Adrian Stokes: Surface Suicide[1]
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Architecture Post-Mortem: The Diastolic Architecture of Decline, Dystopia, and Death 2013
Ed. Donald Kunze

Architecture and death: Why indeed does architecture keep shooting itself in the … well, not just the foot? Its inability to be a relevant profession, its incapacity to compensate its practitioners fairly, its refusal to come to the table of cultural relevance after 9/11, its being DOA in the global discourse of ecology—all of these absences indicate that it is time to put architecture on the couch. Could it be that there is a "death-drive" imbedded not just in its practitioners, but in its formal structure, something unavoidably present (or absent) that makes its irrelevance understandable?

Slavoj Žižek, the analyst who most quickly comes to mind for this job, does excellent work in diagnosing the manner in which our desires, exceeding our ability for codification, come back in the form of the paradox. His analysis of 9/11, of Hitchcock films, and of fables demonstrates that the cultural objects we put out there bear witness to self-inflicted wounds: Beware what you wish for. But, for a more probing look at architecture itself, there is an even more provocative guide—the British painter and critic, Adrian Stokes (1902-72). Stokes' contribution to architectural analysis is not just the psychoanalytic framework he brought to architectural criticism, but the application of psychoanalysis to a theory of form. Moreover, he broadens the notion of architectural form to go beyond proportion, geometry, shape and spatial sequence to include a re-reading of the architectural surface, one that sees the visual plane of architecture as unleashing another type of spatiality—one that is metaphorical, symbolic and animated by our projected psyche. Going beyond aesthetic, neo-Kantian "empathy theory" circulating at the beginning of the twentieth century, which explores the identification of the viewing subject with the viewed object, Stokes' intense reading of buildings collapses their surfaces with his own vision and allows this over-determined plane to be one of mutual identification. And what he experiences there is a full gamut

of aggressive, death-drive motivated part-objects of his inner world. In *Smooth and Rough* (1951), he writes:

> We partake of an inexhaustible feeding mother (a fine building announces), though we have bitten, torn, dirtied and pinched her, though we thought we have lost her utterly, to have destroyed her utterly in fantasy and act. We are grateful to stone buildings for their stubborn material, hacked and hewed but put together carefully, restored in better shape than those pieces that the infant imagined he had chewed or scattered, for which he searched. Much crude rock stands rearranged; now in the form of apertures, of suffusion at the sides of the apertures, the bites, the tears, the pinches are miraculously identified with the recipient passages of the body, with the sense organs, with features; as well with the good mother which we would eat more mercifully for preservation and safety within, and for our own.[2]

Stokes is operating in a psychoanalytic context that explicitly draws on Melanie Klein, but is also consistent with the work of others engaged in psychoanalytic thought— in particular, Lacan but also Lacan's legacy in the work of Gilles Deleuze—whose theories of self-representation, image formation, and visuality are prefigured by Stokes and indebted to Klein. They, too, subsume the death instinct in the context of an epistemology of image flatness and surface effects. They, likewise, endow the surface with a psychic depth that makes it highly unstable in its wavering between representational thinness and conceptual thickness and link that instability, albeit in different if not opposing ways, with the death instinct. It is Stokes, however, who links this analysis to architecture.

> The reflections (of Quattrocento buildings) in the mirror not only contrast with the face of the stone in terms of their mobility and light and shade. I would say that they belong to the architectural impression since they evince further the already-existing parable of the stone. Such strong art collects surrounding phenomena within its own terms: the visual dogma becomes entirely satisfying. When objects of the senses compel in the

> percipient the profoundest emotions of the contemplative state, the soul is at peace. We then have the sense that what we are looking at has rolled up the long succession of the mind in spatial, instantaneous form: and that the relationship between the objects seen, exemplify (*sic*) a perfect harmony of inner and outer things.[3]

