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**THE LIMITS OF VIRTUALITY IN SPACE:
THE TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE
AND IMMATERIALITY**

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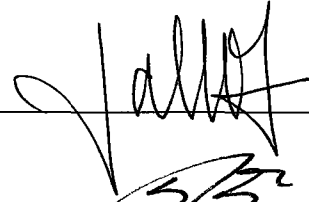
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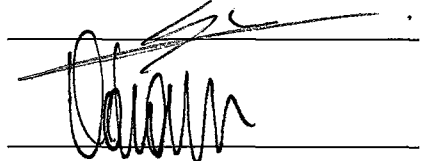
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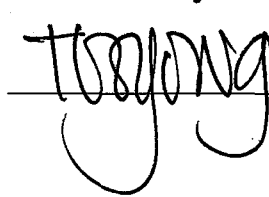
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ABSTRACT

THE LIMITS OF VIRTUALITY IN SPACE: THE TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN ARCHITECTURE AND IMMATERIALITY

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This study tries to discuss the relations between the critical culture of architecture and the concept of virtuality, which gradually emerged with the technologies of virtuality, and are intensifying in effect by the end of the 20th century. This thesis departs from the idea that technology, especially technologies of virtuality, is a cultural construct and affects architecture in various ways. The definition of the term 'virtuality' is narrowed to imply any kind of experience generated by technological constructs, that transports the self out of physical reality. In the third chapter, representations in the popular cultural narrations are studied in order to derive concepts that will help to construe the changing notions in architecture and lay the theoretical framework, under three categories: *time*, *space* and *culture*. Consequently, an analysis is made in the context of urban environment and dynamics, with the same structure, and the ways in which these categories are reconceptualized in the contemporary cities are discussed. As a result, this study tries to examine the shifting notions in the field of architecture with the involvement of virtuality.

Keywords: technologies of virtuality, virtual experience, popular culture, representation, urban culture.

ÖZ

SANAL MEKANIN SINIRLARI: MİMARLIKTA SANAL VE GERÇEK MEKANLAR ARASINDAKİ DÖNÜŞTÜRÜCÜ İLİŞKİLER

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Bu çalışma, sanallık teknolojileriyle ortaya çıkan ve 20. yy sonlarına doğru etkileri yoğunlaşmaya başlayan mimarlık kültürü- sanallık ilişkilerini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Teknoloji, özellikle sanallık teknolojileri, kültürel yapılardır ve mimarlığı farklı yollardan etkilemektedir. Bu çalışma dahilinde sanallık kavramının anlamı, teknoloji tarafından üretilen ve kişiyi fiziksel gerçekliğinin dışına taşıyan deneyimleri içerecek şekilde daraltılmıştır. Üçüncü bölümde, popüler kültür anlatılarında sanallığın temsiliyet şekilleri, değişen mimarlık düşüncesini kavramsallaştırmak ve teorik çerçeveyi oluşturmak amacıyla, üç kategori altında incelenmiştir: zaman, mekan ve kültür. Böylece, kent ortamı ve dinamikleri bağlamında, aynı teorik çerçeve içinde, sanallık kavramının mimarlığa yansımaları araştırılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, sanallık teknolojileri kapsamında mimarlıktaki değişen kavram ve düşünceleri açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: sanallık teknolojileri, sanal deneyim, popüler kültür, temsiliyet, kent kültürü.



To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

By the early 21st century, both the theoretical and practical domains of architecture are enjoying an intense curiosity on technology. As a matter of fact, there has never been any period in time that the technological developments, especially in the field of information technology have had so much influence on the social life and culture of architecture. The fascination with the concept of virtuality, entailed by information technology, manifests itself not only in architecture, but also in various disciplines such as art, philosophy, sociology, history, law, politics, and telecommunications, which are in return affecting the critical discourse of architecture in different ways.

Consequently, drastic changes are taking place in the way we understand and experience the world. The spatial restrictions are weakened, the borders and distances are redefined, our dependence to landscape and location are declined, and physical existence is interrogated. These changes are inevitably leading us to scrutinize our associations with the real spaces. As Soja argues: “[r]ather than disappearing or weakening, the embracing geography or spatiality of human life is being significantly restructured, organized and experienced in new and different ways that we are only beginning to understand” (1998).

The notion of virtual environments is an extra dimension that involves a variety of possibilities, a world without physical boundaries and restrictions, allowing us a new freedom of movement in the natural world. This condition of being freed from time and space brings along some crucial consequences in the field of architecture. Tectonic qualities, material durability and other physical considerations lose their significance as the main space-making determinants. The concepts of boundary, space-time relation as well as place, context, memory, scale, sign are reconstructed in exchange of the established concepts in architecture.

1.1. Problem:

In this context, the concept of space in general transforms itself into alternative meanings within the framework of architecture. With the new developments in the technologies of virtuality, boundaries between real and image, popular and permanent, original and imitation, material and immaterial, body and mind are blurred. Likewise, distinctions between culture and technology start to disappear to the extent that, technology becomes culture itself and starts to influence the urban lifestyles and critical culture of architecture. Therefore, the concepts of space and architecture need to be redefined, and these new meanings and potentials need to be revealed.

1.2. Objective:

This study aims to understand the limits of the transformations concerning space and architecture, which are generated by the concept of virtuality. Also, it intends to discuss the interactions between the real and the virtual spaces and the reflection of this transformation on the critical culture of architecture.

Today, the imagery of virtuality is still set up through analogies in the real world. Some critical concepts and activities are obtained from real life and superimposed onto the virtual, although the restrictions belonging to the realm of real are no longer compelling. The possibilities and potentials of virtuality have long gone beyond the suppositions, as being “a simulacrum of the real world, or allowing interaction in ways that mimic interaction with real world objects” (quoted from Walker by Chaplin, 1995: 32). Thus, the potentials of virtuality within the field of architecture will be explored by raising the following questions:

- How the relationships and dependence of *space – production*, *space-aesthetics* and *space – function* are altered?
- As architecture is not the dominant means of expression anymore, in which ways the real spaces represent themselves?
- What is the new role of the architecture within these challenges?
- How will architecture compromise with the new technologies of virtuality?

1.3. Method and Domain:

Although many literary and academic studies have been made, the concepts on virtuality are still waiting to be developed and redefined in the field of architecture. However, the virtual experiences have not penetrated into the everyday life yet. The direct applications of virtuality on the profession of architecture still remain scarce and superficial. Therefore, a conceptual analysis –which is not necessarily grounded on architecture, but rather on the critical discourses on cultural studies and critical theory, communication and information technology, informatics, popular culture, postmodern reproduction, visual technologies, - is tried to be made, in order to construe the changing concepts in architecture through other disciplines.

This study tries to explore the field of art and popular culture, rather than architectural products, in order to construct a primary theoretical framework. The

method will be a multi-disciplinary one. The main tools will be visual narrations like films, video clips and advertisements, which occupies a large amount of our daily life as inhabitants of contemporary cities. As Clark mentions, this study holds up the approach, which supports that,

“computer generated and transmitted realities emerge out of more encompassing regimes of signification; that they arise from worlds in which physical forms and circulating images are already in constant interplay. Cybernetic constructs both inherit and respond to these prior arrangements of mediated images and objects, and in doing so they impact upon the worlds beyond the digital domain” (Clark, 1995: 116).

Although circulating within the domain of visual representation, the notion of virtuality exposes its results beyond the immaterial world. In this way, the representations and metaphors of the concept of virtuality within these fields, which will act as “imaginative tools to help us discuss the relationship between today’s real city and the so-called virtual space of telecommunication and data manipulation” will be analyzed in the following chapters (Delbeke, 1999: 407). In this way, the concepts derived from these domains will be the tools for deciphering and translating the new meanings and significance of contemporary architectural spaces.

Finally and most significantly, these transformations are sought out within the urban context, as the intersection point of culture, technology and architecture. The notion of virtuality, as an urban generator, gives rise to profound shifts in urban perception and experiences. Urban spaces are not physically defined or determined spatial entities, but rather sites of spontaneous action and interaction. The coexistence and ways of negotiation of virtuality and urban matrix will be the subject of this study. The city, in other words, is the interface between a technology-mediated lifestyle and the impulsive urban flow. The major contingency of virtuality is not the innovative environments it generates, but rather

its accompaniment to the material world. The main framework of the discussion will be constituted under three categories, which are *time*, *space* and *culture*. The ways in which these concepts are reconceptualized will be explored with the contemporary urban transformations. In this way, a variety of speculations and ideas from diverse disciplines, are brought together and analyzed in order to construe an understanding of space in the age of virtuality.

At the end of this study, architectural resolutions will be made to clarify the logic of the concept of virtuality, from an architectural perspective. The involvement of virtuality in these fields will be analyzed in order to conceptualize:

- how virtuality reshapes the meaning of architectural space, and alter some concepts belonging to the field of architecture like *space*, *place*, *body*, *identity*, *boundary*, *surface*, *interface*, *time*, *function*, etc,
- spatial transformations revealed and triggered by the concepts within these fields.
- the reflections of virtuality on the contemporary discourse and theory of architecture.

1.4. Limits

In studying the transformative relations between virtuality and architecture, this thesis excludes applications of virtual reality in architectural design, and the architecture of virtual reality. Furthermore, in discussing the interdisciplinary socio-cultural dynamics of virtuality within the visual media, an architectural point of view is maintained. The main frame of this thesis is constructed according to the threefold frame (time, space, and culture) on which architectural readings are made.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEANING AND CONTINGENCY OF VIRTUALITY

2.1. Definition And Limits Of Virtuality

By the beginning of 21st century, the notion of virtuality is beginning to play a dominant role in diverse disciplines. Today, the word 'virtual' has approximately become identical with *electronically mediated spaces* as the outcome of the information technologies (IT), or the so-called '*cyberspace*', merely implying any kind of object, activity or idea that takes place in the digital environment of any computer network like virtual reality, virtual community, virtual hosting etc. It has been distinguished in today's world primarily by the phrase, *virtual reality*, and has been widely employed by the *video games, architectural design and presentation, geographical modeling, medical diagnosis, engineering simulation modeling, military research and training, etc.* Due to these diverse disciplines that utilize the VR technology, there is a plenty of definitions depending on the area that is used. Nevertheless, to explain broadly, virtual reality is:

1. An electronic simulation in which perspective images are generated in real time from a stored database corresponding to the position and orientation of the head of a user, who observes the images on a head-mounted display.
2. An electronic simulation in which images are generated in real time or near real time from a stored database and displayed in such a way as to facilitate real-time interaction with the database, such as a vehicle simulation with imagery presented for viewing out the windows of the vehicle.
3. Most generally, any electronic simulation or display that suggests the sense of involvement or interaction associated with virtual reality as practiced using head mounted displays (Latham, 1995: 148).

