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The Meanings Attributed to Representation in Architecture

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Abstract　　Architectural representation has been an essential aspect of architecture throughout history. All the tools involved in design, project planning, and narration contribute to the creation of these representations. Architectural products are no longer defined solely as constructed buildings; instead, all drawings and narratives, whether realised or not, gain meaning through architectural representation.

With modernisation, the perception of a chaotic world led to the emergence of structured systems of order and representation-conceptual and visual frameworks rooted in Enlightenment rationalism and later formalised in architectural modernism. These systems aimed to universalise perception by standardising meaning, form, and spatial organisation, often based on the assumption of a shared human experience. This pursuit of coherence produced a trans-temporal design logic that claimed objective validity while also embedding ideological constraints within architectural thinking.

Beyond merely serving as tools for architects to materialise their ideas, architectural representation has evolved into a means of creating envisioned worlds-sometimes utopian, sometimes dystopian, and occasionally feared. Thus, the production of perception and representation in architecture has become a mechanism for establishing universal reality and asserting power.

However, power structures cannot fully suppress the diversity of meaning within perceptions and representations. This study critically examines the classical conception of representation in architecture, particularly how new meanings were added to representation during the 1960s. By exploring these shifts, this study seeks to understand the evolution of architectural representation and how contemporary practices have diverged from traditional models, embracing more diverse and individualised forms of expression.

Keywords　　Architectural Representation · Perception and Power · Universalism in Architecture · Interpretive Frameworks · Individual Expression

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Introduction

The rise of modernism caused transformative changes across numerous facets of life, including social, political, and cultural dimensions. Modernism emphasised progress, technological innovation and a departure from traditional norms and historical precedents. This shift has led to rapid developments in economic systems, transportation networks, communication technologies, and intellectual discourse. As these advancements introduced a level of complexity and fragmentation, a sense of disorder emerged, challenging established ways of thinking. In response, architects and designers sought to impose order, structure, and coherence, not only within the physical environments they created and through the methods and tools used to represent their designs (Frampton, 2007).

Architectural representations-including drawings, models, diagrams, and conceptual narratives-have played a pivotal role in this quest for structure and clarity. These representations are far more than mere visual aids; they are vital instruments through which architects conceptualise, develop, and communicate their ideas. They serve as a bridge between abstract concepts and the tangible reality of built environments. Robin Evans (1995) argued that architectural drawings are not just depictions of buildings; they are fundamental in the process of "constituting" architecture. These drawings help in translating and materialising abstract ideas into physical forms, thus playing a central role in the architectural process.

This study investigates how architectural representations acquire meaning and serve as tools for shaping societal ideals. By examining specific historical examples, this study explores how architects have utilised these representations not only to bring their design concepts to life but also to engage in broader cultural and philosophical debates. The inquiry will be guided by theoretical frameworks from scholars such as Jacques Rancière (2009), who focused on the role of the "spectator" in the creation of meaning, and Michel Foucault (1970), who examined the interplay between power, knowledge, and visual representation. Additionally, the study incorporates the philosophical lens of Deleuze and Guattari, particularly their concepts of virtual, rhizomatic structure, and multiplicity, to explore how architectural imagery can exceed deterministic frameworks and generate nonhierarchical, nomadic possibilities of meaning-making (Deleuze, 1968; Deleuze & Guattari, 1983).

Methodologically, this work adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach. This study focuses on analysing historical architectural representations in dialogue with architects' own narratives and reflections. Representations are not examined in isolation but are situated within broader symbolic and historical contexts, offering a richer view of how meaning is shaped by both form and discourse. Inspired by Clifford Geertz's concept of "thick description"-an approach that aims to capture not just behaviour or artefact but the complex web of meaning surrounding it-the research attends closely to the cultural, historical, and ideological frameworks in which representations are created and received (Geertz, 1973). Representations are shaped by the positionality of both the creator and the viewer and are best understood through constructivist and critical lenses that highlight their role in the production of meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Similarly, Pink (2007) emphasised that visual materials-whether photographs, architectural drawings, or models-are constructed within systems of power and are actively involved in shaping social knowledge. Through this interpretive lens, this study aims to uncover how architectural representations serve as spaces where intention, narrative, and cultural meaning come together.

The study will focus on notable figures such as Le Corbusier, who used architectural representations to articulate and justify his vision of ideal living environments, and groups like Archigram, known for their innovative and provocative approaches to representation that expanded the horizons of architectural

discourse (Cook 1999; Le Corbusier, 2013a; 2013b). In addition, this study addresses the concept of "Unlimited Production" and its relationship with the viewer of architectural representations. This concept refers to the dynamic and open-ended nature of how architectural ideas are produced and interpreted. Specifically, the work of architects like Daniel Libeskind will be examined to illustrate how contemporary architectural representations invite active engagement from viewers (Libeskind, 1994; 2001).

Through this lens, this study seeks to uncover the ways in which architectural representation, as both a process and a product, has evolved from a technical tool to a powerful medium for cultural and ideological expression. This will shed light on how architects have historically used representations not only to construct buildings but also to influence societal structures, behaviours, and perceptions.

What is Representation?

The concept of representation is complex and has evolved significantly . At its most basic level, "representation" can mean "acting on behalf of someone or a group," "reflecting something with specific features", or "symbolising" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023). For Henri Lefebvre, representation is not just symbolic depiction but a means of producing and shaping social space. It operates through both conceptual systems-maps, plans, and architectural designs (representations of space)-and lived, symbolic experiences (representational spaces). These representations reflect and reinforce dominant power structures by masking the social relations that underlie cultural and ideological codes. In this way, representation is not neutral; it is a tool through which space is controlled, perceived, and made meaningful within society (Lefebvre, 1991).

Michel Foucault offers a deep and influential perspective on how knowledge and representation have evolved, particularly through the frameworks of knowledge known as "epistemes," which emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries. Foucault introduced the concept of epistemes to describe the underlying conditions of possibility for knowledge in a given historical era - the deep, often invisible rules that govern what is thinkable, sayable, and representable in a particular way and concept. For example, during the Classical Age, representation was governed by a system of resemblance and classification-signs were seen as directly referring to a stable reality. However, as the modern episteme emerged, representation became more abstract and systematised, privileging taxonomies, rational order, and empirical observation (Foucault, 1970).

