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From the arcade to the shopping mall: The transformation of public space

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FROM THE ARCADE TO THE SHOPPING MALL-
THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

by

PETRA SCHAULE

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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FROM THE ARCADE TO THE SHOPPING MALL -
THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

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ABSTRACT

An inquiry into the loss of urbanity in the contemporary city initiated a historical study of public space. The public space of today's mall is introverted and isolated from its environment - the disintegrated, decaying city. The political implications of this transformation are the tendency towards privatization of public space and increasing segregation of society. Public space and public services are more and more taken over by profit-oriented private businesses and no longer available to everybody, e.g. the 'central business district' demonstrates the replacement of the public realm by the corporate realm. The Houston tunnel system exemplifies this tendency: it is owned by private corporations, accessible to the public only from their buildings. The Design Thesis attempts to return this part of the urban infrastructure to the public realm. Entrances from the street are intended to make the pedestrian tunnels more easily accessible to the individual.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes especially to Assistant Professor William Sherman who patiently supported and encouraged this undertaking. I want to acknowledge the insights he shared with me which fueled my interest in architecture as a political subject. Of great helpfulness also was the acute criticism of Assistant Professor Albert Pope which contributed profoundly to the development of the Design Thesis. I thank Stephen Klineberg, Professor of Sociology, for the constructive discussions we had and the inspiring questions he posed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract
Acknowledgements
Table of contents
Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Space from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcades</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Malls</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping Malls as Public Spaces</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Implications of the Transformation of Public Space</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Houston Tunnel System as Public Space</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix: Design Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript of Design Thesis Jury</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Discussing the transformation of public space raises the question of how public space is defined and what purpose it serves. Phillip Lopate envisions public space as "places where people congregate on their own for the sheer pleasure of being part of a mass, such as watching the parade of humanity, celebrating festivities, cruising for love, showing off new clothing, meeting appointments 'under the old clock', bumping into acquaintances, discussing the latest political scandals, and experiencing pride as city-dwellers". Houston, as the prototype of the modern American city is, under this pretext characterized by an astonishing absence of public space. Here the success of traditional public spaces acquires an increasingly mythical connotation.

In Houston's present state, the image of the CBD moved far away from the notion of downtown around the turn of the century. High-rise office towers are spread out on the square grid and the street serves more to divide than to connect these introverted pristine objects with their reflecting and repellant crystalline surfaces. The leftover spaces in between fail to support public life, unlike their European counterparts. The streets are deserted as if a neutron bomb has been dropped, and even the monumental sculptures on corporate plazas seem to want to run away from their inhospitable environment. The physical presence of the city mirrors the social and political system that stands behind it. The American

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1 Lopate, p.18
2 see Ingersoll, in archithese
ideal of the freedom of the individual has given way to the notion of
the human being as the tiniest increment of a universe of
corporations. Downtown has been transformed from a social, civic
and commercial Mecca to merely a center for corporate headquarters
where the identity of man is covered up with three-piece suits.

Retreating from hostile environmental elements, both man-
made (inconveniently small grid size) and natural (heat and rain),
pedestrians have fled underground into the corporate tunnel system.
Here a new type of public realm has developed within privately
owned buildings, a very different kind of public space from the
traditional. This study is intended to trace the transformation of the
public space over time. The arcade of the 19th century and today's
shopping malls are two building types which are similar in their use
and function, as well as in their spatial and formal articulation. These
two types will serve as vehicles for this exploration.

Public Space from the Middle Ages to the 19th century

The medieval and renaissance square in Paris was the focus of
public life where a multitude of activities took place. Stalls and other
forms of street trade as well as public entertainment by bands of
acroats occurred here. To enable strangers in a large city to
communicate and deal with each other, a code of clothes designated
each person's social standing and defined their roles. Public
experience in the ancien régime was connected to the formation of
social order.
In the 18th century cosmopolis two parallel developments indicate a change in public life. A series of vast squares was built: Place des Victoires in 1685/86, Place Vendôme in 1701, Place des Invalides finished in 1706, and Place de la Concorde in 1763\(^3\). In contrast to the medieval square as meeting ground, the new squares were monuments to themselves, designed as a demonstration of power and representation of the \textit{ancien régime}, not for a congregating, lingering crowd. The public life of the city was now fragmented and dispersed, as the freedom with which people might congregate was changed. At the same time an alternative new network of sociability developed independent from the direct royal control. Urban parks, coffeehouses, theaters and opera houses (now open to public by sale of tickets), and streets, as arteries for pedestrian strolling, became the new grounds of public life. The coffeehouses had their high point during the first half of the 18th century and served as a kind of information center where speech flourished. It was an unwritten rule that everyone from any social rank was allowed to talk to anyone else freely, enter into any conversation, whether he knew the other person or not. Spontaneous encounters in one of the approximately three-hundred coffeehouses suspended social distinctions which played an important role in the 18th century world. The promenade in the park-- the Parisians used the Tuileries-- maintained the sociability between classes, when the coffeehouse came into decline by the middle of the century for the purely economical reason of reinforced tea import. While walking in

\(^3\)see Sennett, p.53ff
a park or in the street one might still speak to strangers without embarrassment, but not chat for hours. Permanent movement hindered speech and here the idea of silence in public germinated. Emile Zola mentioned this silence when talking about the Passage des Panoramas in his novel *Nana*. "A damp and warm air filled the narrow throughfare with a kind of luminous vapor. Along the flagstones, wet from the drippings of umbrellas, footsteps reverberated continuously, without the sound of a single voice"\(^4\). By the middle of the 18th century walking in the streets became an important social activity. But the narrow and very dirty streets were inadequate, for sidewalks were rare and usually built of wooden planks which lasted only short time.

This insufficient, medieval infrastructure of Paris was one of the reasons why the arcades were so successful in the first half of the 19th century. The ever increasing density of Paris caused by the growth in population augmented the need for adequate public space. Unlike other cities, Paris was until 1840 surrounded by a wall--the wall of the tax collectors--which constituted its legal limits. The immigrants from the countryside had to be accommodated within these limits by the subdivision of houses into several apartments. Thus a heterogeneity of classes continued to exist until the late 1850's when Baron Haussmann enlarged the city. At this point new construction in homogeneous economic units seemed more rational to investors. Financial speculation was another impetus for the rise of the arcades. The main wave in the construction of the arcades was

\(^4\)Geist, p.475
connected to the expropriation of church property and palaces of the nobility, a consequence of the French Revolution. These large plots of land in the center of the city were bought at relatively low prices by speculators. They made maximum use of these deep sites by the dense and profitable mixture of shops and apartments in the arcades. At the same time a growing industry of luxury goods, favored by a liberal legal system, was in search of new markets. The covered arcades, remote from the adversities of street traffic and weather, offered a comfortable ground for the display and sale of exquisite goods.