However, the contemporary usage of the term 'Virtuality' obscures the primary meaning. The digital experience and perception, with its very own imagery, is envisaged to be a brand new one, due to the commercialization of virtuality as a vast new area accommodating almost all of the features of real physical environments.

vir·tu·al *adj*

1. Existing or resulting in essence or effect though not in actual fact, form, or name: *the virtual extinction of the buffalo.*
2. Existing in the mind, especially as a product of the imagination. Used in literary criticism of a text.

From the website <http://www.dictionary.com>

The word and the concept itself exist since long before the innovations in the information technology and the [anti]spatial reflections it brings along. As Mirzoeff argues, “[v]irtuality has certainly experienced before, perhaps as long as people have been sufficiently distracted by an artist skill to take a picture briefly for reality” (1998: 181). He traces the roots of the term till the 18th century, when poet Goethe sees the antique sculpture Apollo Belvedere, and writes down that he had been “transported out of reality” (quoted by Mirzoeff, 1999: 93). Mirzoeff infers from this incident that “virtuality can be understood as the transformation of space away from exterior three-dimensional reality to the poly-dimensional interior world of the self” (1999: 93). Another device that evoke a feeling of virtuality, for Mirzoeff, is the *stereoscope*, invented in 1830, generating a feeling of three-dimensionality, which undeniably resembles the virtual reality experiences of our age. The more recent media of the virtual experiences, for Mirzoeff, are cinema and television, for they “create access to a dimension of the optical unconscious that previously could not be explored” (1999: 95). This visual proliferation and finally mass-production and commodification of images raised many discussions on visual culture. As also remarked by Barlow, the meaning of virtuality implies much more than an extension or outcome of technology:

“Cyberspace is what happens when you leave the landscape and move onto the map. Cyberspace is any place where you can interact with other human beings on any level without actually being in physical proximity. Every one of your readers has experienced it because cyberspace is where you are when you are on the phone. You could stretch the point and say that literature is a form of cyberspace” (Barlow).

Today, the meaning of the word, virtual, ranges from its literal meaning, to the digital environments of the virtual reality. Although the notion is hardly a new concept to the contemporary culture of our age, the new technologies give way to a relatively new incident (at least to the social context and practices of today), which is the notion of *immateriality* that is furthered by the dynamics of virtuality. As

Enric Massip suggests, “[p]rogress -future according to the excited plumber- is seemingly recognized by its most paradoxical quality: it is invisible”. Immateriality, in fact, is rooted in the very essence of digital culture and virtuality, in which everything is reduced into the binary opposition of numbers ‘1’ and ‘0’ and no physical existence is available.

From another point of view, in the introduction of the book ‘*Invisible in Architecture*’, Van Toorn and Bouman attempt to describe the ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’. Invisible are the set of dynamics that have effects that are intense but almost indistinguishable by senses.

“The sign is visible, not the content to which the sign refers; the object is visible, not the action taking place in and around that object; the elegant, unique signature is visible, not the humdrumness of collective manners; the solution is visible, not the problem; our Brave New First World is visible, not the peripheral Third World to our south and in the ghettos of affluent West; the self is visible, not the Other in that self’s selfishness” (1994: 12).

In this sense, what the term virtual implies in this study is, the immaterial and invisible nature of the *technologies of virtuality* in architecture, which has no apparent outcomes or consequences, but implicitly influences the culture of architecture. ‘Virtuality’ may not necessarily indicate a total disappearance of the body or the physical surroundings. As mentioned earlier, the meaning of the term ‘virtual experience’ may even involve simply an illustration or any kind of painting. Likewise, the only device that offers the virtual experience is definitely not the Virtual Reality construct. Any kind of technological involvement that shifts the conscience of the self from one spatial dimension into another is the subject of this study.

2.2. Technology And Virtuality As Social Constructs

Needless to say, technological innovations develop together with the social impacts that they entail. Today, we are undergoing a process, in which culture is gradually being more and more explained in terms of technologies of virtuality, as well as other dynamics. These new technologies are not merely involvements that utilize our lives, but rather became inseparable parts of contemporary civilization. Technology today, maybe, has the potential to rearrange the socio-cultural relations more than ever.

We perceive and utilize technology in terms of cultural interactions. Culture is the basis that technology develops on and participates in our lives. In return, cultural practices are gradually starting to reside in the invisible global networks, like telephones, cable networks, electronic data transmission via satellites, world wide web, etc. As Mackenzie and Wajcman write in 1985, “the compelling nature of much technological change is best explained by seeing technology not as outside of society, as technological determinism would have it, but as inextricably part of society” (quoted by Graham and Marvin. 1996: 104). Social meanings and practices interweave with the technological culture and they tend to become one. In this way, it can be said that technology has become a ‘cultural construct’.

In studying the relation between cities (in which cultural practices take place) and technology; unlike the technological determinist approach that follows a linear development and highlights analytical and policy issues, as argued by Graham and Marvin, the notion of technology in relation to culture suggests a more complex and multifaceted conception (1996, 80-110). As urban socio-cultural structures have become susceptible to technology more than ever, these themes –which are henceforth driven extensively by technologies of virtuality-, have changed from a relatively fixed formation into a flow.

However, it is not merely the virtual technological developments, but also the proliferation of visual media that restructures the urban lifetimes persistently. It would not be untrue to claim that a notable portion of contemporary culture takes place in the territory of global networks of mass media. New social meanings are generated, represented, and even experienced within this terrain. Supported by newest technologies, the web of media both accommodates and justifies the 'conception of virtuality as a social construct'. In this sense, technology (specifically technologies of virtuality) and mass media are highly interdependent.

Moreover, both technologies of virtuality and global mass media offer similar experiences of inhabitation. Virtuality, in nature, is immaterial and it is a product of imagination. The realm of mass media network, similarly, is one of representation, in which reality is both mediated and simulated. Even the contemporary self, as many theorists argue, are living in a reality of simulation, with very little connection to the 'real', whose existence and limits become doubtful. As mentioned before, the experience of virtuality is a feature of represented or imagined reality. In the same way, the experience lived via media may be regarded as virtual. Thus, in this context, it is possible to assert that the interface between technology and culture is highly permeable. So to say, contemporary urban phenomena are going through a process in which the distinctions between culture and technology, cities and telecommunications are blurred, as discussed by Graham and Marvin (1996: 106).

Technologies of virtuality, intended for replacing or at least complementing real spaces, are also creating their own culture that is inherently rooted in a spatial basis. As a result, it becomes possible to affirm that the virtual culture and technologies of virtuality both point to a virtualized reality. This substitution is problematic from an architectural view, as architecture is primarily spatial and implies permanence, while virtual environments are anti-spatial constructions and temporal.

2.3. Transformations in Construing of Space

The next section will try to explore how our understanding of spaces is altered in time, and the ways in which space has become devoid of its meaning as it is conventionally conceived. The rest of the chapter aims at discussing the shifting notions in social life and culture of architecture, just before the emergence of technologies of virtuality. Some issues that will be raised here will be the *consumer society, representation, “postmodern” reproduction (and mass production in this regard), visual technologies, and communication and information technologies*. In this way, this study will refer to alternative discussions in various disciplines, to understand and clarify the reflections of these issues.

2.3.1. Simulation Of Everyday Life In The ‘Field Of Vision’: Baudrillard and Robins

As an alternative to the material world, one way of interpreting the notion of virtuality is construing it as a simulation of the real. Studying the Western culture’s excessive involvement with *signs* –which are lacking any relation with reality- and its paradoxical consequences as a cultural problem- Jean Baudrillard introduces the concept of simulation, which implies the construction of ‘real’ with no relation to the reality. Simulation becomes the determinant phenomenon in signifying in mass-production and electronic media culture: it is “the production of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere” (Baudrillard, 1996: 3). Having broken all connections with territory or any kind of its reference, simulation is the “generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard, 1996: 2).

For Baudrillard, “reality itself, entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its own structure, has been confused with its own image”, and real has become inferior to its image (1996: 151). In this sense, the images surpass the

reality by supplying the reassurance provided by the sense of reality. An image changes into a simulacrum –the stage in which the separation between representation and reality has disappeared, or a copy without an original- in the following phases:

1. It is the reflection of a basic reality;
2. It masks and perverts a basic reality;
3. It masks the absence of a basic reality;
4. It bears no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (1996: 11)

He traces this transformation in the abundance of images within mass media (especially television) in western consumerist societies, in which there is more information but less meaning. He claims that the very aim of mass media, in a world that is impossible to distinguish between the spectacle and the real, is to atomize and suppress spectators and unify their differences.

Baudrillard's ideas on the loss of sense of reality as a result of reproduction and simulation are a critical tool for this study to understand the transition from real to virtual. To start, the conception of the map in Borges' tale overlaps the virtual environments of our age: "Henceforth, it is the map, that precedes the territory – PRECESSION OF SIMULACRA- it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map" (1996: 2). Both realms, the map and virtuality, offer simulated realities and distort the inhabitant's sense of reality. The notion of virtuality challenges the way we understand and perceive the material world, and finally becomes an autonomous and self-referential entity that suggests no connection with the material world. Just like the map, the notion of virtuality gradually replaces the real, and turns it into an empty signifier.

While tracing the transitions of space in the digital world, Kevin Robins' stance is also fairly significant, for he examines the massive expansion of vision and visual technologies, in relation to the changing nature of the human experiences. Just as Baudrillard, Robins develops his ideas within the products of visual media. He claims that visually oriented communication devices have changed the way people see the world:

“We seem to live in a world where images proliferate independently from meaning and from referents in the real world. Modern life appears to be increasingly a matter of interaction and negotiation with images and simulations which no longer serve to mediate reality. This simulation culture promises to open up whole new dimensions of existence and experience” (Robins, 1996a: 157).

This visual abundance colonizing every aspect of everyday life has considerable implications on patterns of perception and experience, he argues, as “increasingly we have come to see the world by means of mediated vision, and, as we have done so, we have increasingly been able to distance and detach ourselves from contact with its reality” (Robins, 1996b: 21), implying the hyperreality of Baudrillard. This new consciousness that there is always a gap between image and real in meaning, gave way to a disbelief in our conception of reality. However much imposing the capacities of the new visual technologies are—such as photography, film, and most recently computer generated images—, they have the ability to “displace and replace reality. We are asked to believe that we could inhabit this other-world of simulation” (1996b: 43).