Foucault's analysis focuses on the evolving relationship between the "signifier"-the physical form of a sign such as a word or image-and the "signified," the concept or meaning it represents. This distinction is central to how knowledge is constructed and communicated. For example, the word "tree" (signifier) points to the mental concept of a tree (signified). Foucault argued that this relationship plays a key role in shaping systems of knowledge, particularly as societies began to value ideas like absoluteness, universality, and shared understanding-principles that suggest that knowledge can be stable, universally applicable, and commonly agreed upon. Before the 17th century, the interpretation of signs was more fluid and less formalised; meanings were often context-dependent and shaped by immediate experience rather than fixed categories. With the rise of Enlightenment thinking, there was a shift towards order, classification, and a systematic approach to knowledge, resulting in what Foucault calls a "common ground of representation". This marked a move towards standardised frameworks for organising meaning, reinforcing the separation between signifier and signified and contributing to the development of modern epistemes (Foucault, 1970).

Building on Foucault's ideas, Jacques Rancière offers a critical perspective in his work The Emancipated Spectator. Rancière expands the concept of representation beyond simple imitation to discuss how it constructs "regimes of meaning." According to Rancière, representation is not merely about copying or depicting

something but involves creating frameworks that shape how people understand and interpret information. In this context, representation includes any form of communication-whether visual (like images), textual (like written words), or auditory (like sounds)-that conveys specific ideas or meanings. The "sign" refers to these forms of representation. The "spectator," or viewer, is not just a passive receiver of this information but actively engages with it based on their own experiences and perspectives. This interaction between the sign and the spectator is crucial because it influences how meaning is created and understood (Rancière,2009).

Rancière argues that this process is not neutral. Instead, it establishes a particular "regime of representation," which is a set of rules and conventions that guide how reality is perceived. When a regime of representation is in place, it often presents a singular, dominant interpretation of truth that the audience is expected to accept. This fixed interpretation limits individuals' engagement with the work and often restricts their ability to form their own independent views. In other words, the regime of representation dictates a specific way of seeing and thinking, which can make it difficult for alternative perspectives. In addition, he critiqued the idea of "consensus," which he describes as the dominant understanding within a society. This consensus is shaped by the prevailing social and cultural ideologies and often excludes or marginalises viewpoints that challenge the status quo. By promoting a particular vision of society and maintaining existing power structures, consensus creates a sense of unity, but it also suppresses dissenting voices. This means that the dominant representational regime reinforces existing power structures and prevents alternative perspectives from gaining traction (Rancière, 2009).

John Berger, in his influential work Ways of Seeing, redefined the concept of representation by drawing attention to the deep ties between looking, power, and meaning. For Berger, representation is not merely about displaying what exists, but about shaping how and what we are taught to see. He famously argued that in visual culture-whether in classical oil paintings or modern advertisements-images do not just depict reality; they instruct us how to interpret that reality. A female nude, for instance, often exists not for the woman's own identity or experience but to satisfy the male gaze. In this way, representation becomes a political act-it determines that is visible, how they are framed, and whose perspectives are prioritised or erased. Berger emphasised that what is deemed worthy of being seen and how it is shown is shaped by systems of power that reinforce social norms, stereotypes, and inequalities. Thus, representation is not passive; it is an active process that governs perception and reinforces dominance-making the act of looking itself an exercise of control (Berger, 1972).

Following Berger's insights into Deleuze and Guattari, we shift our focus away from fixed representations towards a more dynamic and open-ended way of thinking. For them, meaning is not simply represented-it is continuously produced through processes of difference and transformation (Deleuze, 1994). In Difference and Repetition, Deleuze emphasised that repetition is not about sameness but variation-each recurrence carries creative potential. Their concept of the ritornello, or refrain, refers to repeated patterns-whether in music, behaviour, or design-that help create a sense of order, familiarity, or belonging. However, these patterns are not fixed; they can be broken apart, reassembled, or transformed, becoming starting points for new directions. In this way, repetition becomes a creative force. Similarly, their idea of the rhizome challenges linear, hierarchical models by proposing a fluid, decentralised system where meaning emerges from any point and grows in multiple directions. Rather than reproducing fixed images, their mapping idea encourages invention, experimentation, and the constant re-creation of meaning-offering tools to resist dominant narratives (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

These ideas have important implications for architectural representation. Architecture is influenced by the cultural, social, and political contexts of its time. Through the lens of thinkers, architecture can be seen not only as a physical creation but also as a reflection of the dominant ideologies of its era. Analysing architectural representations critically can reveal how they reinforce or challenge these dominant ideologies and reveal opportunities for resistance or alternative interpretations.

Architectural Representation: An Exploration

Architectural representation refers to the array of tools and methods architects use to communicate their design ideas. These representations are central to the entire design process, starting from the earliest conceptual stages, continuing through the final stages of production, and often evolving even after a project is completed. In modern thought, architectural representation has experienced significant transformation. It is no longer viewed solely as a system of geometric tools and technical directives designed to communicate the details of a building-whether built or not-to stakeholders involved in the architectural dialogue. Rather, architectural representation is now increasingly understood through the lens of language, encompassing both verbal and written signs that enable communication among people. In this sense, representation functions not only as a technical communication tool among architects but also as a social and cultural dimensions (Robbins, 1994).

Architectural representations are pivotal not only in shaping the physical design but also in reflecting the social and cultural inputs that are intertwined with the architect's role. They carry and shape the culture and knowledge of architecture, assuming an independent status comparable to that of architectural theory (Tanyeli, 1994). This shift in perspective emphasises that representations are not mere by-products of design; they are active agents that guide and inform the design process while also interacting with broader social, historical, and cultural contexts. These representations also establish a network of communication with society-or more specifically, with the audience-conveying, sharing, and often creating collective experiences and understandings of space, form, and function (Tanyeli, 2017).

One critical aspect of architectural representation is its dynamic nature. Representations are not static depictions; they are living, evolving entities that speak to and provoke dialogue among their viewers, both within and beyond the architectural community. Over time, they have embodied the meanings ascribed to them, influenced by the conditions and ideologies of their period. As Kester and Rattenbury (2002) suggested, architectural representations can take on mythological significance, making the invisible visible and invoking something greater than the representation itself. This mythological function allows representations to transcend their role as simple illustrations, embedding broader worldviews and cultural narratives into their form and meaning.