Klein

Melanie Klein was one of the few immediate successors of Freud to defend and elaborate his theory of the death instinct; indeed, she suggests that the super-ego, as avatar of the death drive, is evident much earlier than Freud's Oedipus complex. While children can't relate to whole objects like the father or the mother before the phallic stage and the Oedipus complex, they could, Klein says, relate to "part objects" well before this. These part objects, powerful, threatening entities, aren't merely aspects of the internalized father, but an entire world of both paternal and maternal attributes—breasts, nipples, tongues, penises, etc.—that aggressively attack the child. The mechanisms of defense required to control these domineering figures are equally violent. For Freud, the main mechanism of defense is reparation, but for Klein, there are four: introjection, projection, identification, and splitting. Introjection, based on the earliest oral impulses to eat the object, occurs as the ego wants to gather into itself everything that is good; projection, characteristic of paranoia, occurs as the ego disowns its own impulses and attributes them to the exterior world. Identification in one direction takes the object as its model and thus defends against its loss (or its rivalry with it) and, in the other direction, takes the subject as its model and recreates the object in its image, resulting in narcissism. The splitting of the ego, associated with fetishism, involves the bifurcation of the ego into the normal part that attends to reality and the other libidinal part that detaches itself from reality and plays its fantasy out.

Klein replaced Freud's three phases of the id with her structure of two positions, the paranoid-schizophrenic and the depressive. In the first, the child cannot take in whole objects extended in time and space but only the part-objects of immediate sensory experience. These objects are either satisfying (as in the good breast that provides the milk) or frustrating (as in the

bad breast that is denied). This position is characterized by the ego splitting into its good and bad parts or by confusion with the object in projective identification. This is schizophrenic because the child ricochets between bliss and anger paranoia and euphoria as the same object is rewarding and frustrating. The second position assumes a child who can recognize whole objects, especially the mother, as complete and enduring, as possessor of both the good and the bad breast. This is depressing to the child not only because it learns about the non-purity of what it considered to be "good," but because it apprehends its own destructive desires in attacking the (bad) mother or the breast. This is the onslaught of guilt, but also of a healthy, realistic approach to the exterior world, in which the ego is integrated and exposed to the conflict of the contradictory impulses. While the depressive position is seen as more "mature," both operate and fluctuate in the life of the psyche.

The implication of Klein's work on child psychology for visual theory is not spelled out by her, but she exploits those observations of Freud regarding ego and perception that point to visual organization and the logic of the surface as a contested territory of meaning. One of Freud's observations is that the ego is the perceptual organ in both the direction of the inner world and the direction of the outer world; i.e., the ego's essential role is the perceptual (not merely intellectual) mediation between what the person thinks to be outside itself and inside itself. In this, the ego is depicted as the layer dividing inside and out; later, Freud writes that the ego is the outer crust of the id. Likewise, implicit in Klein's work is Freud's idea that sexual drive cannot be distinguished from its representation; lust does not exist prior to and independent of its object; it is of and on the object. And finally and most importantly, she develops Freud's notion of fantasy. Fantasy was a peripheral concept in Freud's cosmology but underlies many of his assumptions regarding the ego's ability to synthesize the pleasure principle and the reality principle. He writes, "With the introduction of the reality principle one species of thought-activity was split-off; it was kept free from reality-testing and remained subordinated to the pleasure principle alone. This activity is *phantasying*."[4] In Freud's view, instinct can only be perceived by its mental representation, the fantasy.

But Klein goes farther than Freud, depicting an ego that is almost entirely described by its image management. The floating, swarming bodily parts that are the objects of the child's inner world are in constant representational exchange as they are projected and introjected, split and identified in fantasy. Moreover, because the young child has no real sense of itself as an integrated ego, the vagaries of these fantasies don't just project from the child, they *are* the child. Thus, both what the child perceives of the outer world and experiences of itself in the inner world are fully fleshed, in/on the layer of the image.

Lacan (and Deleuze)

Before elaborating on the manner in which Stokes "architecturalizes" these ideas, it is worth exploring what Jacques Lacan does with them, with an aside regarding Deleuze's uptake. Both famously rejected much of Klein's work for its dogmatic analytical prescriptions, but less well known is their indebtedness to her work on part-objects and fantasy and the complex manner they enact the death instinct. Lacan, as we know, was also one of the few figures to embrace the death instinct and Deleuze, both before and after his work with Félix Guattari, accepts but redirects this concept, making it part of the web of his monism.