Baudrillard and Robins share many ideas, as elucidated above. Both theorists study how the idea and practice of simulating detaches the real from the simulated. However, what distinguishes Robins from Baudrillard is his emphasis on the urban experience in simulated environments. For him, the *visual* is preceded to the *tactile* due to the communication and information technologies of our age: “sight against touch” (1996b: 20). Unlike Baudrillard, Robins refers directly to the notion of virtuality. He remarks that the cyberworld is utopian as it is ordered and pre-

eminently visual, in which “real experience is denied; everything is simulation. Desire and lack are disavowed. The tensions and frustrations and anxieties of existence are allayed” (Robins, 1996b: 30).

Against the sovereignty of the images (simulated reality), he praises the importance of experience and the genuine interactions between the body and the world. In this point, he indicates how our visual relations with the city are altered. He examines how the new ways of perception and relations between spaces and their inhabitants transform the assessment of architecture. Within this discussion that Robins puts forward, space is no more construed via its authentic components, but it becomes an integrated whole in a series of experience.

2.3.2. Consumption Of Places: John Urry

Departing from the notion of consuming in the capitalist societies, John Urry asserts that consumption of goods and services, and *consumption of places* are interdependent within the patterns social life of contemporary metropolises: “Such patterns are significantly commodified but there is generally a complex mixing of both commodification and collective enthusiasm” (1995: 28-29).

Urry analyzes the different ways in which spaces are economically and culturally transformed, and reveals how these spaces themselves are being consumed. Four gradual steps are defined through consuming spaces:

1. Places are increasingly being structured as centers for consumption.
2. Places themselves are in a sense consumed, particularly visually, due to the provision of various kinds of consumer services for both visitors and locals.
3. Places can be literally consumed in a way that what people take to be significant about a place such as industry, history, buildings, literature, environment is over time depleted, devoured or exhausted by use.

4. It is possible for localities to consume one's identity so that such places become *all-consuming* places. (Urry, 1995: 1-2)

Urry is concerned especially with the *visual* consumption of places, which mostly becomes evident in the places of tourist industry, justifying the "claims to consume other cultures and places throughout the world" (Urry, 1995: 165). He studies this process from the modernist fascination of mobility and decontextualization –as quoted from Giddens, "one of the key features of modernity is that social relations are disembedded from local contexts of action", to one of its embodiments in the 'organized capitalist' societies: mass tourism (Urry, 1995: 143, 146). The tourism industry sustains the logic of capitalism, in which images are commodified and consumed, as well as geography, culture, history and identity. Emphasizing the problematic representation of history, for example, he refers to Hewison's distinction between "authentic history" and "packaged heritage"; one of which is continuous and unsafe, and the other is "past, dead and safe ... conceal[ing] the destruction of the present" (Urry, 1995: 160).

Then he goes one step further and declares the "end of tourism", referring to the "experience simulated mobility through the incredible fluidity of multiple signs and electronic images" (1995: 148). In this last stage, in which mere visual consumption takes place, mobility and transportation become redundant. Now that the reality is represented by images that are circulating within the global media: a process that results in the 'collapse of space and time' (quoted from Brunn and Leinbach by Urry, 1995: 152). This last step belongs to the terrain of the hyperreal, as broadly argued by Jean Baudrillard.

Consumption of spaces can be regarded as a stage in the process of detachment of architectural spaces and the experiences of their inhabitants. A relation based on consumption is not a reliable one, and might result in the total commodification and commercialization of the environments that it dwells in. The consequences of this

detachment of experience and architectural space in the contemporary urban fabric will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.3.3. 'Non Places' - Marc Augé

Augé depicts another picture of our age specific for what he calls 'supermodernity', entailing in non-places, which "lacks meaning in the classical anthropological sense because nobody feels any attachment to it" (Ibelings, 1998: 65). Augé differentiates places and non-places in a way that, "if a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (1995: 77-78).

Augé marks three transformations that take place in the contemporary world: overabundance of events, overabundance of space and individualization of meaning (1995: 29, 32, 37). In this description, the phenomenon of spatial abundance is worth dissecting, for it is the point where the concept of supermodernity mostly overlaps the terrain of architecture. Supermodernity is expressed, as Augé argues, "in changes of scale, in the proliferation of imaged and imaginary references, and in the spectacular acceleration of means of transport", which result in the multiplication of non-places (1995: 34). The examples of non-places are the airport and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets, and finally the cable and wireless networks, that "mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purpose of a communication so peculiar that it often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself" (Augé, 1995: 79).

However, the notion of 'non-place' isn't merely dependent to the material world, but bears many relations with digital spaces as well. The concept of 'non-spaces' that Augé tries to conceptualize in his work cannot be taken into account as a brand

new designation, for the cyberpunk* author William Gibson in 1983 first uses the word to describe the matrix or so-called cyberspace in his well-known book *Neuromancer*: "Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data" (1983: 51). The conception of non-places point to immateriality, disembodiment and disappearance: erosion of references to reality, context and history, just like virtuality does. Moreover, both refer to places that are in-between, in which issues like identity and difference are first blurred, and then arbitrarily recreated.

In this sense, he unravels some of the issues on virtualization that lies hidden in the modern times, but with an analysis grounded on spatial transformations within cultural issues, mainly concerning the new typologies that are emerging at the end of the 20th century.

2.4. Reflections on Architecture:

Today's urban experience of the contemporary self is one of instability and inconsistency. There is an undeniable shift in the way we perceive and experience space and time, due to our changing interaction with these two. Hitherto synchronized concepts like space, time and culture have entered a process of re-definition and re-formation, specifically within the context of architecture.

As mentioned above, cultural impacts like mass media, consumer aesthetics, global culture, increased ease and acceleration of mobility and communications have made the architectural space turn into a commodity, spectacle, flow of meanings etc. In this way, experience has become dependent on trends imposed by these dynamics, rather than the architectural space itself. These new phenomena

* A literary style; the combination of the term *cyber*, derived from cybernetics, and the term *punk*, combined to imply the "anarchy via machines" or 'machine/computer rebel movement' (<http://faculty.winthrop.edu/tarversj/engl510/cyberlitstyle.htm>)

concerning architecture have rendered the contemporary self “feel rather comfortable with our new condition of derealization” (Robins, 1996b: 44).

So to say, space and spatial relations are already gradually becoming ‘virtualized’, regardless of the technologies of virtuality of our age. Before the time that the technologies of virtuality’ effects have become visible in the contemporary cities, the above-mentioned involvements have laid the groundwork for the new formations of the new immaterial culture. These concepts are all former symptoms of an architecture under transformation. However, all these conceptual frameworks are intertwined with each other, and it becomes almost impossible to distinguish them and their consequences. Therefore, the technologies of virtuality, in some ways, only enhanced these issues discussed, along with bringing new concepts and discussions.

CHAPTER 3.

THE REPRESENTATIVE MANIFESTATION OF VIRTUALITY WITHIN THE FRAME OF ARCHITECTURAL SPACE

If “[s]ociology of the future has long since emigrated to science fiction” (Röetzer, 1998: 125), and other fields of representation, then we need to reconsider our field of study to reconceptualize the changing notions on architecture. The concept of virtuality, as it is used in this study, is still a fresh one, and its nature and metaphors have suggested little about the real life till now. As Bukatman argues, “[t]he newly proliferating electronic technologies of the Information Age are invisible, circulating outside of the human experiences of space and time” (Bukatman, 1993: 2). Therefore, this study aims at focusing on the field of visual representation, in order to derive some notions that will help to conceptualize the reciprocal relation between virtuality and architecture in the next chapter.

In this study, visual popular cultural ‘texts’ will be discussed, in order to prepare a basis for understanding the logic of virtuality and immateriality. Henry Jenkins deconstructs the meaning of fans and fanatics within popular culture, and replaces

it from its negative connotation as having “excessive and mistaken enthusiasm”, to a tendency that “perceives fans as active producers and manipulators of meanings” (1992: 23). For him, mass media is a creative site for fans to construct their social and cultural identity, in which various contrary readings are equally justifiable. In this context, he refers to de Certeau’s *poacher* (as strugglers for possession of the text and control over its meanings) and *nomadic reader* (as they are always in movement, appropriating new materials and making new meanings) analogies (Jenkins, 1992: 24, 36). Both nomadic readers and textual poachers are active interpreters that show resistance to dominant cultural hierarchies and tastes. Correspondingly, in this chapter, we will act like nomads and poachers, wandering through and borrowing arbitrarily from popular culture texts and developing our own meanings from an architectural view. We will exploit the inclusive and open-ended signifying nature within popular cultural texts.

As Iain Chambers writes,

“Popular culture, through its social exercise of forms, tastes and activities flexibly tuned to the present, rejects the narrow access to the cerebral world of official culture. It offers instead a more democratic prospect for appropriating and transforming everyday life. For whatever its actual limits, people live through culture, not alongside it” (1986: 13).

Chambers distinguishes official culture from popular culture, in a way that official culture “demands moments of attention that are separated from the run of daily life”, while popular culture “does not involve an abstract aesthetic research amongst privileged objects of attention, but invokes mobile orders of sense, taste and desire” (1986: 12). Popular cultural products imply inclusion more than exclusion. They perform minimum friction against further interpretations, and thus can be construed by decoding the metaphors and revealing the meanings lies hidden within them.

The domain of popular cultural narrations, -which are films, video clips, and advertisements for this study- are not only areas that ‘post-modern’ consumption takes place, but also fields that social practice takes shape and urban lifestyles are displayed. So far, films are widely discussed and studied to diagnose and analyze the indications of the transformations of the modern architecture. Though, the two visual popular culture products -video clips and advertisements- are generally despised in the academic milieu because of the masses they are addressing to. Contrary to the views that “see advertising solely as a space for consumption”; they are regarded as “sites of production” in this study, as “exchanges of meaning are made with an eye to creating a new value, or adding value, to a product or a service” (Goldman and Papson, 2001a). Similarly, video clips are much more than instruments simply to sell the music; they are visual materializations and signs of the existing urban culture, behaviors and lifestyle.

The aim of this chapter is to exhibit how these narratives define and legitimize the concept of virtuality and the logic of technology. In this way, this study tries to avoid the over-referred works and employ rather unnoticed ones.

