utilization and worked out rigorously to facilitate them.

Prisons had existed long before Bentham and long before the reform measures that led to the large-scale construction of penitentiary prisons in Europe and America from the late eighteenth century onwards. That there were prisons before the reforms is largely irrelevant. It is the general function of imprisonment that is changed. The prison becomes a 'penitentiary', and this change of function involves a change in structure and the considerations acting on it. The first consideration is the spatial demands of facilitating the inspection principle. The second is that the prison must sustain a rigid timetable affecting every aspect of the life of inmates, and facilitate the segregation of individuals and of classes of offender. The 'strategy' embodied in the new type of prison is that of transforming the conduct of the inmates by governing their behaviour. It is a penitentiary, the aim of which is to bring criminals to a full cognizance of their guilt, and to reform them. Previous prison structures had acted as sites of incarceration or detention, for those awaiting execution or trial, or as a pressure so as to redeem a debt. Two examples of prison structures serve to contrast with the new penitentiary regime whose model was the Panopticon. The first is George Dance the younger's design for the new Newgate prison, and the other is the etchings of imaginary prisons in Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Carceri d'invenzione* of c.1761.

'Supplice' is the form of exemplary punishment meted out by the monarch under the *ancien régime* to a regicide, parricide, traitor or any other serious malefactor. Such crime is regarded as *lèse-majesté*, an affront to the power of the sovereign, and is countered by a demonstration of that sovereign's dominion in the systematic destruction of the body of the offender by torture and execution. Supplice thus fits directly with a conception of power as repression and as a capacity exclusively possessed by the sovereign. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* opens with a contrast between the spectacle of the execution of a regicide in 1757 and a prison timetable for a juvenile reformatory of eighty years later. These examples show two quite distinct regimes of punishment. The *Carceri* are an imaginary architecture that represents this exemplary and savage punishment, much as Bentham's Panopticon is an imaginary figuration of the new penitentiary prisons.

In the two etchings illustrated here (Fig. 4), wretched prisoners groan under instruments of torture, and tiny figures are lost amidst a latticework of bridges, immense machines and vast decorative features. The prison in a grotesque theatre for torture, an imaginary structure that intimidates subjects by its bulk and monumental brutality. These imaginary prisons have no rationalized or evident plan. Rather, they serve to make arbitrary power visible and expressive through the sheer mass of the structure, which dwarfs the inmates, and through the darkness that pervades all, despite the immensity of the internal space. Such prisons are sites for torture, incarceration and exemplary punishment, and their form is correspondingly monumental and expressive. They are quite different from the Panopticon, with its ordered cells pervaded by light.

Piranesi's prisons are nothing less than an image of the darkness Enlightenment critics and reformers perceived as the repellent essence of the *ancien régime*; they are a gloomy stage for arbitrary punishment, for the excesses of torture and injustice. To claim, as

Manfredo Tafuri does, that 'in the *Carceri* we are already in the presence of an anguish dominated by the anonymity of the person and the "silence of things"' (Tafuri, 1979, p. 19) is to treat the *Carceri* as empty, silent spaces of alienation. Yet they are pregnant with the darkness of arbitrary power, and the anonymity of the person is that of his helplessness before *despotism*, not modern capitalism.

The closed space of Piranesi's prisons is not the public exemplary space of the scaffold. But the *Carceri* are a hyperbolic enlargement of the dungeons and torture chambers of the Inquisition and the absolutist state. With their vast internal spaces Piranesi's prisons assume the character of a punitive theatre, equivalent to the public scaffold. They are at once a closed, dark space and an immense, planless space, open to the spectator's gaze and expressive of an awesome arbitrary power. They both enclose the victim, forever isolating him in the grip of repressive power, and admit the spectator as a voyeur. They combine as images the dungeon and the scaffold — the secret places of incarceration of the *ancien régime* and the public brutalities of exemplary punishment. They both horrify the spectator and make him complicit with a guilty secret.

We turn from Piranesi's imaginings to an actual construction. The function of the old, purely custodial prison was to detain, but its internal spaces were not rationalized according to any functional scheme of use because there was no conception of a regime such as we find in the notion of a timetable and in the surveillance necessary to make prisoners conform to it. Prisoners were isolated from neither one another nor the outside world, for commonly they could purchase food and receive visitors. Privileged noble and bourgeois prisoners were permitted to re-create their domestic arrangements within the prison. In so far as this type of building's function concerns its form, it relates primarily to the façade rather than to the organization of internal spaces. The custodial prison was often monumental, symbolizing its strength and solidity, but its plan was *not* subject to the demands of inspection. Dance's Newgate gaol illustrates this well (Fig. 5). It was designed immediately prior to Bentham's proposal for a Panopticon but it embodies a completely different 'idea in architecture'. Dominated by a massive façade, visible from the street but not to the inmates, it was designed to impress passers-by. Within, it is divided into a series of squares. It is characterized by numerous dead angles, and there is no principle of circulation such as would minimize the demands for inspection. Its arrangements do not permit easy isolation and classification of inmates. However, it is not intended to regulate systematically the conduct of prisoners, but merely to contain them. Its exterior symbolizes its functions: to detain before execution — its symbolism is preliminary to that of the scaffold — and to intimidate.<sup>5</sup>