Architectural representations often acquire a sense of authenticity, shaping perceptions and beliefs about architecture and its role in society. By constructing and reflecting on their system of architectural perception, they not only communicate the architect's ideas but also select their audience, determining how and by whom these ideas are received. This dynamic interaction between representation and audience helps to construct a unique architectural authenticity that resonates with both contemporary thought and the timeless aspirations of the built environment (Tanyeli, 1994). Representations such as drawings, models and photographs can attain critical agency, operating independently of the built form. In certain institutional and curatorial settings-such as exhibitions or publications-these representations may even displace the built object as the primary site of architectural meaning. By challenging the binary between reality and

representation, this view acknowledges that architectural knowledge is equally mediated through visual and discursive forms, not merely through construction (Tanyeli, 2017).

In addition, architectural representations are not limited to depicting the final product. They extend into the realms of speculation, exploration, and theoretical projection, allowing architects to imagine possibilities that transcend what is physically realisable at any given moment. This speculative dimension of representation opens the door for architecture to engage with utopian ideals, challenge existing conventions and inspire new ways of thinking about space, form and human interaction. Through this process, representations help architecture evolve, continually pushing the boundaries of what is possible while remaining deeply rooted in the cultural, social, and philosophical contexts of their time (Kester & Rattenbury, 2002).

In summary, the role of architectural representation has expanded beyond its initial function as a technical tool. It is now recognised as a critical component in the shaping of architectural ideas, a medium through which architects communicate with society and a dynamic force that evolves alongside cultural and historical shifts. By examining specific examples of architectural representation, a deeper understanding emerges of how these representations both reflect and shape the worldviews of their time while contributing to the ongoing evolution of architecture as a cultural and social practice.

The Classical Conception of Representation in Architecture: Bauhaus, Le Corbusier

The discourse on architectural representation can be traced to the Renaissance, a pivotal era that revolutionised various domains of culture and knowledge. In the 15th century, Leon Battista Alberti pioneered a system of representation that laid the foundation for subsequent developments in architecture. The rationalist ideas of Viollet-le-Duc concerning Gothic architecture, coupled with the rationalist paradigms of the 18th century, propelled architecture into a phase characterised by the production of distinct styles, orders, and modes of representation. Panofsky articulated this progression as a methodical approach to conceptualising architecture within objective and universal frameworks. A system of representation was established that regarded society as a cohesive entity governed by a unified artistic vision and architectural philosophy, defined by clear limitations and determinations (Panofsky, 1991). Based on the premise of a standardised mode of perception, efforts were made to develop a timeless system of thought. This system presumed that the same perceptual standards could be universally applied, asserting that any alternative forms of perception were inconceivable. Human perception is framed within a conceptual structure rooted in nature and articulated through specific representations (Panofsky, 1991; Rancière, 2009).

Figure 1
Model of One of the Twin Houses.

Figure 2
Perspective Study for the Bauhaus Masters' Houses, Colour Scheme Study.

**Source:** Tanyeli & Köksal, 2002

In the context of modern architecture, the conservative Baukunst philosophy, which viewed the coexistence of different styles as problematic, advocated representations that were more precise and unambiguous. The Bauhaus school, instrumental in shaping the ideals and principles of modern architecture, cultivated a discourse and system of representation that appealed to a particular audience. Walter Gropius envisioned the Bauhaus as a hub for developing a design philosophy grounded in the fundamental needs of human life, capable of addressing the requirements of all members of a civilised society. Through a narrative that embraced industrial production, the Bauhaus promoted representations marked by simplicity, where objects were not diluted by romantic embellishments, and where the utility of standardised forms in everyday life was emphasised (Gropius, 2002). As Lefebvre (1991) argued, architectural representations are not merely visual abstractions but are linked to the production of social space-they shape, regulate, and naturalise everyday spatial practices in ways that align with some ideological structures. These representations, confined to specific forms and colours, are exemplified by the Bauhaus buildings in Dessau, including the school and the master houses (Figures 1 and 2).

In the context of modern architectural representation, Le Corbusier played a pivotal role by developing representations that encapsulated the symbolic meanings of modern architecture. As an architect committed to forging a new epistemology of architecture in the 20th century, Le Corbusier sought to redefine the discipline within the framework of the rapidly evolving temporal and spatial conditions of the modern era. His work aimed to break from tradition and establish a new architectural essence through innovative representations (Le Corbusier, 2013a; 2013b)

Le Corbusier distilled the complexities of modern life into a unified and meaningful architectural language. He characterised his time as an era of rapid transformation driven by the machine, which he saw as a force reshaping all aspects of life. To navigate these profound changes, Le Corbusier argued that traditional habits, tools, and practices had become obsolete, necessitating the creation of a new architectural paradigm. In his representations, he prominently featured machines-such as ships, aeroplanes, and automobiles (Figure 3)-as symbols of modernity. These machines served as instruments for experimentation and calculation, guiding the search for optimal architectural forms (Le Corbusier, 2013a).

Figure 3
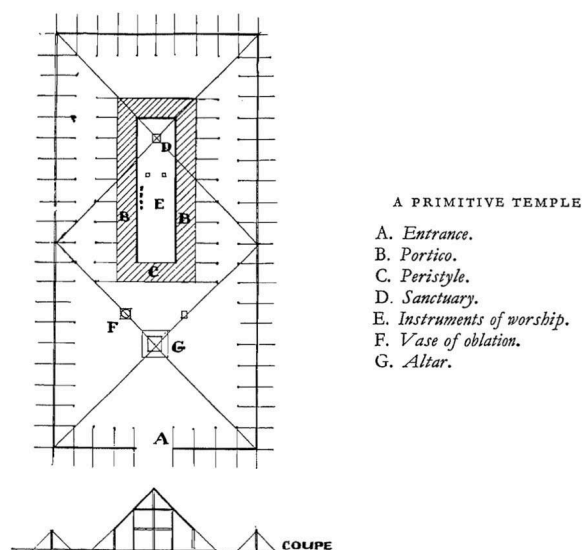*Automobile Models for Standardised Production.*
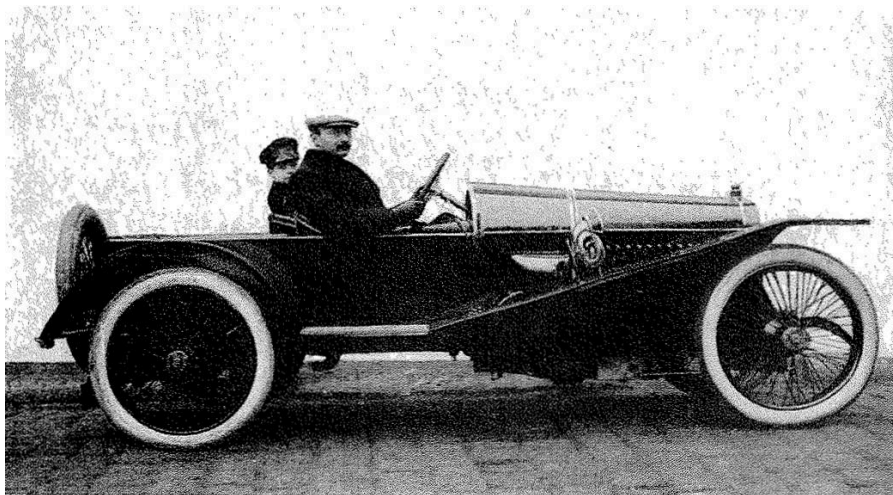
Source: Le Corbusier, 2013b