3.1. Visual Metaphors:

The imagery of virtuality might be discussed under many titles, within the field of visual representation. As this study tries to explore the reciprocal relationships between architecture and virtuality, some of these titles come to the fore. Three of the fundamental components of architecture, *time*, *space* and *culture*, will be the main frame of this discussion. In this way, this chapter will try to develop concepts and ideas about these three constructs, which will be relocated and reconceptualized in the next chapter, in the context of urban fabric. In addition, two issues that characterize today’s urban phenomena, like the representations of *city* and *body*, will also be discussed, in order to construe the present urban condition and self.

Representation of Speed, Time and Distance

“Imagine a world in which time seems to vanish and space becomes completely malleable. Where the gap between need or desire and fulfillment collapses to zero. Where distance equals a microsecond in lapsed connection time” (McKenna, 1997: 3).

The notion of speed, by the end of 20th century, has almost become the inseparable feature of the contemporary cities and lifestyles. It has become the inevitable component of progression. Gradually, not only the speed of rather physical involvements like transportation, money or goods is increasing, but also immaterial ones such as information, communication, images, trends, lifestyles, cultures, meanings, etc have entered into the dynamic process of circulation. The new technologies of virtuality have made this transmission almost instantaneous, coercing the limits of space and time. However, “[s]peed has as its referent not just time but also distance. Speed refers not only to how quickly or slowly the digital pulse of a timepiece moves, but also to movement across space” (Goldman and Papson, 2001b). This new reconfiguration of time and speed has profound effects on the reconfiguration of the material world.

In this context, David Harvey introduces the concept of “time-space compression” in order to explain “processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves” (1989: 240). By the information and communication technologies (ICT), the world has become smaller and spatial barriers are blurred, if not defeated completely. Speed and instantaneity have become the key concepts in this process of acceleration. The experiences, also, are intensified so much to generate simultaneous but disconnected conceptions of time.

This accelerating speed and the coexistence of diverse time patterns is represented most significantly in the multinational corporations’ advertisements. They depict a

world that is explored by the far-reaching invisible networks of transformation and communication, which are so rapid that it is almost impossible to perceive their existence. In this way, a discrepancy between the natural flow of time and the high-speed technological time arises. The architectural and urban spaces, which are relatively much more inert and static, cannot keep up with the continuous flows. Time and speed undermine the spatial conception of cities, which Harvey (referring to Marx) names as the “annihilation of space by time”.



Fig.3.1. Flows of transport and information

From the website

<http://www.lclark.edu/~soan370/global/flashspeed5.html>

Speed, in these media, is emphasized by the method of time-lapse photography of moving objects, by picturing them as linear paths of light splitting up the geography, or distorting its spatial completeness. The stillness of the urban environment and the instant flows are visually distinguished. Speed not only deconstructs the nature of perceptions, but also entails a new way of lifestyle that is highly dependent of mobility. Modern man, whom Koolhaas calls "the kinetic elite," is one that restlessly wanders through the globe, never settling down long

enough to take roots. Space and time are now detached from each other, as they suggest no unity and synchronization anymore.

3.1.1. Representation of Space and Place

The notion of virtuality mainly points to immateriality and the absence of physical reality. However, “understanding of the 'virtual' [is] a primarily spatial phenomenon” (Fletcher, 1998). Virtual reality is just a dimension –and perhaps the most popular- of the spatial extension of this concept. Yet, virtuality becomes visible in material spaces as well, as a conceptual involvement related with experiencing.

The music video ‘In Your Eyes’ directed by Dawn Shadforth in 2002 features a surreal environment, in which he utilizes digital visualization technologies to reconfigure the environment: The borders of the space are instable and ever-changing graphic patterns with bright colors on giant digital screens. The space of the screen is not fixed and stable: it is always in flux. The screen, as Scott Bukatman argues, “operates as the frontier between the two realities, physical and electronic” (1993, 108). The surfaces are illusive and they create infinite different perceptions, with changing shapes and sequences, which create spatial and temporal unsteadiness and disorientation upon the spectator/inhabitant.

The space is designed to display as if “Kylie is suspended in the middle of a futuristic city rather than in a shed off the A308 between Windsor and Maidenhead”*, so it’s primary aim is to feign to be something different. For this is a space “defined by light”, it has no reliable referent. The continuity of the space is disrupted and reformed every minute after another. It is a hyperreal environment, “a space without center or ground, and with only a vector graphic simulation of perspective (too crisp, too perfect) to guide a human eye that has suddenly become

* from <http://www.kyliefever.com/press/200201theface.asp>

distinct from its corporeality, its spatiality, its temporality, and its subjectivity” as Bukatman describes screens in the electronic age (1993: 108).

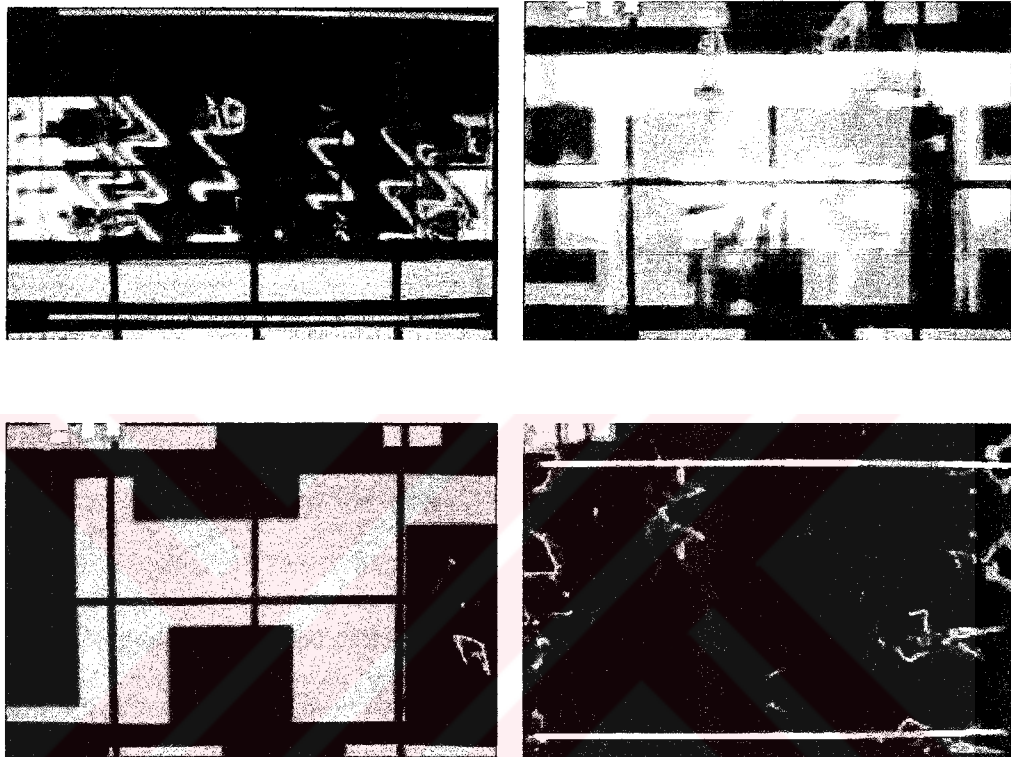


Fig 3.2. Still images from the music video ‘In Your Eyes’ by D. Shadforth

Moreover, the surfaces in the video are merely visual objects that suggest no tactile relations. The dancing people and their motions are mechanized and they look like robots rather than humans. Bodies are pixelated and almost transparent, in perfect harmony with, and even sometimes indistinguishable from the surroundings. Celeste Olalquiaga, in her book *‘Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Sensibilities’* portrays *psychasthenia*, a diseases that eliminates and distorts the temporal and spatial perceptions of the patient. “Defined as a disturbance in the relation between self and surrounding territory”, psychasthenia “is a state in which

the space defined by coordinates of the organism's own body is confused with represented space" (1992: 1).

"Incapable of demarcating the limits of its own body, lost in the immense area that circumscribes it, the psychasthenic organism proceeds to abandon its own identity to embrace the space beyond. It does so by camouflaging itself into the milieu. This simulation effects a double usurpation: while the organism successfully reproduces those elements it could not otherwise apprehend, in the process it is swallowed up by them, vanishing as a differentiated entity" (Olalquiaga, 1992: 2).

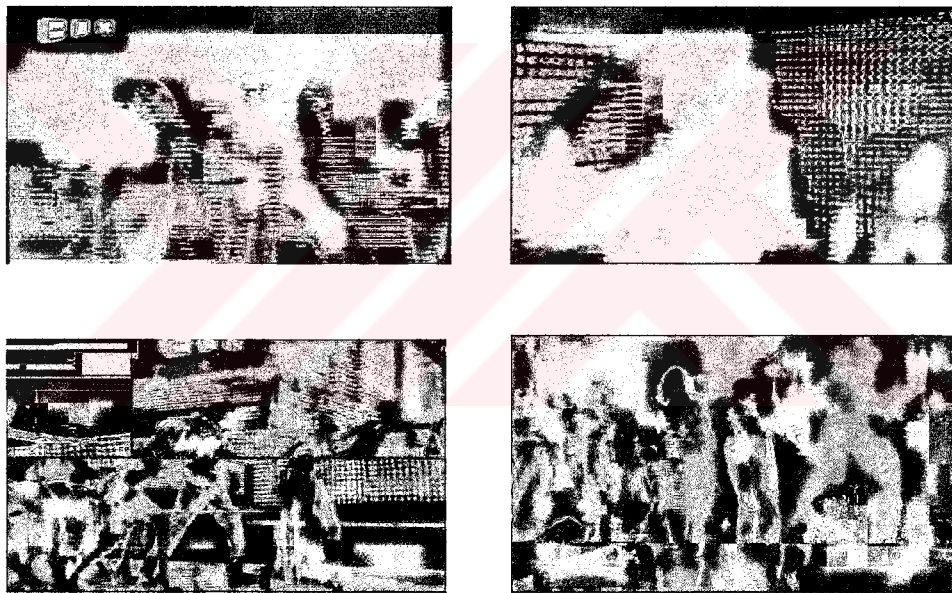


Figure 3.3. Still images from the music video 'In Your Eyes' by D. Shadforth

Olalquiaga settles this process of psychasthenia in the 'postmodern condition' and contemporary urban fabric of our era. This disease that ends up with the collapse of spatiotemporal senses is very emblematic of children's stories, most significantly Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, for Olalquiaga, in which the protagonist suffers the troubles of a new unfamiliar world. However, Alice's verbal differentiation of

the real and the imaginary to avoid psychasthenia is unlikely today, as the verbal language is substituted by the proliferation of visual material. "Images are central to the shaping of identity: largely constituted by the perception of the self as a separate totality, identity must resort to an image to acquire a sense of wholeness" (Olalquiaga, 1992: 4). Also, virtual environments are mostly about visual experiencing. Inhabitant of virtual environments has to act like a chameleon in order to keep up with her/his environment. In this way she/he simulates part of her/his physical appearance. The distinction between the self and environment blurs and they tend to become one.