Klein's influence on Lacan is most evident in his depiction of the Imaginary, the pre-verbal register whose spatial logic is organized around the same disembodied, part-objects depicted by Klein. His contribution to a schema of surface engagement, however, rests equally on what he accepts and rejects of this work. The agreement rests on his elaboration of how part-objects operate in the earliest stage of infant development, the Imaginary.[5] In this period, a child who does not yet have an ego or *imago* to locate or originate images of itself experiences a world of bodies and organs, Kleinian part-objects, which lack a privileged point of view. As Lacan describes, "[These objects] have one common feature in my elaboration of them—they have no specular image, or, in other words, alterity. It is what enables them to be 'stuff', or rather the lining …. It is to this object that cannot be grasped in the mirror that the specular image lends its clothes."[6] Their image is neither in the child (who has no concept of self) nor outside itself (which is undifferentiated

from the image), but it is "imaged" nevertheless. It then "surfacizes" in his depiction of the "mirror stage," associated with the Imaginary. When the child recognizes its image in the mirror and experiences the fundamental gap between this image (whole) and the experience of self (unformed), the fundamental condition of narcissism and aggression gets placed on an ever-so-brittle, infinitely thin (and ultimately still, placeless) surface. In this, Lacan offers a more explicit rendering of image-as-surface than had Klein.

The disagreement with Klein rests, then, on the status of fantasy. For her, fantasy is the particularly imaginative, creative way the child "sees," interprets, and determines reality. For Lacan, fantasy is a problematic escape from reality, and the part-objects that make it up are essentially a system of "absence," where fantasy stands in for the missing, real object. Fantasies, as "imaginary identifications," block the chain of free association and resist the unfolding of speech; they give a false appearance of coherence. Lacan sees fantasy as "never anything more than the screen that conceals something quite primary, something determinate in the function of repetition," something that blocks access to the individual's unconscious.[7] Because fantasies organize around a singular, dominating theme, the goal of therapy becomes "*la traversée du fantasme*," the crossing over of the fundamental fantasy allowing the subject access to language and the Other as desire.[8] As Žižek describes Lacan's position:

> [F]antasy designates the subject's "impossible" relation to (object) *a*, to the object-cause of its desire. Fantasy is usually conceived as a scenario that realizes the subject's desire. This elementary definition is quite adequate, on condition that we take it *literally*: what the fantasy stages is not a scene in which desire is fulfulled [*sic*], fully satisfied, but on the contrary, a scene that realizes, stages, the desire as such. The fundamental point of psychoanalysis is that desire is not something given in advance, but something that has to be constructed—and it is precisely the role of fantasy to give the coordinates of the subject's desire, to specify its object, to locate the position the subject assumes in it. It is only through fantasy that the subject is

constituted as desiring: *through fantasy, we learn how to desire*.[9] [all italics the author's]

Deleuze is interesting as an extension of the Freud-Klein-Lacan line of death instinct-surface-fantasy lineage, although he has a much looser connection to what Stokes offers this debate. For Deleuze, the pressure is put on the surface changes, becoming less visual and more abstract. In his *The Logic of Sense*, he adopts a view of part-objects that he inherits from Klein but breaks with her when he insists that the child never outgrows the chaos of the part-object position. Rather, part-objects are folded into one another in a way that they never fully converge or separate with clear boundaries. This seamless manifold, this "simulacra," has no representation attached to it; it is neither an image nor a fantasy; rather, it is a "fantasm," or, as Deleuze likes to brand it, "a neutral infinitive" (to drive, to kill, etc.). The neutral infinitive, setting in motion real and imagined causes, is only registered in effects, and the effects are only registered on/as a "surface phenomena." Deleuze writes, "The phantasm is a surface phenomenon and, moreover, a phenomenon which is formed at a certain moment in the development of surfaces." Likewise, the death instinct, registered as fantasm, moves between real and imagined, erogenous and desexualized registers as "a metaphysical surface … on which the devouring-devoured objects of the depth are projected."[10] It is this surface that re-emerges, in his later work with Guattari, as the plan(e) of immanence. As he writes in *A Thousand Plateaus*, "There are only haecceities, affects, subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages .... We call this plane, which knows only longitudes and latitudes, speeds and haecceities, the plane of consistency or composition (as opposed to a plan(e) of organization or development)."[11] As abstracted, eventized, and non-visual as this is, the surface is still the location of the net catching the thick "ideational material."