Le Corbusier developed his Modulor measurement system-a mathematical framework he devised-by tracing its origins to the construction of primitive tribal huts. He illustrated the concept of lines regulation through these early architectural forms. Le Corbusier argued that throughout history, humans have used specific measurements to ensure the stability and functionality of structures, with these measurements derived from the innate proportions and movements of the human body. He proposed that primitive people intuitively employed right angles, axes, squares, and circles when determining the dimensions of elements such as fences, huts, and the placement of altars and furnishings (Le Corbusier, 2013b).

The emphasis on measurement as a means of imposing architectural order was central to his design philosophy. To develop his ideal system, he studied the practices of primitive humans, drawing conclusions about their movements and spatial arrangements, which informed the creation of the Modulor system (Figure 6). This representation of scale and geometric order, beginning with the primitive hut, extended to more complex structures such as the Piraeus Arsenal, Persian domes, Notre-Dame Cathedral, and Capitoline Hill (Figures 4-7). The principles of measurement that Le Corbusier expressed through these representations were integrated into his own architectural projects. By employing and communicating these representations, Le Corbusier sought to establish an architecture characterised by purity, orderliness, and nobility-qualities he referred to as "regulating lines" (Le Corbusier, 2013b).
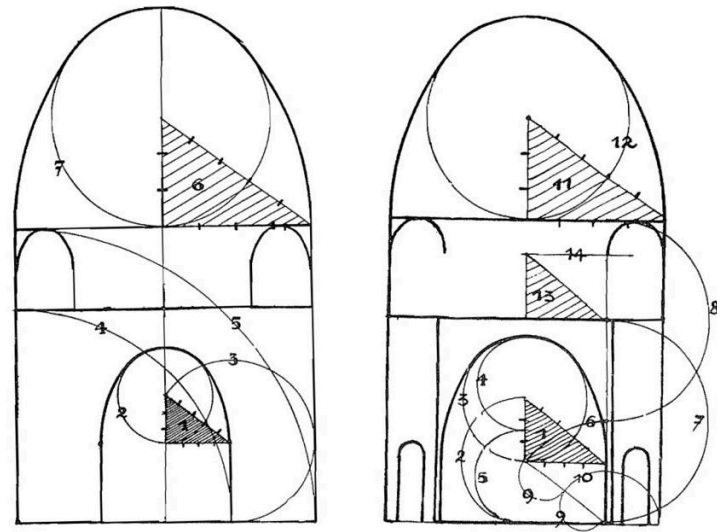
However, the effectiveness of these representations depends on the capacity of the audience to interpret them. Le Corbusier described his audience as possessing "unseeing eyes," underscoring a disconnect between universal human needs and the audience's reluctance to acknowledge these needs. He criticised this audience for being confined to traditional architectural practices, which he believed hindered their understanding of modern architectural principles. In contrast, he praised those who responded thoughtfully to his representations as cultured and discerning elite-individuals who truly appreciated and understood art. For Le Corbusier, effective communication of artistic expression was a fundamental element of architectural practice (Le Corbusier, 2013a). This approach reflects his ideal of an audience that deeply engages with and values his representations and narratives.

Figure 4
Measured Primitive Templ.

A PRIMITIVE TEMPLE

A. *Entrance.*
B. *Portico.*
C. *Peristyle.*
D. *Sanctuary.*
E. *Instruments of worship.*
F. *Vase of oblation.*
G. *Altar.*
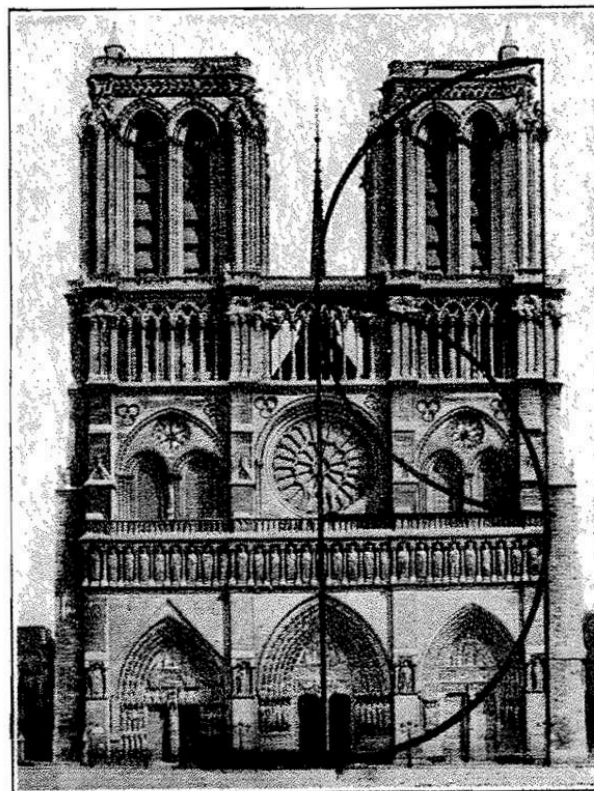
Source: Le Corbusier, 2013b

Figure 5

Persian Domes, 550-330 BC.