As Edward Soja points out, the "epidemic scale and scope of these simulated spatialities and their infectious power to shape the substance and meaning of our contemporary life worlds, world views, and lived spaces" is the very characteristic of our age (1998). The condition of in-betweenness is maybe the most recent relation between the inhabitant and her/his environment.

The music video that depicts the involvement of the notion of digital surfaces into the urban life is '*The Child*', performed by an electronic music artist Alex Gopher. Directed by H5, the video features a pregnant woman and her husband rushing on their way to the hospital. However, the people, objects and buildings within the city are featured as moving words in a 3D environment. Every single object is converted into information and their depth is destroyed. The text-bodies' identities are reduced into vocabulary.

This condition overlaps the condition that Marc Augé calls as "the invasion of space by text" (1995: 99). In dwellers of contemporary metropolis need to decipher and analyze the verbal stimuli that surround him, and in this way, the inhabitant of the contemporary city has become a modern reader, continuously uncovering the coded meanings. This representation of the urban dynamics offers new awarenesses in experiencing of space, in a way that, every singly item, action or meaning in the

city can be interpreted as means of information, eliminating the true nature of objects.

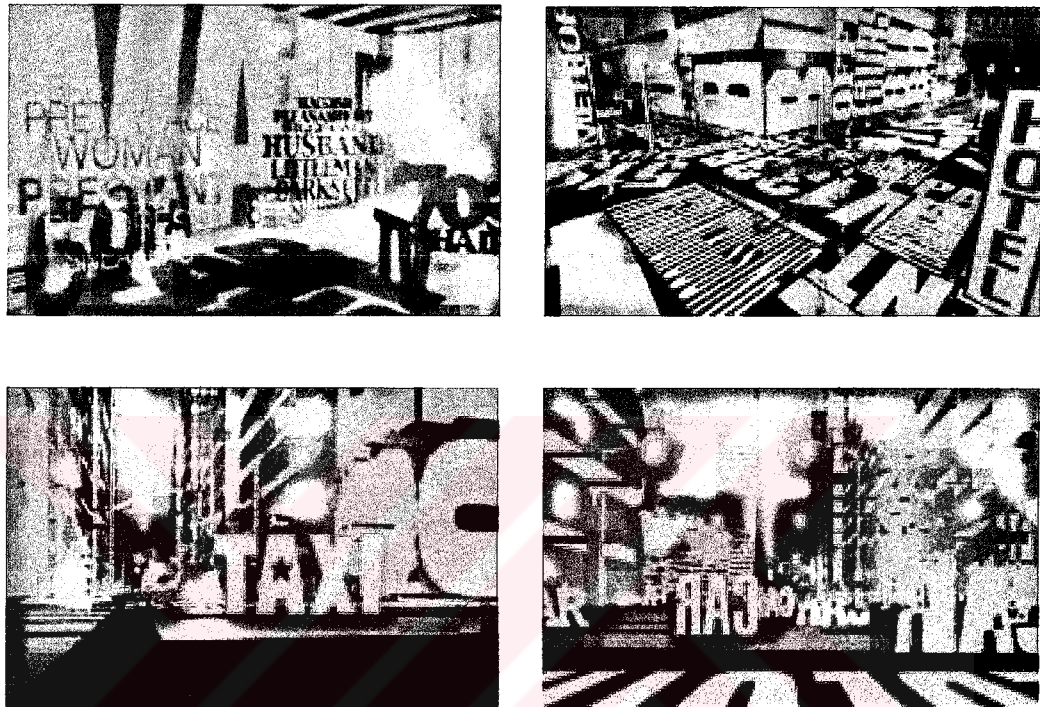


Figure 3.4. Still images from the music video by H5

3.1.2. Representation of Culture and Identity

“In the long run, we’ll not only be wearing Banana Republic T-shirts, but we’ll also be living in the Banana Republic” (Žižek, 1997).

The concept of globalization and virtuality share many in common, both coercing the limits of time and place in similar ways. Technologies of virtuality accelerate the process of globalization via their worldwide networks, while globalization

always contains the logic of virtuality. They grow and intensify proportional to that of each other. Predictably, “global unification is also happening in a virtual space” as Nataša Petrešin argues: as “[t]he anthropological theories about the growing frequency of individual interconnections are realized in the mechanism of the internet as well” (Petrešin).

Globalization is indeed one of the most widely discussed terms of age, both in the academic milieu and mass media. It refers to the shrinking of the world –not in the literal/physical sense but metaphorically- by “new technologies and mobilities, and the speeding up of process no longer inhabited by national boundaries or by geographical locatedness” (Franklin, Lury and Stacey, 2000: 2).

Moreover, some relate this phenomena to the technological revolutions such as communication technologies –like TV, telephone, fax, and others that allow interaction within like electronic space and internet-, others charge the growth of multi-national corporations and organizations emerged with the ‘late-capitalist’ world. Similarly, there are also many definitions on the concept from diverse disciplines, ranging from the approaches that highlight the cultural aspects, claiming that culture “has been moved towards the center”, and the recentering of the cultural within the issues on globalization like Featherstone (1995: 3), to the ones that explains the concept in terms of the changes in economic system. Globalization can be discussed under two themes:

- Growth of the market: David Harvey
- Fusion of different cultures: Mike Featherstone

Harvey sees globalization, without explicitly mentioning the word, as a consequence of the “*geographical expansion* of the capital”, the transnational “flux and flow of capital circulation” and the accompanying socio-economic changes (Harvey, 1996: 295). In the same book, Harvey articulates the problematic process of radical restructuring of space-time relations since 1970, and asserts, “this has

altered the relative locations of places within the global patterning of capital accumulation” (1996: 297). Furthermore, as a result of this growth of power of capital, “new networks of places arise, as fixed capital embedded in the land and configurations of organized social relations, institutions, etc. on the land” and in consequence, “difference and otherness are produced” (1996: 295).

Yet, relating globalization merely to capitalism and economic liberalization that began in the 1980s would be deficient and superficial, as least in the context of this study, as it fails to elucidate the complexities of socio-cultural processes and practices of everyday life. Accordingly, a different approach towards the concept of globalization needs to be discussed, as in the studies of Featherstone, who defends the recentering the cultural issues within this discourse, as mentioned above. In his book *‘Undoing Culture’* dating 1995; he mentions the two contrary consequences of globalization in the cultural sphere:

a. EXTENSION outwards of a particular culture

With the worldwide circulation of all kinds of cultural images, ideals, practices and artifacts, “[h]eterogeneous cultures become incorporated and integrated into a dominant culture which eventually covers the whole world” (Featherstone, 1995: 6). As a result, a new awareness, asserting that there are plural histories, diverse cultures and particularities which were excluded from Western modernity’s universalistic project raised, which “points to the more positive evaluation by the West of otherness and differences resulting from the shift in the balance of power between nations which find themselves progressively bound together in a global figuration from which it is increasingly difficult to opt out” (1995: 89). Featherstone is critical about this picture, as “it suggests a process of conquest and unification”, leads to a “singular domesticated space, a place where everyone becomes assimilated into a common culture” (1995: 6).

b. COMPRESSION of different cultures

Featherstone mentions the overlapping/conflicting of diverse cultures and histories, which gives birth to a new domain –a third culture- that the cultural struggle takes place; they ‘meet and clash’ independent of nationality, place and borders. What is challenging about this incident is not the process itself, but its consequence. As the conflict is severe and the different cultures are so disparate, it becomes impossible to “handle and organize [them] into coherent belief systems, means of orientation and practical knowledge” (1995: 6).

On the other hand, there are particular negative consequences of this trans-bordered world in both social and cultural aspects. As Douglas Kellner argues, “the technological revolution perpetuates the interests of the dominant economic and political powers, intensifies divisions between haves and have-nots, and is a defining feature of a new and improved form of global technocapitalism” (2001). Defenders of the free-market economy and globalization fail to observe the extending gap between the wealth of multinational corporations and the poverty of the undeveloped countries of the world. According to the online magazine ‘*The Far Eastern Economic Review*’, half of the world’s population lives on \$2 a day while half of this amount (including 600 million children) survive on less than \$1 a day. Similarly, the worldwide distribution of IT services is uneven. Western civilization, as the ultimate bearer of capital power, keeps on exploiting the Third World Countries on labor, culture etc, which leads to many contradictory circumstances. Canadian anti-corporate journalist, Naomi Klein, mentions a 17-year old girl working in Philippines for the IBM COMPANY, who is capable of assembling CD Rom drives perfectly, but paradoxically has never used a computer in her entire life. As Klein says, “[t]his is a village where some multinationals, far from leveling the global playing field with jobs and technology for all, are in the process of mining the planet’s poorest back country for unimaginable profits” (2000: xvii).



Figure 3.5. – The Afghan girl's photo on the cover of the National Geographic, taken in 1984 and 2001 respectively.

From the website <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

Another incident is from a refugee camp in Pakistan, about the well-known photo of a Pashtun girl that appeared on the cover of the National Geographic magazine in 1985, and struck numerous people from all around the world. After September 11, the photographer and his team scrambled into Afghanistan and finally found her after 17 years. The main issue here, besides her harsh life in the wartime Afghanistan spent in refugee camps, is the irony of the unawareness of the Afghan girl of her photo, which was published various times and was reproduced for millions' gaze. So to say, the only taken photo of the Afghan girl on earth -that she is unaware of- has become the internationally recognized symbol of the Afghanistan's war-torn people and that era, and has been over-displayed -needless to say- in Western media.

It is possible to observe these issues on globalization in the advertisements today, especially in those of multinational corporations that sell software, banking or

communication services, financial consulting, or merely goods that have worldwide accessibility. Benetton was one of the companies that implicitly carried this logic of globalization to its advertisements.



Figure 3.6. An example of the Benetton advertisements.

“What if Queen Elizabeth was black? What if Spike Lee was white? What would it be like to sleep with someone of a different race? What is the difference between black, white and in between?”

From the company’s website

<http://www.benetton.com>

Benetton’s advertising campaigns since 1984 draws a universalist utopian picture of the world, emphasizing the cultural diversity of the different nations and geographies of the world. It is often claimed that the multinational companies’ advertising policies are on marketing lifestyles rather than selling the clothes.