Stokes

Adrian Stokes cannot be seen as Lacanian (or Deleuzian). He was a contemporary of Lacan, but he was Klein's patient, aesthetic heir and advocate. Unlike Stokes, who saw fantasy as beneficial

and reparatory, Lacan saw it as a blockage. Nevertheless, Stokes' belief in architecture's definitive surfaces marking inside off from outside unleashes the full play of fantasy and produces a remarkable array of connections that are not Kleinian-specific in their unfurling of thick vision and thin surface. Moreover, despite his overt espousal of Klein, his enactment of his/her thoughts in his trance-like writings offer monologues with which any analyst could have a field day. Motivated by a particular Kleinian ideology, they are *sui generis and* representative a class of fantasy explorations that go beyond him. His assessments, as he positions himself in front of a building, can be very positive, but it is a positive of having the death instinct, the "Other," made formally manifest.

In *Smooth and Rough* (1951), one book, along with *Venice: An Aspect of Art* (1944), and *Inside Out* (1947),[12] of a trilogy that is Stokes' psychoanalytic "coming out" in the very traditional world of art history, he offers this passage:

> The building, which provokes by its beauty a positive response, resuscitates an early hunger or greed in the disposition of morsels that are smooth with morsels that are rough, or of wall spaces with the apertures; an impression, I have said, composed as well from other architectural sensations. To repeat: it is as if those apertures had been torn in that body by our revengeful teeth so that we experience as a beautiful form, and indeed as indispensable shelter also, the outcome of sadistic attacks, fierce yet smoothed, healed into a source of health which we would take inside us and preserve there unharmed for the source of our goodness: as if also … the smooth body of the wall-face, or the smooth vacancy within the apertures, were the shining breast, while the mouldings, the projections, the rustications, the tiles, were the head, the feeding nipple of that breast.[13]

Another Stokes passage from *Venice: An Aspect of Art* is also illuminating. *Venice* is of particular interest because, writing during the war, he worked wholly from photographs he had previously taken of buildings in Venice. Besides the fact that his attraction to Venice rests on its being a city of façades, he doesn't hide the fact that he is talking about the buildings' two–

dimensional, black and white flat representations; indeed, he is liberated by their transformed abstraction. The photo's surface denies a "natural" hierarchy of the depicted objects' meanings. And for the most part, his photos as well as his general interest are of ordinary buildings; he is unmoved by architectural icons. He writes of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, "Much more is brought upon the surface. Pilasters, with their arch moldings lying upon the bright marble wall-space, are the inner dark ferment in architectural form on the marble. The darkness of the windows is like a residue both of the inside of the church and of the dark canal. The base of stone is entirely conjoined with the canal as a bank is formed by the stream." Or, describing "A Venetian House of the 17th Century," he writes:

> The monolith Isterian jambs to the door give added density to the layer upon layer of thin transverse bricks and even to the worn horizontal planks of canal door. Yet brick and wood seem to partake of the stone from their intercourse. These static things appear teeming things arrested and ordered for the eye. In terms of distinctness, we have the sense of things fused.[14]