Arcades

The history of the arcades begins with an unattractive provisional structure, the Galeries de Bois, the only arcade built in the era of the *ancien régime* between 1786 and 1788. The site of the Galeries de Bois was the huge garden of the Palais Royal built by cardinal Richelieu who had boldly extended his palace garden northward by tearing down part of the old city wall. The new owner, the Duc de Chartres, intended to alleviate his ruinous financial situation by a more intense use of the valuable site. He had it surrounded by a U-shaped building with open arcades facing the public garden. The ground floor housed shops, and the upper floors were rented out as apartments. When the duke ran out of money, the proposed wing separating the Cour Royal from the garden was erected as a simple, inexpensive wooden structure that gave the first arcade its name. Its unbelievable success made it survive the
political and social golden age of the Palais Royal, it was not demolished until 1828. Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), a contemporary of the epoch, gave an authentic description of this place in his novel *Lost Illusions*.
"In the place of the present cold, lofty, and broad Galerie d'Orléans, a sort of greenhouse without flowers, there stood in those days a line of wooden barracks, or, to be more exact, plank huts, small, poorly roofed and ill-lighted from the court and the garden and also from the roof by small sashes, called casements, which were more like dirty openings of the dance-halls beyond the barriers than actual windows. A triple line of booths made two galleries about twelve feet high; those down the center faced to each side, and the fetid air which rose from the crowded passage-ways had little chance to escape through the roof, which admitted only a dim light through its casements. These center booths or cells were thought so valuable, because of the crowds who passed them, that in spite of their narrow space (some being scarcely six feet wide and eight or ten feet long) they brought enormous prices—some as much as three thousand francs. The side booths, which were lighted from the court and from the garden, were protected by small, green trellises, possibly to prevent the crowd outside from demolishing by pressure the lath-and-plaster walls which formed the sides of the sheds"\(^5\).

But what were the activities that made the arcade so attractive? Most of the space was consumed by shops which offered all kinds of luxury goods. Fashion, as a means of indicating one's rank in the hierarchy, played an important role at that time. Therefore many tailors had their workshops here, tissues and fashionable accessories were offered. Confectionery, fashionable stationary, perfumes, chocolate and tobacco shops, magasins de nouveautés and barber shops... the services and retail were similar in all arcades, only the degree of elegance varied. F. M. Marchant commented about the Galerie de Bois: "The bookshop alone has the same prices as in the rest of Paris. The other merchants overcharge by at least two times;

\(^5\)Balzac, in Geist, p.459
their rapaciousness has earned the locale the name of the 'Camp des Tartares'\(^6\). In terms of entertainment, the Palais Royal housed a circus and the Théâtre Francais was built in 1787/90. Cafes, restaurants and billiard rooms offered more worldly kinds of pleasures. Balzac presents a colorful picture of another activity in the arcade:

"The tragic aspect of this terrible bazaar began to show itself towards evening. Through all the adjacent streets women poured in, who were allowed to walk there unmolested; from every section of Paris came prostitutes to 'do the Palais'. The stone galleries belonged to privileged establishments, who paid for the right to expose their creatures, dressed like princesses, between such and such an arch with a corresponding right to the same distance in the garden; but the Galeries de Bois were the common ground of women of the town, 'the Palais', par excellence, a word which signified in those days the temple of prostitution"\(^7\)

One public function is peculiar to the Palais Royal and its time, that almost disappeared in later arcades: it was a center of finance, politics and the place of the formation of public opinion:

"For twenty years the Bourse was directly opposite, on the ground=floor of the palace. Rendezvous were given before and after the opening of the exchange in these galleries. Consequently, public opinion and reputation were made and unmade here, and political and financial affaires incessantly discussed. The Paris world of bankers and merchants congregated in the square of the Palais Royal, and swarmed into the galleries when it rained"\(^8\).

Comparing the image of man in public during the ancien regime and the Thermidor, as Richard Sennett lays it out in his book *The Fall of Public Man*, to the observations made by Balzac in his *Lost Illusions* one can define the Galeries de Bois as a place of flourishing public life. Here the world was a theater with every man as an actor. The

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\(^6\)Geist, p.460
\(^7\)Balzac, in Geist, p.459f
\(^8\)Balzac, in Geist. p.459
fact that everybody's social station was immediately recognizable allowed open discourse among each other. The public aspect of the arcade contributed to a mixture of social classes. Everyone could enjoy looking at the displayed goods, even if one could not afford them, and "the gratuitous readings at the booksellers' counters by penniless young men hungry for literature began. The shopmen whose business it was to watch the books thus exposed for sale charitably allowed these poor fellows to turn the leaves". Open speech flourished obviously as in the coffeehouses, as "not a quarrel could take place at one end that the other end did not know what it was about". Personal interaction occurred not only in the sale of goods between salesman and buyer, but also among the pedestrians in public. The 'incroyable' of Thermidor Paris dressed in a way to make a parody of fashion and he expected to be laughed at on the street. This interaction was based on the non-verbal language of clothes.

Balzac's text expresses a nostalgia for a past era and its rich public life. Already before Balzac's death in 1850 a significant change in the appearance in public must have evolved in Paris, as Balzac judges it "by no means useless to draw a picture of that ignoble bazaar, which for thirty-six years played so great a role in Parisian life that there are few men of forty to whom the following description, incredible to younger men, will not be of interest".