Benetton's marketing policy too is towards forming / presenting a lifestyle of their own: a lifestyle depending on diversity of colors and races.

This advertisement merely shows a black woman breast-feeding a white baby. The second order tells us that the company respects racial diversity, and emphasizes its international and transcultural character, thus deprives the first sign of its original meaning, rendering the first obsolete.

In this sense, Benetton advertisements exploit the literal colors as a metaphor of racial variation, and race as the metaphor of the global culture and tolerance towards difference. Difference and diversity are first blessed, and then commodified in these ads to underpin the significance of the brand. In other words, "the flattening of perspective and the playful juxtaposition of color inverts and displaces the relations between figure and context, subject and object, culture and nature" (Franklin, Lury and Stacey, 2000: 152). The main problem here is not the company's exploitation of race, but rather it's undermining the cultural codes. With this approach not only boundaries between geographies, but also and more prominently differences between cultures are being virtualized. As Franklin, Lury and Stacey argue, the natural patterns of social relations and practices are dissolved and redefined, and constructs "the space of the visible: the non-localized, non-dialogical, open-ended space of the visible in which mediated symbolic forms can be expressed and received by a plurality of non-present others" (2000: 174). This is a "space" where almost anything goes, for it can refer to a countless set of cultural signifiers in a world in which meaning is flattened into one.

The tendency of depicting and visualizing the metaphors of globalization is widely discussed by Goldman and Papson in their study, "The Cartography of Ads: Time, Space and the Collapse of History, Geography, Sociability & Narrative". They examine the ways in which the global spaces are transcended in today's advertisements, mostly by multinational corporations in order to justify their ideologies. According to them,

“from the early 1990s depicted a 'new global order' whose vaguely utopian aura rested on the structural absence of community, society, and state – indeed social relations were representationally narrowed down in these depictions to relationships between isolated individuals and the panoramic presence of the Corporation. While stressing a glorious new age of multicultural diversity, these representations banished production relations, and indeed, turned all geographic places into abstracted signifiers. Orange-robed monks and green-eyed tree frogs had become the preferred signifiers in a heavily abstracted advertising geography of global capitalism. In advertising, signifiers of cultural geography are key to identifying geo-location” (2001c).



Figure 3.7. “What makes us all the same is that we're all different”
Slogan of the AT&T advertisements
From the website
<http://www.lclark.edu/~soan370/global/spaceplace.html>

These ads generally use randomly gathered images, as decontextualized signifiers lacking of historical or cultural reference. They are, in a way, a bricolage of culture, history and ethnicity, in which a borderless world is mirrored, but without mentioning the problems it brings through, promoting the ‘global village’ and global citizenship. Incoherent objects and images that belong to diverse contexts

are juxtaposed after each other. This process points not only to the universalization of culture, but also “shrinking of geophysical space” (1997: 9), in Virilio’s terms.

3.2. Representations of Body and City

3.2.1. Representations of the City

“The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel ... By day, the bars down Ninsei were shuttered and featureless, the neon dead, the holograms inert, waiting, under the poisoned silver sky” (Gibson, 1994: 3).

The cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer* starts so, introducing an artificial world of both decay and chaos. The major characteristic of the cyberpunk cities is the urban environments that are displayed as industrial wastelands where the social order of late capitalism reigns. These cities, devoid of any natural lifelessness, are the ultimate representation of a post-apocalyptic world, worn out and shattered urban landscapes.

3.2.1.1. Dark City

The movie *Dark City* dating 1998 by Alex Proyas, features a similar dystopian urban condition. The story takes place in a ‘generic’ but twisted city with no name, which it is always night. The city is like a scaleless gigantic organism with oversized buildings, in which the unsettling cityscape literally changes its profile every night. Leaving the city is impossible, however, no one seems to be aware of this. Moreover, the memories of the inhabitants are transplanted from one into another regularly.

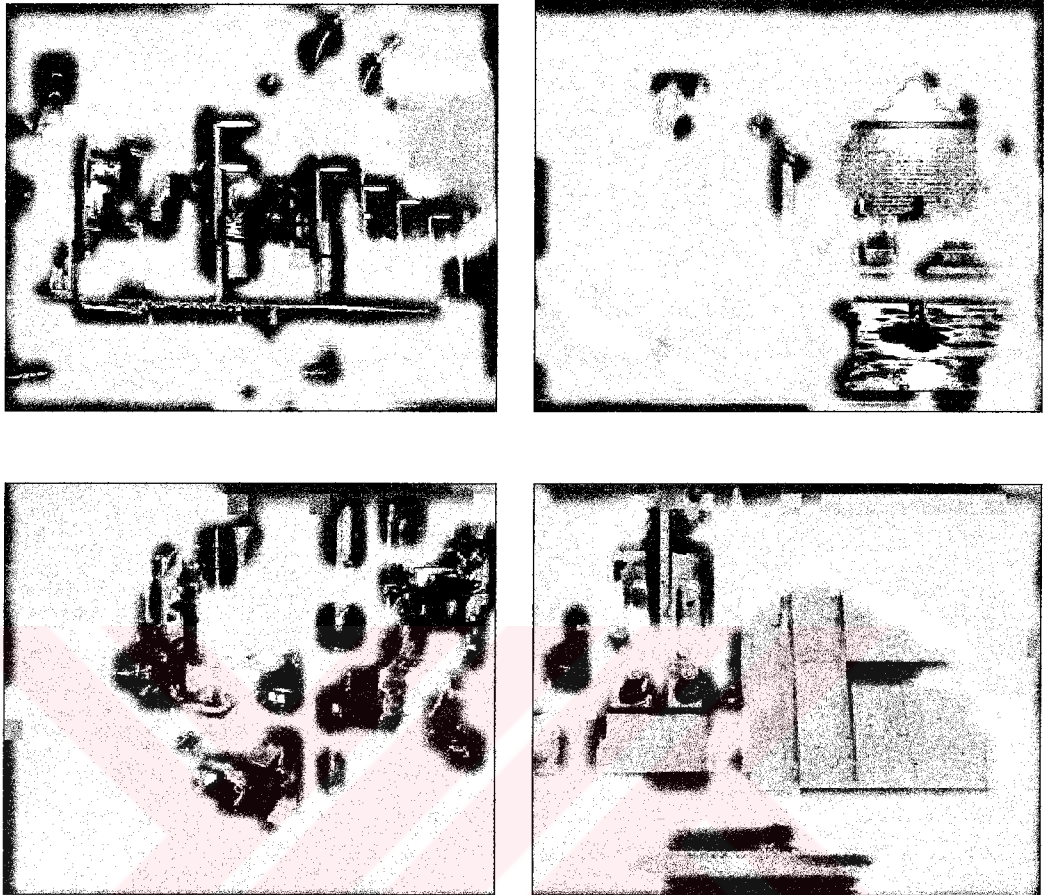


Figure 3.8. Still images from the Dark City

The urban landscape is claustrophobic and incomprehensible, and the city is suffering from a disease of chronic amnesia and lost inside countless fragments of memories. The city and its inhabitants are living an alternate reality with a flux of fake memories, in which “different stories and different pasts all erode into one”*. What the movie depicts most notably is the isolation of the self from the city. No matter how hard or how long the inhabitants try to grasp the nature of the city, its inconsistent and fluid nature renders it impossible to understand completely. The confrontation with the city is cold and oppressive, which leads to disintegration, paranoia and suspicion. Dark City, above all, visualizes a hostile urban fabric,

* Quote from the movie, Dark City.

which suggests very little interaction with its inhabitants. This detachment is the impetus between the detachment of city and citizen.

3.3.1.2. eXistenZ

The movie eXistenZ (1999) by David Cronenberg, also depicts a simulated realm of an organic game system named eXistenZ (just like a Virtual Reality environment), which is messed up by the havoc caused by the industrial race. Existenz is a bizarre world, lost in the dream of producing game-pods with fertilized amphibians with synthetic DNAs; and with guns made of bones of these amphibians and bullets of human teeth. It describes not only a bizarre city, but also an imaginary plane of existence with its everlasting set of rules constantly changing every time you play. As McKenzie Wark remarks,

“it provides an alternative to the boredom of suburbia without having to deal with the danger of inner-city living ... [it] is a fantasy destination for white, middle class suburbanites who realize that rural life is even more boring than the suburbs and the cities are becoming far too dangerous.”

The Existenz determines its own fundamentals and codes, so that you are always a stranger within the game, suffering from alienation and troubles of adaptation. What makes Existenz such a crazy and perverted experience to its inhabitants is the fact that not only what you see or hear is doubtful, but also what you feel or remember carries the risk of being a total distorted reality or even not real at all. Even after getting out from the eXistenZ, the protagonist cannot become accustomed to the reality, he is “not sure here is real at all. It feels like a game and Allegra (the female protagonist) begins to look like a game character. The city, for these reasons, is a surreal site of insanity and violence.

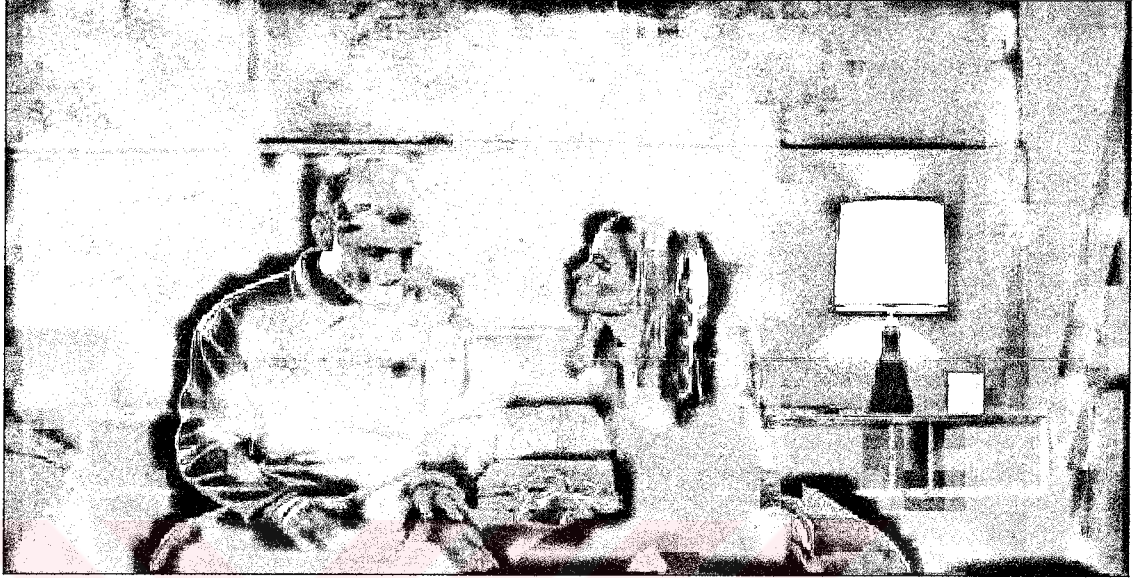


Figure 3.9. The protagonists before and after plugging in to the eXistenZ

These two movies represent a 2-step process in which, the contemporary cities are gradually becoming virtualized.