Stokes was an eccentric. He got to his aesthetic ideals before his analysis with Klein through his own need to "get out of himself" (his fear of his homosexuality), and to have the external world reflect his inner world (himself as other). He speaks of his aesthetic awakening when he first arrived in Italy through the Mont Cenis tunnel, where everything, unlike the gray morass of London, was clear, distinct, other, and the proper manifold for self-discovery/projection. This tendency is evident in Stokes' article of 1945, "Concerning Art and Metapsychology," in which he argues that Freud's pleasure principle should be expanded to include greater emphasis on the role the external world plays in our fantasies. As he stated, "It is perhaps astonishing that no general concept derived from the omnipresence of the external world as such, other than the reality principle, figures in psycho-analytic metapsychology."[15] The dialectic between Stokes' inner world and his outer world was active and needy. His work, then, while it gains intellectual rigor and psychoanalytic credits as it gets filtered through Klein is far too singular to represent a definite

analysis of architecture, self, or culture. Rather, his struggle, perhaps because it was so personal, leads to such obsessive analyses of how we engage with the architectural object that they reveal something primary about how architecture affects us.

Stokes' paradigm in all of the arts was work whose spatial essence was presented flatly and immediately for the eye, whether it be the stone of a sculpture or building façade, or the pigment and color of a painting. His hope for objects was that they would demonstrate and make us experience their otherness; only in its otherness would we both lose ourselves and ironically, find our selves.

> The new-born baby soon becomes aware that neither his mother nor the surrounding world is an extension of himself. Henceforth, to his dying day, there remains the huge division between himself and objects, people or things. Throughout life, we seek to rival the externality of things. The world as we perceive it, our animal habitat, is the language of every passing mood or contemplative state. Indeed, without this canvas on which to apply ourselves, by which we project and transmute as well as satisfy more direct biological needs, we cannot conceive the flow of the mind any more than the activity of the body. The body is obviously meaningless without a further external world: but so, too, is the mind. Mental as well as physical life is a laying out of strength within, in rivalry, as it were, with the laid-out instantaneous world of space.[16]

And vision was the sense par excellence for negotiating/providing this otherness. Only the eye allowed an immediate (whole, unsplit, unsequential) grasp of the object, and only in this grasping of and onto the object could the subject find the mirror, the essence of his/her inner world, his/her psyche. Vision was also appreciated as a physical phenomenon. The body he noted was literally present in the physical housing of the eye in the torso. All of the ocular muscles, mucous and nerve-endings were experienced in the act of seeing and prevented sight from merely "floating" around ambivalently. But ironically, or, again, dialectically, vision, as he liked to point out, is the one sense whose *effects* are not experienced as belonging to our bodies. "I sometimes have the feeling

that what I see out of my eyes is a projection of the pictures in my head as if I were a cinema reel and the outside world a screen on which the film is projected, put in movement and enlarged."[17] Likewise, the supposed flatness of vision was pivotal. Using but transforming the British empirical tradition of George Berkley and John Locke—in which vision's two-dimensionality made it inferior to and dependent on touch—Stokes, like John Ruskin, *valorized* the flatness as an essential condition for its ability to symbolize and promote fantasy. It allowed what was looked at to be not itself, but something other. Likewise, vision comes to us immediately. As such, it is not mediated by our (internal, psychologically suspect) thoughts, but comes to us purely. At the same time, however, all sensations were lodged in the eye. This was part of his kinaesthetic insistence that vision was superior to touch—it absorbed the other four senses into itself. This is his fascination with rough and smooth. As he writes in the book of this name, "In employing smooth and rough as generic terms of architectural dichotomy, I am better able to preserve both the oral and the tactile notions that underlie the visual."[18]

Certain formal preferences result from Stokes' notion of vision, objective identification, and surface preference. Paintings should never be about their composition or their perspectival depiction of deep space; rather, they should register their layering. That is, the important relationships aren't those that operate across the lateral surface of the painting, but those that imply a layered relationship from front (the eye of the viewer) to back (an implicit space in/on/behind the canvas in which actual, literal surface always dominates). Color should be "surface" color, not "film" color, where the former is understood to be "out there," located on the object and not, like film color, experienced as floating a-spatially in our mind's eye.[19] In sculpture, "carving" was better than "modeling," where the former, carving, fights back (in layers and depth) and challenges the ego while the latter, modeling, allows the ego to willfully shove things around.

His love of stone was the origin of his love of carving, although both stone and carving transcend this literal start. Limestone, itself "the link between the organic and inorganic worlds," exemplified the essence of otherness, capable of being presented instantaneously, *via* its surface.