Foucault's concept of 'disciplinarity' thus enables us to comprehend important differences in a certain class of structures. It considers the Panopticon in terms of an architecture pervaded by discourses and pursuant of strategy — as a form of power, rather than in terms of style. Newgate can be viewed in terms of conventional considerations of style, and be also found wanting as a device for a strategy. The one possibility is closely connected with the other. Conventional considerations of style and the demand for an intimidating façade can happily co-exist. Inspection implies a new organization of space, one to which style is secondary. A Panopticon could take the form of a large shed. Foucault's concepts enable us to appreciate the difference between these two 'ideas'. Architecture is linked to the functioning of institutions of power/knowledge and we are given another measure of structures than styles or technical solutions to constructional problems.

Bentham's Panopticon was never built but it is not an irrelevancy, a mere idea, for all that. For many prison structures did pursue the demands of the inspection principle and of the internal reformatory

regime. Radial and star plans, rows of cells in galleries, inspection towers are all testimonies to the relevance of Foucault's emphasis on Bentham. Prison regimes attempted to isolate and transform, as in the case of the Auburn and Philadelphia systems. The Auburn Prison, in New York, was based on the system of solitary confinement but silent work in association with other prisoners; the Philadelphia system, on solitary confinement and isolated work.<sup>6</sup>

Quite different schemes also attempted to pursue a 'disciplinary strategy'. For example, the Retreat at York, designed by William Tuke, was purpose-built as an insane asylum (Fig. 6). Its disciplinary mode differs from Bentham's inspection principle, but also embodies the strategy, as described by Foucault, of 'normalizing individuation'. The Retreat was built to sustain an architecture of impressions, but one very different from Alberti's churches or Newgate gaol. For the impressions created by architecture are at the service of a transformative regime that is disciplinary. The Retreat combines with a 'domestic atmosphere' the necessity of detaining the insane. The patients are deceived by bars which imitate sash windows, and by walls that are concealed by the landscaping of the grounds. Discipline proceeds, not through inspection by means of the functional organization of visibility, but through surveillance disguised by domesticity. Restraint of the insane is achieved through the patterning of conduct on the normality of 'family life'. Deviation becomes visible by its departure from ordered gentility. Surveillance works in a different mode, and architecture is subordinated to the demands of the domestic management of madness.

This essay has confined itself to discussing those aspects of Foucault's work that directly analyse or can be made to bear upon architecture. Foucault's immense strength was his commitment to specific analysis through working concepts, rather than the construction of general theoretical systems. The only way to 'apply' Foucault's approach is by conducting original works in a similar style, as in Jacques Donzelot's *The Policing of Families*. Foucault's work thus offers both a real opportunity and a difficult challenge.

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#### Notes

1. See Eribon (1991), Macey (1993) and Miller (1993).
2. See, for example, M. Cacciari, F. Rella, M. Tafuri, and G. Teyssot, *Il Dispositivo Foucault* (1977) — see also the English version of Teyssot's article (1980) and the comments by the translator, David Stewart (1980).
3. Erwin Panofsky comments in his essay 'The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles' that 'The Italian Renaissance, however, looked upon the theory of proportions with unbounded reverence; but it considered it, unlike the Middle Ages, no longer as a technical expedient but as the realisation of a metaphysical postulate. . . . the Middle Ages, it is true, were thoroughly familiar with a metaphysical interpretation of the structure of the human body. . . . However, insofar as the medieval theory of proportions followed the line of humanistic cosmology, it had no relation to art; and insofar as it stood in relation to art, it had degenerated into a code of practical rules which had lost all connexion with humanistic cosmology.' (*Meaning in the Visual Arts*, p. 118)
4. See Foucault (1976).
5. Interestingly enough, there is considerable debate on the influence of the *Carceri* on Dance's design. John Summerson notes such an influence in *Georgian London*. He also comments that Dance's plan was soon rendered obsolete by prison reform but does not dwell on the reason why. Dorothy Stroud, in her work on Dance, comments on this frequent comparison but argues that the Newgate design owes little to Piranesi. Accepting Dance's familiarity with

- Piranesi's work she points to a Palladian influence (Stroud, p. 98). Wilton-Ely (1978, chapter V) on balance accepts the primacy of a Piranesian influence.
6. There is now an extensive literature on the new prisons, on mental hospitals, etc., and on their development from the late eighteenth century onwards. Perhaps the best book on the American systems mentioned above and on the chronology of prison construction is Rothman; on American and Italian prisons see Melossi and Pavarini; on English prisons Ignatieff and Evans; and on asylums Doerner, Donnelly and Scull. See also Middleton and Rabinow, on French urban planning and social intervention from a Foucaultian perspective.

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