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9Balzac, in Geist, p.459
10Balzac, in Geist, p.459
11See Sennett, p.185f
12Balzac, in Geist, p.458
as "the women were all dressed in a style and manner that no longer exists". Richard Sennett interprets this change with the entering of personality in the public realm, which would have a profound influence on public life in the 19th and 20th century. It was a common belief that each person's appearance reflected one's character as controlled by the self-conscious. At the same period Paris, as all other capitals, witnessed an incredible increase in population. Fear arose in people of how to cope with the unknown, how to behave in front of strangers. In order not to disclose one's personality involuntarily to strangers, people dressed in clothes increasingly more homogeneous and monochromatic to protect themselves by blending into the crowd. "The dullest decade in the history of feminine dress began in 1840". The middle-class family became the shelter from the tremors of the outside world. As man still believed that there were important experiences to gather outside the home, in the cosmopolitan crowd, the public realm was not suddenly deserted. But increasing passivity turned man from an actor to a spectator of public life. "And so, the sheer survival of belief in public life might seem to be a necessary survival, a means for the spectator of having a realm in which to observe". Consequently Walter Benjamin pictures the observer as "a duke who is everywhere in the possession of his incognito". The arcade became the favorite environment for this one-sided spectacle presented to the silent and

13Balzac, in Geist, p.460
14Squire, in Sennett, p.161
15Sennett, p.195
16Benjamin, i.2, p.543
amazed onlooker. From the beginning of the 1820's to the middle of
the 1840's no less than 21 arcades were built in Paris alone. The
transformation of public life in the 19th century is embodied in
Baudelaire's main figure, the 'flâneur'. Charles Baudelaire (1821-
1867) saw him as "the man of the boulevard who 'dresses to be
observed', whose very life depends on his arousing the interest of
the others in the street: the 'flâneur' is a person of leisure who is not
an aristocrat at ease". Walter Benjamin is correct in dating the
emergence of the flânerie back, before the Haussmannisation of
Paris, to the rise of the arcade. He reminds us that "wide sidewalks
were rare before Haussmann; the narrow ones offered little
protection from carts. The flânerie would have hardly been able to
develop its significance without the arcades". Here the flâneur finds
his remedy against boredom, the 'spleen de Paris'. Baudelaire utters:
"Who is able to get bored in a crowd of people is a fool". Around
1840 it became fashionable to walk turtles in the arcades, a fact that
throws a significant light on the pace of the promenade.

The arcade appears in a time of transition from the pre-
industrial to the industrial era. A Paris guide-book from 1852
defines: "The arcades, a more recent invention of industrial luxury,
are glass-covered and marble-veneered corridors through whole
masses of houses whose owners joined for such speculations. On both
sides of these corridors, that receive their light from above, run the
most elegant stores, in a way that such an arcade is a city, a world in

17 Baudelaire, in Sennett, p.213
18 Benjamin,
19 Baudelaire, in Benjamin, I.2, p.539
little"\textsuperscript{20}. Mass-production made luxury goods available to a far wider range of people than in the ancien régime. The inconveniences of the old city street was an obstacle to the assemblage of consumers. Before the creation of the grand boulevards in the 1860's, the arcades expedited the trade of goods. As people came from different quarters of Paris to shop in the arcades, cosmopolitanism was tied to consumption. "Here houses the last dinosaur of Europe, the consumer"\textsuperscript{21}, remarks Walter Benjamin.

The first six arcades built in Paris until 1811 show an experimental, unfinished state of design. The Galeries de Bois with its wooden booths call the Foire St. Germain into mind. The early arcades were narrow, e.g. the Passage du Caire was 2.7 meters wide, the Passage Delorme approximately 3 meters, and were lighted by lateral skylights or skylights cut into a wooden saddle roof. With a height of only two storeys these arcades conveyed a corridor-like impression. In contrast to this, the interior facades with the habitual storefronts on the ground-floor, signs, cornices, and cut in windows on the first floor were designed like street facades: a street à l'intérieur. By the 1830's the image of the idealized street, with the same facades on both sides, became the refined type of the arcade. Widening the arcade, inserting more storeys with additional apartments, and continuous glass-roofing reinforces the sense of a public space. Everyone could stroll here, look at the displays without obligation to buy. This was the secret of the success of the arcades as

\textsuperscript{20}In Benjamin, I.2, p.538
\textsuperscript{21}Benjamin,
public space. Outside of France this building type reached really street-like dimensions and a monumentalisation in expression in the Galeries St. Hubert (1846/47) in Brussels and in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele (1865/77) in Milan. By then an arched glass roof enhanced the illusion of openness towards the sky.

At the time when the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele celebrated the young Italian nation, the arcades of Paris were already in decline. The rise of a new type of retail building, the department store, deprived the arcade of its clients. The former theatrical interaction between seller and buyer was suspended. The aforementioned passivity of man in public, growing in the first half of the 19th century, was significantly reinforced with the cessation of personal interaction by the buyer in the satisfaction of his needs, in consumption. The creation of the boulevards with their wide sidewalks in the 1860's offered a favorable environment to stroll and emptied the arcades of yet more of their life. Émile Zola (1840-1902) was a contemporary of the decay of the arcade as public space in the fin-de-siècle. In his novel Thérèse Raquin he chose the Passage du Pont Neuf as a dim setting for his critical look at society:

"The Passage du Pont-Neuf is not a place to go for a nice stroll. You use it as a short cut and time-saver. Its frequenteres are busy people whose one idea is to go straight on quickly: aproned apprentices, seamstresses delivering their work, men and women carrying parcels. But there are also old people picking their slow way through the dismal gloom shed by the glass roofing, and troops of little children just out of school who come running through here to make as much clatter as they can with their sabots on the flagstones. All day long the quick, irregular tap-tap of footsteps on the pavement gets on your nerves; nobody says a word, nobody stands still, everybody gets on with the job, head down, walking rapidly, with never a glance at the shops. When
by a miracle passers-by do stop in front of their windows, the shopkeepers eye them anxiously"22.

Zola pictures "the death of the Parisian arcades, the process of decomposition of an architecture. The atmosphere of this book is pregnant of its poison and the people perish from it"23.

Shopping Malls

Despite the similarities in appearance of the arcades and the shopping malls, both as elongated, covered retail centers, there is no continuous development between these two types. However both occurred and spread as a consequence of comparable social and economic phenomenon: in 19th century Paris the enlargement of the city area dramatically increased the population; American cities in the middle of the 20th century exploded by the post-war Baby Boom. As industrial mass-production of goods enlarged the potential clientele in 19th century Paris, in the United States the Depression and poverty of wartime was followed by a retail boom.

The growing population caused an exodus to the suburbs which was facilitated by the availability of private cars. Freeways were supposed to solve the problem of commuter transportation, but their significance was not merely technical, but also social and economical. Retailers followed their customers from the jammed downtown to the suburbs and lined up along the 'miracle miles' that delivered car-customers in unprecedented numbers. The interference between drivers on the way to their destination with

22Zola, in Geist, p.486
23Benjamin, V.2, p.1046
those who wanted to engage in shopping created a 'hostile public environment'\textsuperscript{24} similar to that which triggered the development of the arcades. The time was ripe for a new concept. Its precedents were smaller community centers such as the Roland Park Shop Center (Baltimore, Maryland) of 1907, the Country Club Shopping Center (Kansas City) built by J. C. Nichols in 1923 and the Los Angeles Farmers' Market constructed in the 1930s'. Especially successful was Country Club Plaza, conceived as core of a newly developed 5,000-acre residential community. The center consisted of a group of small stores, housed in an architecturally unified complex of Mediterranean character. Like the stores on the strip they still faced the parking lot in front. 'Shopping villages' of this kind differed from 'regional shopping centers' as department stores or other large stores were not generally represented in them.