"The compactness of (the) grain causes the purer limestone's to be not only robust as we have seen, but also to posses in many cases this flesh-like glow,"[20] a proper, Quattrocento appreciation of stone comes with "adulation of the plain smooth, but tense surface" … it "reflects light preeminently."[21] Thus his love of the sculptor Agostino di Duccio, whose *bas-reliefs* ensured that not the figure, but the stone through the medium of the figure, was the content of the work. Carving was an admiration of the tough, durable "otherness" of an object, whether words, landscapes or buildings. This was his affinity with Ezra Pound, whom he met in Rimini; they both wanted words as well as images to be hard, physical and "cut like stone."

In architecture, space is denigrated; inside and outside must collapse on a surface; all must proceed from the vertical plane, pressing from it or on it. Stokes dismissed modernism's interest in plasticity and space, associated by him with "modeling." In architecture, as well as sculpture, the textures are paramount; the juxtaposition of rough and smooth is particularly meaningful for its evocation of the breast and the nipple. Apertures in a façade, as the moment of exchange between the inside and outside of a building, are of significance not because we want to see the inside but because it symbolizes the psychic interior on a flat, objective surface.[22] The rough and smooth textures around apertures—always a moment of excitement for Stokes—resonate as a bodily orifice with particular psychoanalytic, part-object meaning.

Again in *Smooth and Rough*, Stokes writes:

> Colours, textures, smooth and rough planes, apertures, symbolize reciprocity, a thriving in a thorough partnership. The landscape's center is fashioned by plain houses in a cobbled street, by the dichotomy of wall-face and opening. Dichotomy is the unavoidable means of architectural effect. It has**,** of course, many embodiments, a sense of growth and a sense of thrust, for instance, heaviness and lightness, sheerness and recession or projection, rectangularity and rotundity, lit surface and shadowed surfaces, a thematic contrast between two principal textures, that is to say, between smooth and rough. I take this last to symbolize all, because it best marks the

> "bite" of architectural pleasure upon the memory: the dichotomy that permeates our final impression.[23]

And finally, what we know already—that architecture is the epitome of all the arts for its operating in all of these aesthetic registers. In *Three Essays on the Painting of Our Time* (1961), Stokes writes, "We will agree that the work of art is a construction. Inasmuch as man both physically and psychologically is a structure carefully amassed, a coalescence and a pattern, a balance imposed upon opposite drives, building is likely to be not only the most common but the most general symbol of our living and breathing."[24] (At times, this analogy takes on an anthropomorphic cast, but the deeper analysis investigates architecture's unique capacity to demonstrate—not through its shape or iconography but rather through its material, textures and apertures—its own dialectic nature of inside-out transference.)

Žižek and the Sublime Object of Ideology

As Stokes "positions" himself (in the Kleinian *and* physical sense), he is proving the Lacanian dictum that "it is the role of fantasy to give the coordinates of the subject's desire, to specify its object, to locate the position the subject assumes in it."[25] Standing before architecture, Stokes allows his fantasy to visually attach himself to the building surface. The death drive is instantiated twice: by the aggressive part-objects that fill this fantasy, making it thick; and by the nature of that surface that can't, given its brittleness and thinness, be occupied or nurtured. Here, the nature of that plane can be seen in its Lacanian light: a screen that is "never anything more than the screen that conceals something quite primary, something determinate in the function of repetition."[26] The primacy is, of course, desire: "fantasy stages … a scene that realizes the desire as such, and desire is, of course, the death drive.[27] "We could say that … desire structured through fantasy is a defense against the desire of the Other, against this 'pure', trans-fantasmic desire (i.e. the death drive in its pure form)."[28]

In other words, Stokes physically and mentally stages the enactment of Lacan's fantasy. They both indeed use the same language. Stokes' "the work of art is a construction. Inasmuch as

man both physically and psychologically is a structure carefully amassed,"[29] meets Lacan's "Before we intervene in reality by means of the *particular* act, we must accomplish the *purely formal* act of converting reality as something which is objectively given into reality as 'effective', as something produced, 'posited' by the subject."[30]