ACHÆMENIAN CUPOLAS

Source: Le Corbusier, 2013b

Figure 6
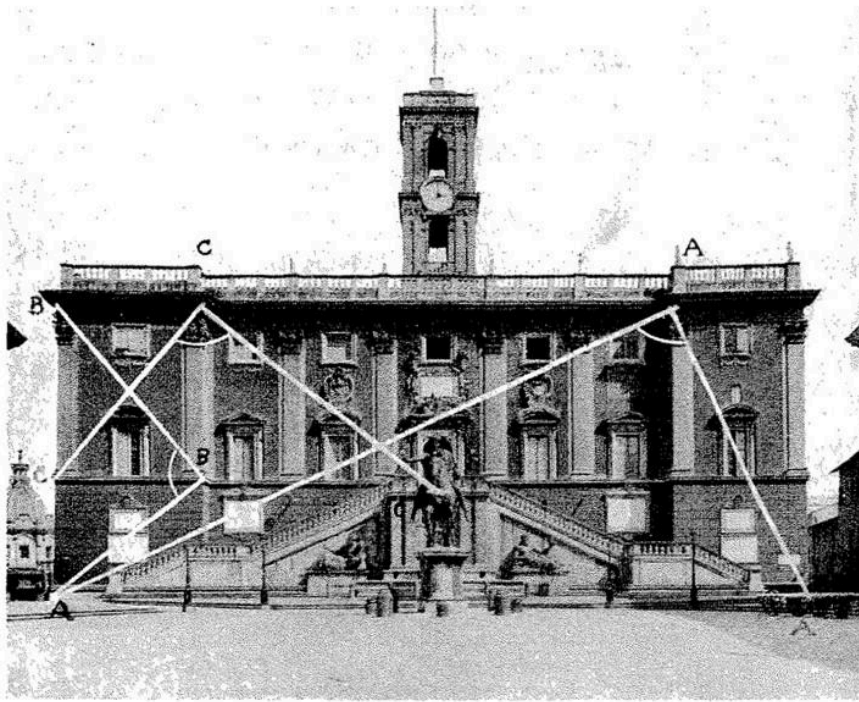
Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris.

NOTRE DAME, PARIS

Source: Le Corbusier, 2013b

Figure 7
Capitoline Hill, Rome.

THE CAPITOL, ROME

Source: Le Corbusier, 2013b

The classical conception of architectural representation, as exemplified by the works of the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier, laid the foundation for a system emphasising clarity, order and the expression of universal principles (Le Corbusier, 2013a; 2013b). Under the leadership of Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus advocated a precise and utilitarian approach, where architectural representations were shaped by industrial production and standardised forms, reflecting the essential needs of a modern, civilised society (Gropius, 2002). Le Corbusier's representations, while visually innovative, prioritised control, rationality, and the construction of an idealised modern subject-the "man-machine"-over the richness of lived human experience (Lefebvre, 1991). Such modernist representations functioned not only as design principles but also as mechanisms of knowledge that defined what was visible, thinkable, and permissible within a given historical moment. They served as instruments of power, structuring the perception and organisation of representations according to dominant ideologies (Foucault, 1980). However, this system of representation was limited by its rigid, universalist ideals, which eventually prompted movements like Archigram to introduce playful, speculative interpretations that challenged traditional narratives and opened new possibilities for architectural representation.

Adding New Meanings to Representation: Archigram

In the 1960s, a period marked by a significant departure from conventional modern architectural representations, avant-garde movements emerged, challenging established norms. This era of intense rebellion against prevailing perspectives opened new avenues for innovative forms of representation. The advent of photography, cinema, and technology has accelerated this shift, pushing architectural thought beyond

rational constraints and broadening its conceptual scope. Among the most influential of these movements was the Archigram group, whose radical visions and publications redefined architecture as a medium of speculation, imagination, and mobility (Cook, 1999).

Archigram was born out of a desire to move beyond the limitations of artistic protests that were largely confined to the bourgeois sphere. The group, composed of members referred to as "arthropods," sought to disrupt the traditional centrality of architecture in shaping urban environments. They proposed a new paradigm that challenged the dominance of individual architects over the authenticity and clarity of urban life, advocating for a decentralised approach to architectural authority. Their work introduced a form of representation that encouraged collective production and sought to expand the audience's understanding of architectural discourse. Initially targeting architecture students, Archigram's influence eventually extended beyond academic circles, becoming a significant force in long-term societal change (Sadler, 2005). The group's approach, characterised by brief yet impactful messages, led them to coin the term "archi(tecture)-(tele)gram," reflecting their commitment to the immediacy and reach of their ideas (Cook, 1999).

Active from 1961 to 1974, the Archigram group made significant contributions to architectural thought, though most of their projects remained unbuilt, existing primarily as visual concepts. Archigram aimed to push the boundaries of architecture beyond traditional bureaucratic constraints and elitist aesthetic norms. By incorporating elements from popular culture and leveraging technological advancements, Cook sought to liberate architecture from restrictive formal disciplines and artistic conventions (Cook, 1999). Their exploration of the "free form" concept led to the development of a representational style that emphasised form as much as, if not more than, content, challenging conventional architectural narratives.