Lacking precedents for the auto-age regional shopping center, the architects borrowed heavily, intentionally or unintentionally, from urban forms of the past. Northgate Center north of Seattle was the first shopping center in the United States, built 1948-50 by John Graham & Co. He relied on the pattern of the traditional downtown main street, creating a long, stretched development on both sides of a 48-foot wide street, from which automobiles were excluded. As magnet for the mall, a 3-level Bon Marche department store and another 2-level department store were located vis-à-vis. Smaller stores had only one floor. Like the arcades, malls are objects of speculation and the challenge is to convert car customers back into

\textsuperscript{24}Gruen, 1973, p.19
pedestrians. Each store unit had two entrances, one from the parking lot and another from the mall with display windows on both sides, similar to the middle row in the Galerie de Bois. But this arrangement did not prove economically successful, because it dispersed the shoppers instead of channeling them on the mall. The importance of pedestrian traffic led to a design that maximizes foot traffic along one inward storefront and restored window-shopping to its original sales-generating function. The Northgate Center building complex was unified architecturally by a continuous marque, corrugated concrete paneling, and by the uniformity of style, scale, and building materials. The plainness of the architecture was apparent. The buildings were designed to be inexpensive to build, efficient to operate, convenient to use, and pleasant to look at, but no more. As with the arcades, the architectural design of shopping malls would experience an increasing sophistication parallel to the development of this new building type.

In 1956 the Southdale Shopping Center in Edina was to become the prototype for the 'introverted' shopping center, the type that comprises about 90% of all malls in the U.S. today. Its architect, Victor Gruen, who immigrated from Austria in 1938, had the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in mind when he designed the first roofed mall. It housed two major department stores and a rich variety of other stores, according to the principle of 'one-stop shopping' based on the analogy with downtown. As the arcades in Paris served as shortcuts in the street network, their attractiveness relied on the two streets, boulevards or places they connected. In
the mall, however, department stores were now located at the ends to draw the customers back and forth between these two poles. In order to make the roofing and air-conditioning feasible, the building mass was concentrated on about half the land area by a two-level arrangement. The fear of destroying the balance of shoppers' traffic by introducing two retail levels was counteracted by sloped parking outside, each level serving as an entrance. The same disposition, caused by a natural 12-foot slope, had already been successfully solved in the Cleveland Arcade (built 1888-1890) by two centrally located monumental staircases. The three-storey-high Central Garden Court of Southdale Shopping Center was intended to provide a pleasant outdoor shopping atmosphere and establish a psychological connection with nature. Skylights and vast glazed openings into the garden court allowed trees and plants to grow inside. A sidewalk cafe with umbrellas gave the impression of being in the open.

Shopping Malls as Public Spaces

Looking at shopping malls as public spaces, it is surprising how successful they are, as William Kowinski puts it "...malls have more than financial significance, they are becoming a way of life."25 Surveys prove that Americans spend more time in malls than anywhere else except home, job or school. Americans not only consider shopping their favorite leisure pastime but also as an event for which the family gathers to engage in a common activity.

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25 Kowinski, p. 21
shopping. Don Delillo transmits this excitement in his novel *White Noise*:

"Babette and the kids followed me into the elevator, into the shops set along the tiers, through the emporiums and department stores, puzzled but excited by my desire to buy. The two girls scouted ahead...they were the guides to my endless well-being... We smelled chocolate, popcorn, cologne; we smelled rugs and furs, hanging salamis and deathly vinyl. My family gloried in the event. I was one of them, shopping, at last... There was always another store, three floors, eight floors, basement full of cheese graters and paring knives. I shopped with reckless abandon. I shopped for immediate needs and distant contingencies. I shopped for its own sake, looking and touching, inspecting merchandise I had no intention of buying, then buying it... I began to grow in value and self-regard. I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a person I'd forgotten existed."\(^{26}\)

For teenagers, nicknamed the 'mallies', the mall became the place from which almost all of their social contacts emanated. Here they come after school, meet their friends, and spend their whole spare time. A new vocabulary developed to describe this phenomenon: 'mallcrawling' or 'mallering'\(^{27}\). The presence of so many teenagers for so much time started in the early times of the shopping mall era and came as a surprise to mall developers and managers. Teenagers are tolerated as they are likely to keep coming to the mall as adults- as shoppers. To keep teenagers away from major traffic points of adult shoppers, game arcades allow the management to channel these restless adolescents in a certain contained area. The fact of malls being the baby-sitter for two-paycheck households launched a new type of entertainment mall, like Fame City in Houston, to satisfy exclusively the needs of bored children: video games and fast food. Besides teenagers, elderly

\(^{26}\)Delillo, p.83f

\(^{27}\)see Kowinski, p.26
people use the mall mainly as social centers to escape the loneliness of their homes and to meet companions. The sheltered, comfortable, and consistent mall is ideal for promenades. Mall managers have even organized walker's clubs for senior citizens and give certificates for the miles they walk.

Richard Francaviglia, professor of geography at Antioch College, started to analyze formal aspects which dictate why malls are the 'new Main Street' or a 'Disneyland for adults'. He examined the features of 'Main Street U.S.A.', the centerpiece of Disneyland and Disney World which, like malls, are preplanned, protected and controlled commercial environments. Walt Disney did not take as example the road that leads through town as the 'main drag', but the rarer kind of Main Street which is on one end closed by the town square or village green, for it is more quiet, peaceful, and pedestrian-oriented. He did even better and put two town plazas at both ends, omitted all the unwanted places, such as sleazy bars, seedy pool halls etc., and reduced the size of the whole by five-eights. This scaling-down appeals psychologically to both children and adults. Francaviglia compared these characteristics with the enclosed shopping mall. The mall's street is lined with stores and bounded by plazas or courts, safe from traffic. As in Disney's street, the mall's design is consistent and unified, all rougher elements of real downtown -no 'dives' or pool halls- are excluded and stores are smaller than stores on town streets. "...the basic the mall delivers - what this stage was set up to be - is a simplified, cleaned-up,
Disneyfied fantasy version of Main Street U.S.A."$^{28}$ The mall as an idealization of Main Street has "just the right touch of obvious artificiality to make it permanently extraordinary"$^{29}$, the culmination of the 'Highway Comfort Culture'. In order to heighten the attractiveness of shopping centers and to stave off all possible competition, new malls with as many as four or five department stores are being constructed. These are referred to in shopping center lingo as 'blockbusters'. In this case the arrangement calls for an alteration of the main street scheme to a T-shape, a cross-shape or a more complex cluster scheme. The most prominent example of this type in Houston is certainly the Galleria built by Gerald Hines, designed by Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum. The two main axes are anchored by four department stores and one hotel, a minor cross axis connects to the parking areas, on one side a multi-level parking structure and on the other side the ground parking which is accessed by an little inviting portico. Due to raising land prizes in the last decades malls became increasingly compact, making economical use of the area with parking structures that shorten walking distances and offer more comfort. At the same time malls became increasingly multi-functional. Entertainment facilities like theaters, restaurants, cafés and bars already existed in the arcades, comparable institutions to add interest to malls are ice-skating rings, cinemas and so on. As all activities that keep people in the malls for a longer time make the cash registers ring, mall managers support all kinds of communal