- Firstly, the city becomes the site for isolation and estrangement, misplaced in the inhabitant's mind. It is almost another enemy to be struggled with or fought against, with its endless deceptions and tricks, like a puzzle to be explored comprised of many deceptive and unreliable components (Dark City).
- Secondly, the city has turned into an artificially generated reality, or a plain simulation itself, with its unreliable referents (eXistenZ). The relations between the inhabitants and the city are reduced into a shallow and merely visual association, eliminating the genuine and tactile connections between these two Associations with the city have become slick and erratic. As the male protagonist, Ted Pikul says,

"I don't like it here. I don't know what's going on. We're both stumbling around in this unformed world whose logic and rules and objectives are largely unknown, seemingly indecipherable, or even possibly nonexistent, always on the verge of being killed by forces that we don't understand".

The city has turned into an unreal perceptual illusion, supported by technology. As Lavery remarks, "Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*, though it does imagine seemingly heroic realists fighting against the triumph of illusion, has no such faith [as the real world exists but need to be recovered]. For even they cannot escape from the ever-recursive game of *eXistenZ* and *TransCendenZ*. There is nothing which is outside the text" (2001, 158). The margins of the game and real, simulated and genuine blur, in such a way that, the simulation has completely replaced the reality.

3.2.1. Representations of the Body

Within the context of ‘the boredom of suburbia’, the electronic age also witnessed a boredom of *the body* in the shifting human nature and culture. Body and city, as material, worldly and embodied subjects of everyday life are undergoing a conceptual transformation regarding the spatial and bodily perceptions and our patterns of signifying. Studying the discussions on the *Body* in relation to the *City* is thus appropriate since a new kind of existence and formation that suggests new modes of experience, perception and consciousness.

The issues on our physical existence and bodies need to be analyzed and redefined in the context of new electronic medias, in which physical attributes such as race, gender, features can be arbitrarily invented by the inhabitant. Even “identity now is a personal construct, rather than something shaped with the context of a relatively stable social space ... We become cultural consumers, capable of constantly defining and redefining ourselves, shifting our physical and psychic venues, choosing from the ever-widening array of options at hand” (Brown, 1997: 130). Virtual spaces enable their users to adopt an alter-ego shaped by personal choices and tastes, which generates new modes of perception. However, the medium’s lack of specific referentials gives birth to the erosion of the constructed self as well, as Mirzoeff articulates: “once considered the clear frontier between internal subjective experience and external objective reality, the body now appears to be a fluid and hybrid borderland between the two, as subject to change as any other cultural artifact” (1999: 116).

Also Vivian Sobchack asserts that, “at this historical moment in our particular society and culture, the lived-body is in crisis. Its struggle to assert its gravity, its differential existence and situation, its vulnerability and mortality, its vital and social investment in a concrete life-world inhabited by others is now marked in hysterical and hyperbolic responses to the disembodiment effects of electronic representation” (1994). Utilizing Jameson’s framework for identifying three

consecutive periods – *realism* in the 1840's, *modernism* in the 1890's and *postmodernism* in the 1940's – Sobchack suggests three areas for representation matching Jameson's temporally and conceptually, such as the photographic, the cinematic, and the electronic. The differentiates the electronic from the photographic and cinematic in a way that "[d]igital and schematic, abstracted both from *reproducing* the empirical objectivity of Nature that informs the photographic and from *presenting* a representation of individual subjectivity and the Unconscious that informs the cinematic, the electronic constructs a metaworld where ethical investment and value are located in *representation-in-itself*" (1994). The "metaworld" that she mentions is a system of simulation in which "everything that was lived directly has moved away into a representation" (quoted from Guy Debord) and "referentiality becomes *intertextuality*" (1994).

Anne Balsamo, in her article '*Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture*', draws attention to the sharp distinction between the technological/cultural and the organic/natural in the contemporary culture, and settles the *human body* as the boundary between these two, establishing a hierarchical relationship (1995: 215). For her, "[t]he role of the body in this boundary setting process is significant because it becomes the place where anxieties about the 'proper order of things' erupt and are eventually ideologically managed" (1995: 216). That is to say, it is this condition of in-betweenness and instability that prompt us to interrogate our physical existence in a digital world and enable us to redefine the human-machine relationship.

The main reason that the issues on the body are raised since 1980s is the reflection of the intersection of the '*organic and mechanic*' in the contemporary cultural media of everyday life. In this section, the ways in which *organic* bodies are represented, transformed and deconstructed with the intervention of the emerging digital culture will be studied. In this context, two issues will be discussed; one of which is the concept of cyborg as the ultimate life form as a result of the marriage

of technology and biology, and the other is the disengagement of the body from the reality within the field of vision.

3.2.2.1. Cyborg:

Cyborg is a term (derived from the first three initials of words cybernetics and organism) coined by Manfred Clynes to introduce a new kind of existence -a hybrid of organic and artificial, human and machine, nature and culture-, that is capable of surviving in the space explorations in 1960. The primary aim of the creation of cyborgs was “to provide an organizational system in which such robot-like problems are taken care of automatically and unconsciously, leaving man free to explore, to create, to think, and to feel (Clynes and Kline, 1960: 29-34). Although the definition dates back to 40 years back, its importance was re-recognized in the 1980s, first by the science-fiction films such as *Bladerunner*, *Terminator*, *RoboCop* etc, and the was theorized by some scholars studying in diverse disciplines such as information technology, cultural studies, biology, feminism etc.

The notion of cyborg as the artificial life form is a popular theme in literature and films. The origins of the cyborg can be traced back to the Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* (1831) that reflects the anxiety towards the Industrial Revolution and dominance of mechanization. But it was during the 1980s that the concept of cyborg became the symbol of technology’s invasion into the human body, namely the collaboration of organic and artificial existence. As mentioned above, the innovations –both theoretical and practical- in technology and more specifically in the field of information technologies gives way to a breakdown or blurring of boundaries between the western dualisms such as humans and machines, male and female, real and simulated etc. It is this process of redefinition of meanings that laid the groundwork for the formation of socio-cultural tendencies that intend to break down the repressive constructs and hierarchies like gender, race, class etc.

The cold anti-human environments anticipated by Clynes and Kline in 1960s are replaced by the “conflicting and hostile worlds of ideas” (Tomas, 1995: 39) in the cyborg reality that Donna Haraway, a feminist science historian, suggests in the influential book, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the Late Century’ (1991). She argues that the very concept of cyborg is a “creature of social reality” and renders the above-mentioned conflicts obsolete, as the boundaries between the binary oppositions become permeable, just like the boundary between man and machine, as well as technology and culture (1991: 149). She points out to the pleasures of blurring boundaries, for

“[t]he cyborg imagery can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our tools to ourselves. This is a different dream of a common language. It means both building and destroying machines, identities, categories, relationships, spaces, stories” (1991: 181).

This ambiguity at the threshold between man and machine is a potential area for intervention and exploration, in which new contexts for understanding culture, politics and technology’s new role in everyday life can be discovered. Due to the indefiniteness of these boundaries between the organic and mechanic, as well as the other contrary terrains, “social experience readily flows between these spaces” as Gordon Fletcher (1998) also articulates, without necessarily being grounded into the Western dualities.

While Haraway puts forward the pleasures of the blurring boundaries, some critics like Mitchell proclaim a similar defeat of the contemporary body from an architectural perspective: “We are all cyborgs now. Architects and urban designers of the digital era must begin by retheorizing the body in space” (Mitchell, 1995a). Separated from its natural attributes, the body undergoes some mechanical and digital transformations, like

Nervous System *transforms into* Bodynet
Eyes *transform into* Television
Ears *transform into* Telephony
Muscles *transform into* Actuators
Hands *transform into* Telemanipulators
Brains *transform into* Artificial Intelligence (Mitchell, 1995b).

Such a tendency that glorifies the technological revolutions implies a situation in which technology doesn't just influence us, but rather define our selves and identities. The virtual body, which Mitchell defines, is one that is independent of not only from his 'real' identity, but also of the landscape and other physical restrictions, due to the prosthesis-like equipments that can replace the body's natural senses. Indeed, one can easily argue that the modern man is already a cyborg, even without the devices in the science-fiction films, as Mitchell has previously discusses. "And perhaps, as the boundaries of the body and the limits of the nervous system become less definite, metaphysicians will be tempted to reformulate the mind/body problem as the mind/network problem" (Mitchell, 1995c).

Nevertheless, the main issue here is that whether this in-between persona that can be redefined infinitely will lead to a self-discovery and revelation of the repressed personality of the self, or a made-up schizophrenic personality containing pathologic multiple selves within.

As previously mentioned, the potential of cyborg imagery is its resistance to the binary oppositions of western dualities, from which feminist critiques can be raised. For example for Haraway, the cyborg "is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity" (1991: 150). Released of biological/bodily functions that construct the duality between man and woman, the cyborg imagery offers

space for reconstruction of female identity and undermining the patriarchal order. Besides, the 'gendered' ascription of technology is studied by Claudia Springer, who reveals these issues within visual media such as films, television, comic books and literature: "Technology has no sex, but representations of technology often do" (1996: 8). Contrary to Haraway, she points to the contradiction that: "while disparaging the human body, the [cyborg] discourse simultaneously uses language and imagery associated with the body and bodily functions to represent its vision of human/technological perfection" (quoted from Springer by Holland, 1995: 165). The arbitrariness of identity construction without regard to gender cannot prevent the patriarchal system's superiority over women, even in the representative form. In this context, as Springer discusses, these texts adopt a rather conservative approach to gender roles. Even, the characters perform identities shaped by exaggerated sexual attributes. Therefore, these texts fail both to represent the ideal feminist ideals that Haraway implies, and fundamentally reconstruct a social order in which the fluidity of identity and gender operates as a constructive input towards a non-gendered society.