One of Archigram's notable works, the "Living City" project, first exhibited in London in 1963, is of particular significance. This project, a collaborative effort by the entire group, was groundbreaking in illustrating that a city is not merely an accumulation of architectural elements but is fundamentally constituted by life itself. The exhibition catalogue emphasised that architecture constitutes only a minor portion of the urban environment, with the broader environment as the primary focus. The project sought to capture the city's dynamic vitality and the influence of the environment on human conditions (Figure 8). Archigram argued that cities should not be viewed simply as a series of plans but should be understood through their emotional and experiential dimensions (Cook, 1999). However, while exploring the phenomena of life, there is a risk of creating representations that systematise and constrain life within a controlled framework. "Living City" offered a utopian vision of urban life, in which the city was designed to transform individual experiences by detaching people from their everyday routines and providing a formative environment. As seen in Figure 9, the city was envisioned as an organism crafted by individuals outside traditional hierarchical structures, with a strong emphasis on placing humans at the centre of their environment and giving them control over all aspects of it (Cook, 1999).
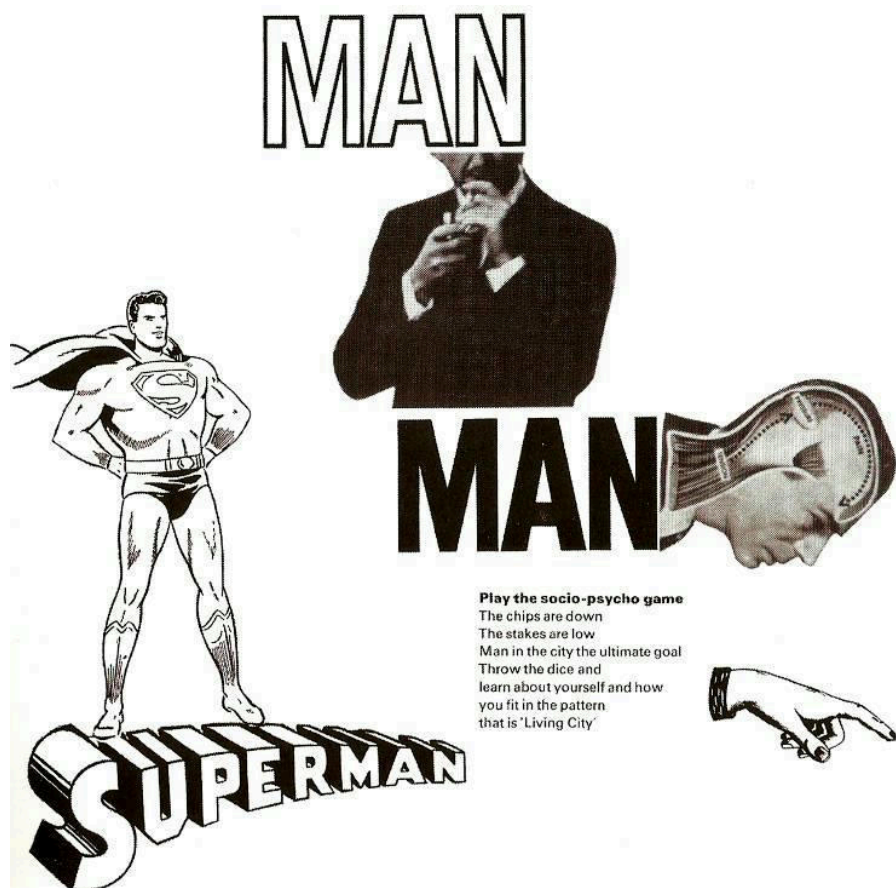
Figure 8

Archigram, 'Living City' Exhibition, 1963. Photographs of the exhibition space and the exhibition's logo.
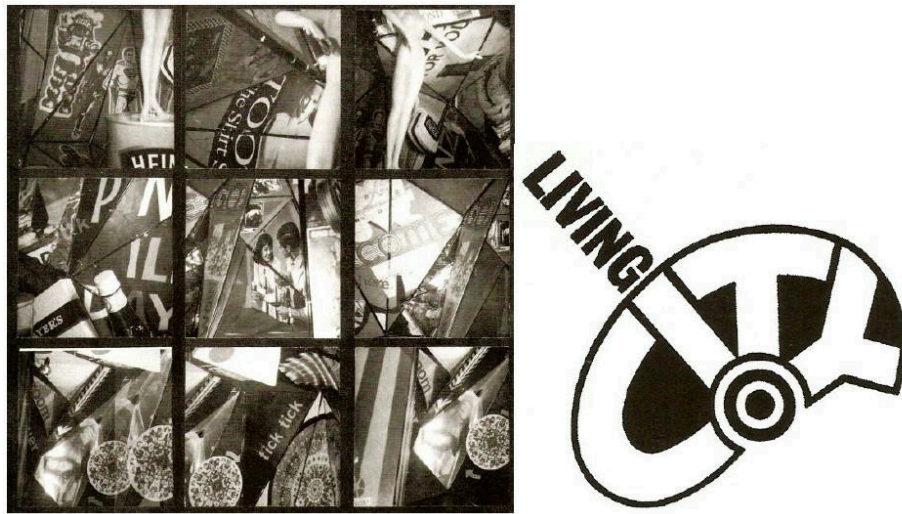
Source: Sadler, 2005

Figure 9

Peter Taylor, Montage for Man Gloop from the Living City Exhibition, 1963.

Source: Sadler, 2005

Archigram proposed a democratic techno-utopia built around the principles of consumption, emphasising concepts such as movement, speed, organic growth, disposability, and a "use-and-dispose" mentality (Pawley, 1998). Rather than glorifying objects, Archigram focuses on their rapid obsolescence and constant change. They envisioned a new culture in which consumption objects perpetually evolved-not through historical continuity but by disappearing and being replaced by new forms. Their designs were framed as forward-looking visions of urban futures, aimed at fostering a heightened sense of urban consciousness through their unique perspective (Cook, 1999).

By employing these concepts, Archigram's innovative approach to architectural representation-characterised by its challenge to traditional norms and embrace of dynamic, techno-utopian visions-marked a significant departure from established practices. They emphasised fluidity and collective engagement over static, individualistic ideals (Sadler, 2005). This avant-garde movement not only redefined the parameters of architectural discourse and laid the groundwork for future explorations of how representations interact with their viewers. While appearing radically open, such approaches may still produce their own form of consensus-a dominant mode of seeing shaped by futuristic aesthetics and technological optimism-those risks marginalising dissenting or alternative interpretations (Rancière, 2009). As the discourse on architectural representation continues to evolve, the next phase will explore how the concept of unlimited production interacts with the viewer's experience and perception, addressing the implications for both the creator and the audience in contemporary architectural practice.

Unlimited Production with the Viewer of the Representations

The process of creating meaning through representation becomes particularly intriguing when it moves beyond the traditional relationship between the signifier (the form of representation) and the signified (the concept or object it represents). When representations avoid fixating on established entities or a singular quest for origins or reality, they generate diverse and evolving experiences. This approach challenges the assumption that all viewers interpret representations uniformly. Instead, it continuously deconstructs and redefines meanings, encouraging new interpretations and transforming viewers from passive observers into active participants. In this way, the search for absolute knowledge and the reliance on rigid, fixed systems of communication have become less important and increasingly outdated (Barthes, 1977).

Michel Foucault explored this concept by examining how meaning attached to representations are influenced by prevailing power structures. He uses René Magritte's The *Treachery of Images* to illustrate his point. In this painting (Figure 10), Magritte presents an image of a pipe with the caption "This is not a pipe." This seemingly paradoxical statement creates semantic disruption that challenges the viewer's perception (Foucault, 1983). Rather than providing a stable representation of a pipe, the painting raises questions about the nature of representation itself.