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$^{28}$Kowinski, p.67  
$^{29}$Kowinski, p. 68
activities in their centers, but also exclude those that might disturb shoppers. Besides entertainment other business activities that support a stable environment for the mall are combined with them, such as offices, hotels, apartments, medical buildings. Victor Gruen wrote as early as 1952 "shopping centers must..., fill the vacuum created by the absence of social, cultural, and civic crystallization points in our vast suburban areas"\(^{30}\) and facing the phenomenon of their success Ralph Keyes added the provocative sentence: "Malls aren't part of the community, they are the community."\(^{31}\) Citizens accept the artificiality of the mall as a public space in return for the comfort and safety it offers.

Political Implications of the Transformation of Public Space

The process of change in the public realm, exemplified in the development of the arcade from the late 18th century to the late 19th century, found its preliminary end in the suburbanization of American cities. In its beginning the arcade was a public space with colorful life and interaction across all borders of a class society. During the 19th century the behavior in public spaces and the attitude toward the public realm was characterized by increasing isolation and passivity. Nevertheless public spaces, the street and the square, still kept importance as places of socialization. In the 20th century the formal setting of public life- the Stadtraum'- "the matrix that united public and private interests in the city"\(^{32}\) was replaced

\(^{30}\)Gruen, 1952, p. 67

\(^{31}\)Kowinski, p.65

\(^{32}\)Dennis, p.1
by the freestanding solid- the icon of the private realm. The suburban house, located in the middle of the lot to assure greatest possible privacy, documents this disinterest in the public space. The malls, solids themselves, became de facto the public space of the suburb, and demonstrate the change in its character. This change can be subsumed under the two terms of isolation and homogenization. Looking at the relationship to the urban fabric, the essential difference between the arcade and the shopping mall becomes obvious (see fig.1,2). The arcade depends on significant pedestrian circulation which exists only in downtown. It connects major streets or places, for example, in Paris the arcades connected mainly the Palais Royal to the Boulevard (see fig.2). Whereas the shopping malls depend on the car-culture and its circulation system, the freeway. It is a typical suburban element and isolated from the city by a belt of parking lots, or in denser areas by parking structures without any coherence to other public spaces. As a result of this malls turn even more inward; they don't have a public face. The entrance is merely a hole in the facade, whereas the development of the arcade witnessed a growing grandeur in its articulation toward the city that found its climax in the triumphal arch of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. As an enclosed 'introverted' building complex the mall provides controlled and secluded space. Private owners striving for maximum profit favor a homogeneous middle-class clientele to avoid possible unwanted frictions that might affect the mall's appeal. 'Mall rats' are only tolerated as long as they behave properly in the eyes of the security guards. In contrast to traditional public spaces, as e.g. the
Fig. 1 Arcades and shopping malls in the urban fabric

Fig. 2 Location of the arcades in Paris and the shopping malls in Houston
Greek agora, the Roman forum, the Medieval marketplace and the Parisian arcades, that contributed to a mixture of all classes, the mall tends to segregate society. The mall's old mass market is vanishing- literally splitting apart into those becoming richer and those becoming poorer. In the post-war years the middle income group made up the American majority, by 1982 it declined to 44% and this trend continues. Whereas in the decade between 1980 and 1990 the percentage of upper-income families rose from 25% to 40%. The malls responded to this change in going after the upscale market. Especially the more recent urban malls, supposed to revitalize the deserted downtown, show an alarming 'Yuppification'. Philadelphia architect Richard Huffman comments: "Revitalization is for people who aren't poor."\textsuperscript{33}

Segregation seems to be today's answer to the fear of the unknown, the fear of the stranger in the metropolis. In the 19th century the individual exposed to the public encountered this situation by refraining from interaction. The seclusion of the bourgeoisie family turned into the "demanding tyranny of the private realm in postwar Houston, Los Angeles, or St. Louis"\textsuperscript{34}. Contemporary fear of interaction manifests itself in the fragmentation of the public realm; a fragmentary condition within which threatening aspects can be avoided. As man feels most comfortable among equals, the mall offers the well-to-do a sort of

\textsuperscript{33}Kowinski, p.313
\textsuperscript{34}Dennis, p. 241
exclusive, 'privatized' public space which caters to their desire for protection from the hostile environment. In the tradition of the English and American arcades, with their tendency to dissolve the interior facade and turn inwards, shopping malls provoke a more interiorized feeling of space. Compared to the arcades the sense of grandeur in the design and the generous gesture to the public is missing. Instead a new public language of architecture, achieved by highly polished quality sheet metals, extensive areas of float glass, and veneers of expensive stone emerges, that discourages any non-specific use by the general public. Other public spaces as the streets and squares of downtown, decaying due to increasing criminality, are left to the poor, the unemployed, and the minorities.