But the "Lacanian" quotes above are not actually Lacan's, although they properly explain him; they are Žižek's paraphrase of Lacan. Žižek makes Lacan accessible, but he also sets Lacan up for his own use, and hence in these "quotes," we have a hinge linking Žižek-speaking-Lacan to Žižek himself, a hinge helpful in letting Žižek into this conversation on his own terms. Žižek, for all his admiration for and his reliance on Lacan and his Imaginary-Symbolic-Real triad, takes fantasy to a slightly different place—one that is useful for us as we circle back to the initial, culturally oriented architectural suicides (DOA in the economy; DOA at social vision; DOA at historical critique). For Žižek, fantasy, for all its misrepresentations, is, more or less, all there is. Yes, fantasy is a screen that needs to be stepped through to access the linguistic register and the "Other," but since the other side of this screen is the big Void (the Other, the death drive, the *objet petit a*), it is, for Žižek, the only representation of self that we have.

> So "we" (who have already "gone through the fantasy") can see that there is nothing where the consciousness thought that it saw something, but our knowledge is already mediated by this "illusion" in so far as it aims at the empty space which makes the illusion possible. In other words, if we subtract from the illusion the illusion itself (its positive content) what remains is not simply nothing but a determinate nothing, the void in the structure which opened the space of the "illusion."[31]

As Žižek says, in the opposition between dream and reality, fantasy is on the side of reality. "We can rephrase here the old 'hippy' motto of the 1960s: reality is for those who cannot support the dream. 'Reality' is a fantasy-construction which enables us to mask the Real of our desire."[32] Because it is the only place that we can see/stage ourselves, it is worth our, and Žižek's, full attention; this is his work on popular culture. This screen—in being more than psycho-

biological; in being cultural—is, in Žižek's hands, the work of ideology; or, rather, it *is* ideology.[33] The screen is capitalism's "coordinating apparatus."

> It is now clear how we use this notion of fantasy in the domain of ideology proper: here also "there is no class relationship," society is always traversed by an antagonistic split which cannot be integrated into symbolic order. And the stake of social-ideological fantasy is to construct a vision of society which *does* exist, a society in which the relation between its parts is organic, complementary. The clearest case is, of course, the corporist vision of Society as an organic Whole, a social Body in which the different classes are like extremities, members each contribution to the Whole according to its function—we may say the 'Society as a corporate Body' is the fundamental ideology of fantasy.[34]

As Žižek points out, the surplus of the Real is identical with Marx's notion of surplus value.

So what then of architecture? Žižek asks: "[H]ow does an empirical, positively given object become an object of desire; how does it begin to contain some X, some unknown quality, something which is 'in it more than it' and makes it worthy of our desire?"[35] Does architecture answer this by presenting us with its multi-layered but compressed self? Stokes, after all, isn't just fantasizing in any old place. Architecture was—this is his big claim—the art that singularly produced fantasy. His books are his heartfelt desire to convince us of this, and his case is convincing: we do stare at façades; we do search rather desperately for meaning there. And we do, as we are meant to, given that the structure is about the denial of desire, feel guilty about this. It becomes almost impossible, reading Stokes, to not believe that architecture is Žižek's sublime object of ideology, as described in the book of that name: "an ordinary, everyday object which, quite by chance, finds itself occupy the place of… *das Ding*, the impossible real object of desire."[36] And it has this place because we *want* it to. As he continues the above quote: "It is its structural place—and not its intrinsic qualities that confer on it its sublimity."

To go back to our original question: Is there something intrinsic to architecture in its form that inscribes its own death-wish?" The answer, following Žižek, is "no." But we certainly take pleasure in watching it do its *Ding*.

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———, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (Verso: London, 1989).