Foucault elaborates on this disruption by posing a series of questions that highlight the complexities of representation: *"Is this a mere slip of the pen (a 'miswriting' similar to a misinterpretation) that will dissipate like a puff of white smoke?" This is the smallest of the uncertainties. Here are others: Are there two pipes? Would it be more accurate to say that there are two designs of the same pipe? Or is there only one pipe and one design of a pipe? Or are there two designs, each representing two different pipes? Or is one a design of a pipe while the other does not represent a pipe?"* (Foucault, 1983, p. 16). By addressing these questions, Foucault emphasised that the meaning of representation is not fixed but is subject to ongoing interpretation

and debate. This perspective underscores the dynamic nature of representations and their role in shaping and reshaping our understanding of the world (Foucault, 1983).

Figure 10
René Magritte's painting The Treachery of Images.
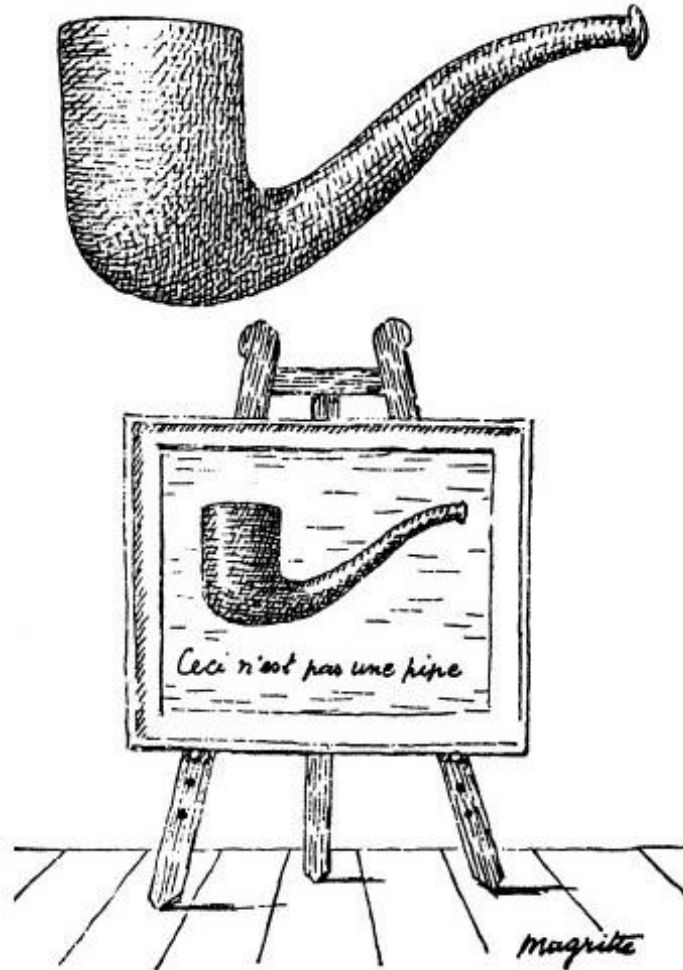
Jacques Rancière compared artistic productions that exist outside traditional representation frameworks with those that are mimetic or ethical adaptations designed for specific social purposes. Mimetic adaptations focus on realistic or conventional portrayals of subjects, while ethical adaptations are geared towards addressing social or moral issues through their content and form. According to Rancière, works that do not conform to these conventional frameworks resist having fixed meanings imposed by established representational systems. Instead, they create a barrier against such systems through their unique qualities and their detachment from the traditional mechanisms of interpretation. This disassociation from established norms introduces a level of ambiguity and opens the door to new interpretations. Such works often defy easy categorisation and challenge viewers to engage with them on a deeper, more personal level, rather than relying on predefined meanings or traditional aesthetic values. Consequently, representations, which are typically expected to convey fixed meanings and be presented uniformly to viewers, are disrupted. This disruption results in an ongoing process of change and reinterpretation, where meanings are continually

negotiated and reshaped, reflecting the evolving nature of both the artworks and the contexts in which they are experienced (Rancière, 2009).

Daniel Libeskind's approach to architectural representation reflects a deep belief in the potential of drawings to transcend their conventional, functional roles. He sees representation not only as a means of conveying technical information but also as a medium capable of expressing layered, symbolic meanings. For Libeskind, architectural drawings are embedded within a historical tradition in which they signify more than static or objective data. He views the act of drawing as a process that transcends its material form-the signifier-to uncover an inner reality. In this view, even when representation is reduced to a formal system, it does not become empty or redundant. Rather, such a system begins to act as an extension of reality, with its structure communicated through symbolic language. This perspective positions representation as a dynamic and interpretive act, one that allows architecture to engage with abstract, philosophical, and emotional dimensions beyond its physical manifestation (Libeskind & Crichton, 2004).

Libeskind's prospective highlights how architectural drawings, often viewed as purely functional or technical documents, can serve as powerful vehicles for conveying deeper, more abstract ideas. His "End Space" series (Figure 11) exemplifies this approach. In these drawings, Libeskind does not intend to depict a specific utopian, fantastical, or idealised vision of the future. Instead, the drawings evoke a sense of absolute reality that defies conventional expectations, offering an unpredictable and often unsettling view of space (Libeskind & Crichton, 2004).

Figure 11
Daniel Libeskind, Small Bigs: The Maldoror Equation and Polar Flowers, 1979.
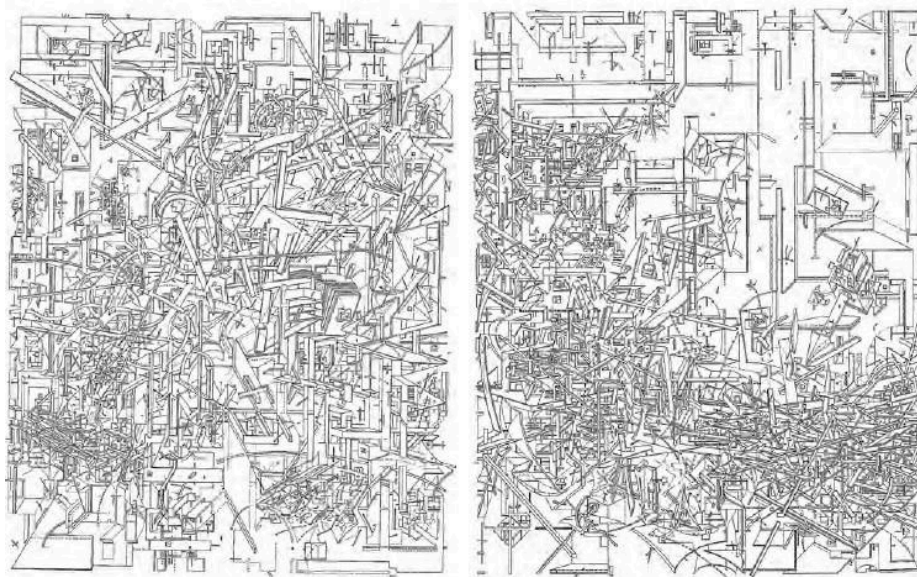
Source: Libeskind, 1991