Privately owned buildings which actually function as public spaces encounter unique legal problems, unlike those of traditional public spaces. The question of whether the protection of civil liberties by the Constitution applies also to private property, if the owner assumes public roles or public functions, provoked ambiguous reactions. In 1968, in the case of the Logan Plaza Shopping Center the Supreme Court ruled that a labor union could picket a nonunion supermarket in the shopping center, despite the 'no trespassing' signs posted by the shopping center manager. "The Court reasoned that the new mall was the functional equivalent of the old downtown business district, and that it should therefore be treated as a public space". Similar protection of political activities was only warranted in a few states, such as California, Connecticut, Washington, and

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35 Warner, p.19
Pennsylvania, as the tide began to turn a few years later. More conservative courts argued that malls would suffer an 'unwarranted infringement' of their private property rights if they were required to yield to the exercise of First Amendment rights. But traditional places of retail, the markets, "existed to serve a variety of public needs, from court to meeting place"\textsuperscript{36}, as the cultural historian Padriac Burke remarks. They were, as said before, places of public speech, information, and formation of political opinion, "...the seedbeds of American democracy"\textsuperscript{37}. No wonder that the American Revolution started at Faneuil Hall, where tea was dumped into the Boston Harbor. The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele has also been the scene of political activities, even unrest. For example protesters against the detention of Garibaldi clashed here with police forces shortly after the opening of the Galleria. In Milan a new regulation had been passed for this new building type dedicating the publicly accessible area as civic property, whereas the basement underneath remained in the private domain.

Now, the principle of maximizing profit excludes all activities, e.g. politics, that might provoke controversies. In this context it is interesting to note that in the first years of settlement, the commons used to have proprietors who had common right to the land. But over time the proprietors ceded their powers to the town government. In our century an opposite current is visible. More and more services, once offered by public institutions, are taken over by private

\textsuperscript{36}Kowinski, p.358
\textsuperscript{37}Kowinski, p.358
institutions and businesses. The topic of politics demonstrates how increasing privacy changes the public realm. Already in the 19th century Alexis de Tocqueville layed out in his book *Democracy in America* that in a democracy, "under a rough equality of conditions, ...the intimacies of life would become increasingly important".\(^{38}\) The individual was freed from the concern of public affairs, as they were now intrusted to bureaucrats and state functionaries. In a representative democracy there is no longer the need to gather for decision-making and the meetinghouse, the center of civic government which was often the local parish church, disappeared. The mass media of the 2nd half of the 20th century made information accessible to everybody in the solitude of their private lives and inhibited "the capacity of people to convert that knowledge into political action".\(^{39}\) By this process public space was stripped of its political and informative function.

Looking at the transformation of public space over time, it is necessary to consider the ambiguity of this very notion in American culture. The admiration for lively European, especially Italian, squares is diametrically opposed to the American anti-urban attitude. In a culture based on the Puritan ideal of agrarian life, Thomas Jefferson justified his rejection of the city by declaring "great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health, and the liberties of men."\(^{40}\) As the first immigrants believed that success reflected divine gratitude, business assumed a very deep significance, still

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\(^{38}\) Sennet, p.31  
\(^{39}\) Sennet, p.283  
\(^{40}\) Dennis, p.231
valid today, that rejects all unspecific, seemingly aimless activities, such as lingering in public spaces. Robert Venturi formulated this idiosyncrasy in his competition entry for Boston's Copley Square in 1965: "Americans feel uncomfortable sitting in a square: they should be working at the office or home with the family looking at television, or perhaps at the bowling alley." With this in mind it becomes clearer why shopping became the 'chief cultural activity in America'. It is justified as a necessity to subsist, even if it its main aspect became shopping as leisure pastime. The collapse of the public realm is a cultural and social phenomenon. The absence of true public life called forth the progressive deterioration of American public space. Krier proposes the street and the square as the only necessary model for the reconstruction of a public realm. While this might be viable within the European cultural sphere, it is not so readily applicable to the American city, which does not support the same level of public activity. Opposed to such a formal intent the question arises: what common values can the public realm represent in an increasingly segregated society that gives primacy to the notion of privacy? One can say that the destruction of the public realm in post-war times by urban renewal reflects the indifference toward the public realm as a result of the transformation from public to private hegemony.

Since the 1970s' there has been an increasing awareness of the deterioration of downtown. At that time the suburban element of the mall was seen as infusing new attractiveness and life to downtown,

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* Sanders, p.87
as its effect is immediate. Growth of white-collar and service sector jobs relative to manufacturing jobs brought about social changes in the downtown working population that gave new opportunities for downtown upscale retail. 'The Park' mall in Houston is a striking example that a mall downtown is equally as isolated from its surroundings as its suburban counterpart. A huge arch marks the entrance facing a small triangular plaza, but hardly anyone enters here. The majority of the lunchers and shoppers arrive through the tunnel and skywalk system. Basically the urban mall fails to address the real problems of the revitalization of downtown; it is just another enclave in an agglomeration of enclaves.

Public life in its traditional sense can only exist in places where people live and inhabit the public space for most of the day. The separation of functions effected not only the complete transformation of the city center and the central business district, but also the fragmentation and reduction of public space. American urbanism is characterized by sprawling suburbs that don't allow for a continuous inhabitation of the outdoor space; the distances are great and the centers dispersed. Enclaves of public life spread over the city, their only unifying feature being the proximity of the highway. The fact that these isolated nuclei are created consciously makes their artificiality an inevitable result.

The Houston Tunnel System as Public Space

The downtown of Houston is conceived on a relatively narrow square grid of about 330 feet. Opposed to this extremely rational
layout (see fig.3,4), there exists a network of underground passages that serve as pedestrian connections between the office towers. It has grown incrementally over the last four decades without any overarching masterplan and now displays the character of a labyrinth. Originally the tunnels served to connect office towers with their adjacent parking structures, a true invention of the automobile age. Since the 1970's these independent fragments, privately owned, grew together into a well-accepted infrastructure, open to public use (see fig.5). Furthermore, the tunnels are lined with shops, restaurants, cleaners etc., reminiscent of the arcade (see fig.6). The fact that the tunnels are only accessible through the lobbies of the office towers, creates a psychological barrier (see fig.7) for individuals that might want to use this public space, but are not part of the corporate world, as thus, the tunnels are used almost exclusively by white collar workers. The character of the space is, by its narrowness and separation from the exterior, even more interiorized and 'privatized' than that of the shopping malls for example. This development well reflects the trend that more and more services, formerly offered by public institutions, are now being taken over by profit-oriented private businesses, and, consequently, are no longer available to everybody -but only to those who can afford them. Parallel to this, the city as social and political entity is replaced, not only in its physical presence, but abstractly, by the notion of the city as merely an economical power center. This seems to be a questionable evolution, as corporations are by their nature
Fig. 3 Diagram of the street grid and the tunnel system in Houston

Fig. 4 Model of the tunnel system and its relation to the grid
Fig. 5 Development of the Houston tunnel system
Fig. 6 Tunnel types

Fig. Entrance types
hierarchical and authoritarian and possess an uncontrollable self-dynamism that is well able to infringe upon the freedom of the individual. To break up this lingering tendency consciously aggressive acts of subversion are necessary.