Notes

1 Portions of this article have appeared in "Adrian Stokes: The Architecture of Phantasy and the Phantasy of Architecture," in *Architecture and Psychoanalysis: The Annuals of Psychoanalysis,* 33, ed. Jerome A. Winer, James William Anderson, and Elizabeth Danze (Chicago, 2005)

2 Adrian Stokes, *Venice: An Aspect of Art*, 2, *The Critical Writings of Adrian Stokes* (London, 1978), 241–242. This is an anthology in three volumes of most of Stokes' writings. (The name of the original books authored by Stokes will be identified in the text or footnotes, but volumes and pages in subsequent notes refer to the anthology and its particular volume.)

3 Ibid., 2, 111.

4 Sigmund Freud, *Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning*, 12 (1911–1913), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London, 1953–74), 222.

5 Lacan's language is very similar to Klein's when he says: "The very delimitation of the 'erogenous zone' that the drive isolates from the function's metabolism … is the result of a cut that takes advantage of the anatomical characteristic of a margin or border: the lips, 'the enclosure of the teeth', the rim of the anus, the penile groove, the vagina, and the slit formed by the eyelids, not to mention the hollow of the ear (I am avoiding going into embryological detail here)." Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian

Unconscious," *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London, 2006), 692. I am indebted to Simone Brott for much of the attention focused on Lacan's "surface" epistemology.

6 Ibid., 315–6.

7 Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (New York, 1998), 60.

8 Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, NJ, 1997) 61, 62, 72.

9 Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), 6.

10 Stokes, *Critical Writings*, 2, 240.

11 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis, MN, 1987), 266.

12 These three texts, in the middle of Stokes' writing career, were a transition from his purely aesthetic work—in which he slowly incorporated Klein's unacknowledged influence on top of his own earlier views shaped mostly by his reading of Francis Herbert Bradley, the idealist philosopher—to these where he no longer hid his indebtedness to Klein nor the fact that he was promoting the benefits of psychoanalytic work. Herbert Read and E. H. Gombrich, leading art historians at that time, were interested in psychology but not psychoanalysis. Stokes' up-until-then rising star stalled with this overt referencing.

13 Stokes, *Critical Writings*, 2, 243.

14 Ibid., 104–5.

15 Adrian Stokes, “Concerning Art and Metapsychology,” *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 26, 3/4 (1945), 178.

16 Stokes, *Critical Writings*, 2, 137.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 243.

19 This is related to his appreciation of Italy over London. London’s buildings and environment floated in his mind’s eye; it was the (negative) paradigm of film colour.

20 Stokes, *Critical Writings*, 2, 202.

21 Ibid., 53.

22 Later he seemingly saw that this good/bad polarity was itself “unhealthy” (split) and advocated that a psychoanalytically successful work of art would allow one to experience both sides of the equation, experience the fluctuation from paranoid-schizophrenic to the depressive. With this late aesthetic formulation, he became more interested in art that can envelope you, not just land you visually on a plane. Stokes changed his attitude about how absolutely other and distinct from you the work appeared (he was less paranoid of losing himself) but he didn’t give up on an aesthetic that praises the all-over over clear figure-ground distinctions and the hierarchically composed.

23 Ibid., 2, 241–2.

24 Ibid., 3, 149.

25 Žižek, *Looking Awry*, 6.

26 Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, 60.

27 Žižek, *Looking Awry*, 6.

28 Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (Verso, 1989), 118.

29 Stokes, *Critical Writings*, 3, 149.

30 Zizek, *Sublime*, 217.

31 Ibid., 195.

32 Ibid., 45, referencing Lacan's *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (London, 1979), chapters 5 and 6.

33 Here, the term is used in the Marxist sense: ideology does the work of capitalism and is always negative.

34 Ibid., 126. In another remarkable passage, Žižek says: "Lacan points out that it was Marx who invented the symptom: Marx's great achievement was to demonstrate how all phenomena which appear to everyday bourgeois consciousness as simple deviations, contingent deformation and degenerations of the 'normal' functioning of society (economic crisis, wars, and so on), and as such abolishable through amelioration of the system, are necessary products of the system itself—the points at which the 'truth', the immanent antagonistic character of the system, erupts." *Sublime Object*, 128.

35 Ibid., 119.

36 Ibid., 194.