In this series, the use of geometric and technical tools does not result in static or easily recognisable representations. Rather, it fosters a dynamic and evolving dialogue between the viewer and the drawing. The viewer is encouraged to actively engage with the images, promoting an interpretive process that transcends traditional constraints. Instead of simply providing a fixed vision of space or technology, the drawings invite multiple interpretations, creating a fluid interaction between representation and meaning (Tanyeli, 2001).

As demonstrated by thinkers like Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1983), the meanings attached to representations are not fixed but are influenced by power structures and open to constant reinterpretation. René Magritte's The Treachery of Images exemplifies this dynamic by questioning the nature of representation itself. Rancière further emphasises that artistic productions outside traditional frameworks resist imposed meanings, allowing for greater freedom in interpretation. This notion is reflected in Libeskind's architectural drawings, which defy fixed, predictable outcomes and invite viewers to actively participate in the interpretative process. Through these perspectives, representation is seen not as a static, definitive construct but as an ongoing dialogue that transforms both the work and the viewer (Rancière, 2009).

Magritte's pipe disrupts the hierarchy between signifier and signified, just as Libeskind's drawings dissolve traditional architectural hierarchies, replacing functional clarity with a web of dynamic, non-linear potentials. In both cases, representation becomes an evolving process rather than a conclusive statement-mirroring Deleuze's concept of the rhizome, which allows connections to form at any point, resists centralisation, and generates new possibilities through rupture (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Libeskind's architectural gestures embody Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the Body without Organs-a conceptual space where organisation emerges from minor, relational flows rather than fixed structures. Likewise, Magritte's semantic dissonance exemplifies the Deleuzian virtual: not something unreal but a reservoir of latent potential whose actualisation is always contingent, context-dependent, and unpredictable (Deleuze, 1994). These representations invite viewers to move beyond passive observation and engage actively with a shifting field of meaning.

Conclusion

In the modern era, architectural representation has evolved into a potent medium for conveying meanings that transcend the mere depiction of form and function. These representations not only reflect the realities of their time but also gesture towards broader, often abstract ideas and ideals. For instance, the Bauhaus school infused its representations with social determinism, aiming to redefine architecture's role in shaping society (Tanyeli & Köksal, 2002). Le Corbusier, on the other hand, employed his representations to articulate an architectural language grounded in order, clarity, and a utopian vision of progress (Le Corbusier, 2013b). Archigram further advanced this trajectory by deconstructing traditional representations, challenging established architectural narratives, and envisioning futuristic, often utopian cities that questioned societal norms and proposed alternative ways of living (Cook, 1999).

The evolution of architectural representation mirrors broader cultural and intellectual shifts. Le Corbusier, with tools like the Modulor system, saw representation as a means of reshaping society, reflecting his belief in architecture's potential to influence human behaviour and foster a rational, orderly world (Le Corbusier, 2013). Meanwhile, Archigram's speculative representations offered a radical departure, using visionary drawings to critique existing social structures and imagine alternative futures (Sadler, 2004). Their work exemplifies how representations can both critique the present and project potential futures. Similarly, Daniel Libeskind's architectural drawings challenge traditional frameworks by emphasising the potential of representation to convey abstract, transformative ideas. His End Space series, for instance, disrupts conventional expectations and invites viewers to engage with a dynamic and evolving dialogue, reflecting his belief in the power of representation to provoke deeper contemplation and reimagine spatial experience (Tanyeli, 2001). Collectively, these approaches demonstrate how architectural representations can transcend mere depiction to engage with broader intellectual and cultural dialogues.

Le Corbusier's modernist approach aligns with Foucault's notion of disciplinary power-his use of standardised forms, regulating lines, and the Modulor system constructs a normative vision of the "ideal" human subject, embedding control and order into the very fabric of architectural space (Foucault, 1983). Archigram, by contrast, reflects Rancière's critique of representational consensus: their speculative, pop-culture-infused projects resist fixed meanings and hierarchical authorship, proposing instead an open, participatory visual language that decentralises architectural authority and disrupts traditional social roles (Rancière, 2009). Libeskind's fragmented, non-linear drawings most vividly illustrate Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the rhizome and the Body without Organs, where meaning emerges through rupture, multiplicity, and becoming. Unlike Le Corbusier's totalising vision or Archigram's techno-utopian optimism, Libeskind embraces ambiguity and indeterminacy, inviting viewers into a continuous process of interpretation. Together, these architects demonstrate the evolving politics of representation-shifting from modernist control to radical openness, to a post-structuralist embrace of complexity and territorialisation (Deleuze, 1994; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

This study has demonstrated how architectural representation has developed through history by examining the works of key architects and groups. By analysing figures such as Le Corbusier, Archigram, and Daniel Libeskind, it becomes evident that each era and ideology shaped distinct modes of representation-whether as a tool of control, a site of resistance, or a space of philosophical inquiry (Cook, 1999; Frampton, 2007; Tanyeli, 2001). Over time, however, representation has undergone a significant transformation. It is increasingly detached from fixed meanings and is no longer confined to the creator's original intentions. It is open to multiple interpretations shaped by the viewer's context and perspective (Barthes, 1977; Berger, 1972; Rancière, 2009). As representations circulate and evolve, the meanings they carry shift accordingly, fostering new dialogues and interactions between the viewer and the work. Although institutional forces may attempt to stabilise meaning, the inherently fluid nature of architectural representation ensures that meanings are continuously questioned, challenged, and redefined. In this dynamic process, viewers become active participants in meaning-making, engaging with representations as living, interpretive texts rather than static visuals (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Foucault, 1983). Thus, architectural representation stands as both a reflection of its time and a catalyst for future discourse-ever-changing, contested, and deeply embedded in cultural and intellectual movements.

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