The program for the Design Thesis constitutes the attempt to regain the tunnel system as a truly public space, a first step in regaining the city for the individual and also counteracting segregation. It proposes to add public entrances from the street to the tunnels to improve their accessibility to each inhabitant of the city. The two types of public entrances to the tunnel system derive their character from one of the two coexisting circulation systems: the grid and the labyrinth.
APPENDIX: Design Thesis

PASSAGES TO THE UNDERWORLD-
PUBLIC ENTRANCES TO THE HOUSTON TUNNEL SYSTEM

Program

The Design Thesis consists of the proposal for two types of public entrances to the tunnel system of Houston whose characteristics have their source in the nature of the two circulation systems they connect. The grid type connects the above-ground world, ordered by the grid, to the tunnel and, like the rational, predictable grid, it occurs every third block on the north corner. It intensifies the existing notion of the grid by the superimposition of another grid of public infrastructure (see fig. 8,19, 20). The labyrinth type occurs wherever an entrance seems necessary and is incidental as to its location within the grid (see fig.10, 19, 20). The elements that define the entrances are as follows: the modular grid type is basically a composition of three elements --the pit, the elevator shaft, and the wall (see fig.9, 12, 13, 14) and the labyrinth type consists of the ramp and the cascade (see fig.11, 15, 16, 17, 18). Water elements are meant to be a service to the public, as they used to be in former times (for example, aqueducts and fountains in ancient Rome were indispensable to the life of the city). In the project drinking fountains, sinks, and public restrooms offer additional services, especially useful for underprivileged individuals. The two foot thick plumbing wall of the grid type and the two foot wide cascade of the labyrinth type also refer to the mythological idea
of crossing the river Styx on the way to the underworld. Water divides the worlds below and above ground from each other.
Images

Fig. 8 Site plan and diagrams of grid type
Fig. 9 Section
Fig.10 Site plan of labyrinth type
Fig.11 Section
Fig. 12 Grid type
Fig. 13 Model of grid type

Fig. 14 Model of grid type
Fig.15 Section of labyrinth type

Fig.16 Plan of labyrinth type
Fig. 17 Model of labyrinth type

Fig. 18 Model of labyrinth type
Fig. 19 Site model

Fig. 20 Site model
Transcript of the Thesis Jury, December 7

Jury Members:
William Sherman, Associate Professor of Architecture, Chair
Albert Pope, Associate Professor of Architecture
Stephen Klineberg, Professor of Sociology
Peter Waldmann, Professor of Architecture
Robert Dripps, Professor of Architecture
Francoise Jourdan, Architect
Gilles Perraudin, Architect

PW: I think that the entries down to the tunnel system are very real... I wonder if you could transform the tunnels themselves ( )whether there was almost an obligation to do one or two windows to change the quality of light as you have investigated the opportunity ( ) One gains access to the tunnel ( ) find the places where light comes down from ... Have you been thinking how it would be to be in the middle of the tunnels ( )

PS: I have been thinking about skylights, but basically then I restricted my program just to the entrances of the tunnel system.

SK: Its pretty hard to do...to put skylights down into the tunnel system.

PS: There are already a few and I think there would certainly be places where you could do it.

RD: I think its pretty remarkable as a thesis and the way you describe it has a sound conviction and the lack is absolutely
appropriate and the interest of this thing to me is in the near subversive quality of the effort. I think the models show that and yet to be expected in this kind of an effort, it doesn't go far enough. I am really very interested in some of the things you set up to subvert and would wish that there could be a more significant and rigorous analysis of what these things are so that your subversion became more clear. What I mean by that: you wanted to do something different from the corporate environment, so you did some thing different. But I think that to often these kind of things rest in a representation of differences rather than something that one is fully engaged in. so I wonder what it is about the corporate thing, what is it actually dealing with that we can actually come and start to subvert in a more positive way, not in a destructive sense ... But it seems you are involved in a political situation, it seems to be a critique of the way land is parcelled out and appropriated and excluded from the public realm and then this underground thing where you are actually in the ground, you are claiming the ground for the public realm that has lost its ground to the corporate realm. So it seems to me that suggested in this is something more significantly programmed. I get kind of disappointed when it finally gets down that we have a water fountain and a bathroom. That is a great thing, but you would think that there would be a more fully developed program that would translate into an architectural program. So for me I get open in the end and I got to criticize architecture which is fine, but with the lead that you have given me and with the potential of this project, that is absolutely
extraordinary, I kind of hate to get down to a level of discussion in a way, is so incredibly anticlimactic. And I am saying that so negatively, I can only say that because you have been so incredibly provocative in setting up a thesis that one wants to carry that much further. So one wants to then use that space, I want more than ( ) down there, I have never been in the tunnels so I can say all this with enthusiasm, after trying to avoid looking at that. But what would happen with these various things or what would be the next step, but -you could never do that- you could set up a process by which certain things would catalyze other things. Certain kinds of institutions that would grow out of this and that would then insinuate their way into this underground world. And just metaphorically this notion of the underground described by Bachelard....I hate to then have to get down discussing the objects.

GP: My first impression is I am very impressed by the design... If I remember your first premise how to create in the town these very interesting areas... comfortable for walking... In the 60's and 70's we have developed districts in which we have separated pedestrians from the cars and its doesn't work. And now the pedestrians walk at the same level with the cars and people don't want to go up and down to the skywalks. Actually it just needs trees along the streets and you can walk under 50 foot canopies... the sun...cafes... What I mean you work is very, very interesting and very beautifully designed, but I don't know if it is good.

SK: There is a major tree planting program that has begun.
FJ: What could happen here you say that with the skyscrapers things were cold and here in the underground ( ) you could have very poetic things just like the grottos of the 18th century or Piranesi's this fantastic world underground with no connection with the upper ground. I think it is coming from the underground world, showing that there is something hidden under the surface...

PS: I mean this type that grows out of the labyrinth is hidden from the streetside, just let us see, this little door you have kind of to know where it is to get down there. It is more like coming up and basically this type was somewhat inspired by Piranesi, transformed into a steel beam structure and I wanted to have much more beams everywhere in space, but I didn't have more time to build more of the beam structure. But this was the basic idea for this type. The idea that you have to cross the water is based on Greek mythology where you have to cross the river Styx in order to go to the underworld. I just took out the two walls, otherwise you cannot look inside the model.

RD: I think to envision grottos is quite wonderful, because capable existing above ground in the corporate world that kind of things can happen... can be relegated to graveyards... A whole series of things could happen in that thing you are building. I still think, as lovely as this thing might be and I think it actually is, there is nothing that is actually here. It is still for me a kind of representation of something actual, it doesn't get at the strength of the criticism.
PW: If you had done one more grotto-spot entry, the one that is below by the river, in the ground ( ). I wonder if you had done a final portal to that place which touches real water- the Bayou- or came really close to that, as a way perhaps where these are representing water- token things- and they are useful to the homeless. I wonder what would do that token water to the water life of the Bayou. I don't know if it is out of Metropolis, but I wonder if there is a vault at the back of each of these places with multiple keys and combinations that move on it that a certain power structure would know and at certain political occasions indeed the vault would open out and all that kind of the Bayou water would rush on in there... To flush it out, I think, if you want to by provocative about the territoriality... whether one should not have the required vault... It's more connected to that final tunnel place which ... at the Bayou. There may be a more convincing aspect to that sort of thing. But may be these water pieces have some immensity, but they become representational at a greater volume. But I wonder if you could not fill those sewer lines, the light that they sustain right now is... If they were true grottos down there they were amazing kind of places where one would say yes, a good way to get down to a great place. But they represent once one is down there so happily, probably the meanest type of ( ). Nothing about grand underground rooms..., they are just hollowed out corridors with a few token shops along them. I wonder if you have to go through that kind of Sodom and Gomorrah, you have to go to a play and really clear out all the
sheetrock... and really get back to the three dimensions. I think that is the subversive way, maybe just get a portal down to it. RD: And maybe there may or may not be done a political ( ) Suggest how that thing would..., suggest possibilities that these bureaucrat planners from upstairs haven't thought of. PW: I wonder a bit about the materiality which is expedient what you had a critical attitude supposedly that... rough concrete or the opposite of what the corporate palette had. I think the corporate palette ....changes so radically that ( ) It may be a fashionable kind of thing on this end. It is very, very handsome, but I keep wondering a little bit ...but how an appropriate..of materials. Exotic materials you used now in the late eighties and.... nineties.. RD: ...but when you think of what you do with the revealing of what is below and use that sense of materiality in a very real sense. Which is again the exact antithesis to what is above ground. It is almost .. PW: ( ) the gumbo-clay brick which is pretty close to the kind of mud that exists beneath this city, rather than necessarily the corporate vocabulary. SK: But the real point of that I think is the ... of making this access to that absolutely antiseptic tunnel.. nothing like about it, nothing like a human space at all, just designed by business for business and efficient... By opening this up a little bit it becomes a catalytic sort of thing and then lent itself to a whole variety of other uses as it has become available to human beings, inhabitants of above-ground. A lot of this
is enormously subversive, because it is going to force what has been a restricted, controlled, private environment into speaking to the real people.

WS: That raises an interesting discussion, I think, about the relation of the ... of representation, and of whether the program is a representational program that represents a political program or actually proposes a program to replace it. And it makes me question whether this first act of representation is actually essential the first political act in a way prior to programs that may follow. In a way to raise the fist and protest before necessarily having a program to put in place and whether the proposition of the program without necessarily the necessity of that representational aspect is, especially as an architectural means, an essential step.

RD: Well, I generally push things the opposite way. I don't know that I have the answer to the question. But I at least think that it's a competent subversion, generally that once its done, it's deed, you become aware of its effect, rather than announcing its presence in an emblematic way. I wish at that point its capable for one to rip down the emblem and keep going. That I might, in a vision of subversion, subtle subversion is far more powerful than emblematic subversion.

SK: But you open up a new path of evolution that is otherwise complete, but suddenly there is a new set of ingredients.

RD: I think it is a very important discussion for the architect who is, interested in architecture as a political or potentially subversive activity which you introduced to recognize these distinctions of modes of operation which all architects should.
PW: What was raised by our European visitors, is a very important one, too. Perhaps the obligation to get out of the heat ( ) if indeed they are potentially negative, then the street is the thing that ought to be reinforced. But then, you don’t know how hot it is, even under the trees. But as long as people are getting down beautifully to these places that might eventually get more handsome ( ) it is still off the streets. Wouldn’t the biggest subversive act be to deny the alternative that the underground tunnels are in a way, or to take ........I guess that’s what you are saying. David didn’t have a program for the tunnel and I think that... And I guess this is the start of that proposition.

RD: What is that, it is a very uneasy project, because ultimately I think that you would say this whole thing is rotten (the tunnel system), not your project, but I mean the fact that one has to engage it, the fact that one has to do this, is all wrong. Because obviously, the street is the thing, that is what you want, you want the street to return to the public.

WS: But it is a very powerful recognition that that isn’t the case.

RD: But accepting what she has here and then looking at that and work from that point... maybe she can even accept that...

WS: One way it becomes interesting is that is isn’t seeking a kind of utopian saying: it should be that or it should be the other way. It is accepting the fact that both conditions do exist and trying to find some way of prompting it.

RD: ...and in the best sense of that... Because, in a sense, what has been proposed is a system, that has almost a destabilizing aspect to
it. So that it is intervention into the corporate world and what might happen to that corporate world is unpredictable.

PW: To me, a way to present the city, seriously, as a grotesque thing to see that. A world existing in its shadow.

WS: Actually in that whole question of erosion, in a sort of parallel analysis, would be an extremely interesting thing to do, in addition to the analysis that shows the development of the tunnel system since 1947 when there was the first tunnel, a sort of striking mark that is right immediate postwar period, and the relation between that and in a way the erosion of figure-ground of Houston which went from a relative continuous fabric to its current state which is half skyscrapers, half parking lots. It would be an actually fascinating... one would not necessarily draw a causal effect. But there is certainly some relationship there and this is in a way provoking a response to a condition that is emerging by its own force.

SK: ... a change to that?

WS: Not necessarily to try to recover the prior condition of the continuous figure-ground, that would be a continuous street city, but actually find a nice space for it.

PW: That section is a tremendous help, it is actually that one that begins to show a series of...

PS: I wanted to create a sort of drama going down, so you have this change between high and narrow spaces and low and wide spaces and a movement up and down, wide and narrow.

PW: Also this.....metal clad wall, is this what this is? This is a tremendous leap from a few weeks ago, from the concrete (  )
PS: This wall was always supposed to be metal.
PW: I could imagine that in the middle of the night there would from one fork to the other there would be great signals all across the jungle... so that a kind of revolution could start.
PS: The intent was also that the building itself is concrete or beam and column structure and that this is supporting itself, hanging on these two walls. It is detached from it and supported by it and doesn't touch the rest (of the existing structure).
WS: Thank you very much.
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