Likewise, John Berger (1982) discusses that; *ways of seeing women* and *ways of using images* in a work of art hasn't changed for centuries: a view that the *spectator* is always acknowledged as male. According to him, the paintings before the invention of mechanical reproduction are transformed into proliferated images in commercials and advertisements; but the function of women is still the same: *visual objects*. This tendency seems to be sustained in cyberpunk literature and visual media as well. Similarly, Nicola Nixon asserts that cyberpunk's strong female characters are "effectively depoliticized and sapped of any revolutionary energy" while she condemns cyberpunk's version of strong, self-conscious women as pale imitations of their feminist forerunners from 1970s (1992: 222).

Although somewhat promising in some ways, Haraway's ideas accompany further questions and problems, which urges us to see this cyborg imagery not literally, but as a metaphor. The condition of cyborg is an ambiguous one; it is just on the

interface that “relocates the human, in fact redefines the human as a part of a cybernetic system of information circulation and management” (Bukatman, 1993: 192). This cyborg imagery is significant in an architectural perspective, as it might suggest new modes of perception and negotiation between material and immaterial realms. It might also act as the embodiment of a resistance towards fundamental assessments, challenging the authority and established standards of these constructions of real and virtual worlds. The temperate and in-between tendency of the cyborg also might open up new awarenesses on our minds and bodies, on which inhabitants are dependent in the urban experiences.

3.2.2.2. Body in the Field of Visual Representation:

The very aim of virtuality of reducing physical existence into bytes relies on disparagement of human body, and its involvement into the digital non-space, and thus its withdrawal from the embodied world. This tendency inevitably leads to a strong dichotomy, in which the humanly properties are considered as exposed to dangers, vulnerable and weak. As Schuppli stresses, “to log in means in some way to escape language, to defeat the metaphors of self and identity that alienate, isolate and imprison the mind that transcendence of the human body enabled by computer facilitated environments fulfills a profound and increasingly necessary function” (1997). The real world is seen as the “most pathetic level of reality”*, a dimension that one should escape from.

As mentioned above, representations of city and body share much in the electronic age, in a way that the physical properties are accredited with the repellent aspects of the city, just as the body is regarded as an object of detest. The Cartesian dualism between the mind and the body that is accepted since the Enlightenment recurs here between the real and the fake, city and cyberspace, real body and virtual one.

* quote from the movie eXistenZ (1999)

CHAPTER 4

REFLECTIONS OF VIRTUALITY IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

The rise of the information and communication technologies, accompanied by the digital global networks since 1980s, has several crucial consequences, depending on the relevant ground. Architecture also embraced the notion of virtuality entailed by these technologies and is starting to transform both the product and culture of architecture. Just like many other disciplines, architecture is increasingly affected by immaterial involvements.

In his article “Visions’ Unfolding: Architecture in the Age of Electronic Media”, Eisenman remarks a paradigm shift that “should have profoundly affected architecture”: from mechanical to electronic, and regards the photograph and the fax as the embodiments of impacts of these ‘paradigms’. For him, “[i]n photographic reproduction the subject still maintains a controlled interaction with the object” while “[w]ith the fax, the subject is no longer called upon to interpret, for reproduction takes place without any control or adjustment” (1994: 144). He carries this analogy between mechanical / photography and electronic / fax into the field of architecture, between the ‘real’ and visual representations within the electronic media, in which vision is carried into foreground.

It is quite possible to reassess this second paradigm into the field of architecture, as Eisenman says:

“The electronic paradigm directs a powerful challenge to architecture because it defines reality in terms of media and simulation, it values appearance over existence, what can be seen over what is. Not the seen as we formerly knew it, but rather a seeing that can no longer interpret” (1994: 144).

There is an apparent overlap between the electronic media and the modern metropolis today. These two domains are unavoidably getting closer, and thus have entered a process of transforming and reconstructing each other. In this way, the terminology of two disciplines, architecture and cybernetics, are being recombined to form new words, such as infostructures, mindspace, cybercities, hyperstructure, dreamscape, technoburb etc, and accordingly new meanings as well. Being the most well-known and prevalent instance of digital environments, Windows, is highly dependent on the visual and logical patterns of the real world. Some crucial concepts and activities are obtained from real life and superimposed onto the virtual, which determines the structure, such as window, file, desktop, recycle bin, notepad etc. It is no surprise that the first generation virtual simulations are mostly of cyber-city-tours and spectacles of the world. To put it in Brown’s words, “the ultimate aim of a cybernetic system is to mimic nature: that is, for the simulation to become so convincing and so ubiquitous that it can be used to model, alter, or even supplant the real thing” (1997: 153).

The reverse is also happening in our cities, in the way that the virtual alters the urban dynamics. The urban landscape is affected by the new networks of information and transportation, free flow of capital and information across geographies, and visual proliferation in cities. Contemporary cities are becoming more and more dependent on the technological innovations, and thus are attaining

new social, cultural and political functions as a consequence. The order and hierarchies of the urban condition seem to collapse, as Spela Hudnik says,

Today, we are again dealing with the redefinition of architecture and the city, challenged by the information revolution. Planned territorial shifts have been replaced by the new environments of telecommunication networks and systems that offer velocity, simultaneity and unlimited communication. The world has become smaller and the human being has grown. People are no longer interested in static architectural shells, but rather in dynamic spatial attires” (Hudnik, 2000).

This chapter aims to unravel how the concepts on virtuality transform our perception and experiences, and its effects on our understanding of real spaces, in the urban context. As Soja writes, “[o]ur real and imagined geographies will not only continue to be important shaping forces in our lives, they will intensify in their effects as we enter the twenty first century” (1998). Soja critically points out to the radical changes that are taking place since the beginning of 1980s by the communications revolution, the Information Age and most recently by Virtual Reality (VR). He writes that this “imagined reality” is inevitably reconfiguring the spaces we inhabit, our lifestyles, namely every aspect of urban life and culture and explains the new meanings of the contemporary city. Since the issues on virtuality demonstrate their effects on the urban fabric, the new discussions should inevitably be grounded in the contemporary cities.

4.1. The CITY

Today’s coexistence of architecture and virtuality is problematic and paradoxical, since architecture is naturally practiced in physical environment with physical materials, while virtual spaces are not. Besides, as many scholars put forward, these two realms’ characteristics are primarily contradictory, such as

embodied/disembodied, visible/ invisible, material/immateral, located/dislocated etc. On the other hand, virtuality might give us new perceptions and possibilities that can undermine the physical limitations. In this sense, this chapter aims to highlight the architectural relevance of the concept of virtuality, and in this way to foreground the transforming urban condition and issues within this context.

4.1.1. City as a Generator of Culture

One could easily argue that the structure and dynamics of contemporary cities have altered a great deal since 1700s by the Industrial Revolution, and more recently and intensively by the massive telecommunication networks and electronic spaces. However, as mentioned before, within the limits of visual representation, social and experimental aspects come to the fore in the contemporary metropolis. In this context, it is necessary to map out the cultural formations and ways in which technologies (more specifically digital technologies) change the nature of urban culture.

Cities have always been sites that cultural formations define, transform and then redefine emerging paradigms and notions concerned with spatial issues, and social and cultural practices take place. Cities are places where different and contradictory patterns of lifestyles emerge, clash with others and disappear. As Chambers writes, “[i]n challenging and exploring this inheritance [of physical structures and cultural conditions] much of our urban sense and self is formed” (1986: 183). Furthermore, for him, “[m]etropolitan life has become the semiological nexus between the imaginary and ‘reality’. Its increasingly cosmopolitan syntax has simultaneously extended our world and sharpened the comparative sense of the immediate, the local and the particular” (1986: 187). Similarly, within the context of this study, it can easily be said that cities are places that a conflict between virtual and real environments takes place. These two realities overlap and emerge within each other, and this transformation is perceived and experienced mostly in the urban life.

4.1.2. City as a Generator of Technology

Technological improvements are embodied in and intertwined with cities. As Marceau says, “[c]ities are undoubtedly high-technology locations and generate both innovation in technology and industries which diffuse such innovations” (1995: 131). Moreover, social and cultural relations are constituted via new technologies within contemporary cities. For Graham and Marvin, developments in telecommunication technologies “are important not simply because such new technical media can establish different patterns of social and cultural life, but because they can also act ‘as a potential reorganization of social relations themselves’ (1996: 173). Contemporary urban cultural interactions, they argue, are more and more maintained by technologies such as:

- Telephones that help to support the maintenance of intimate links irrespective of distance
- Television ‘rituals’ such as major sporting occasions support new social events and gatherings
- Computer games support new sorts of social isolation and withdrawal
- Such networks as electronic mail and bulletin boards generate social meetings in ‘virtual space’ between people who never actually meet in ‘physical space’ (Graham and Marvin, 1996: 173).

Today, we can broaden the limits of these involvements so as to imply all technological involvements that offer the experience of virtuality and eliminate physical distances, such as mobile phones, laptops, Virtual Reality environments etc. Such innovations stimulate the transformation of the patterns of urban socio-cultural practices, reshaping the character of interactions in the existing urban condition. Given the reciprocal association between the city and technology, it is not unexpected to say that cities are technology generators.

Technological innovations and cultural interactions are inter-dependent. These two concepts are so entangled that it is indeed difficult to distinguish them and their consequences. Though it is hard to claim that they radically affect each other, they

transform in rather implicit and profound ways. These issues should be reconsidered in order to conceptualize and redefine the new urban culture.

4.2. Reconceptualization of Architectural Dynamics

This section aims at unraveling the ways in which the concepts on virtuality transform our perception and experiences, and their effects on our understanding of real spaces, in the urban context. In this way, a threefold analysis will be made, in which the issues closely concerning architecture will be discussed, such as reconceptualization of *time*, *space* and *culture* in the age of virtuality.

4.2.1. Reconceptualization of Time:

“The Shrinking Effect”

“We do not conceive of sudden, radical, irrational change as built into the very fabric of existence. Yet it is. And chaos theory teaches us that straight linearity, which we have come to take for granted in everything from physics to fiction, simply doesn't exist. Linearity is an artificial way of viewing the world. Real life isn't a series of interconnected events occurring one after another like beads strung on a necklace. Life is actually a series of encounters in which one event may change those that follow in a wholly unpredictable, even devastating way.”

(Crichto, 1991)

The intensification of instantaneous connections of information or capital between distant locations entailed the inevitable reconceptualization of the concept of distance. This process can be mapped out till the high-velocity railway services in the 1800s. However, today's networks of telecommunication and visual

technologies amplify and make this notion widespread. The desire of human beings' extension to acquire the 'further' and 'faster' and the technological availability of contacting even the most distant points of the world and hitherto unreachable destinations result in the obliteration of distance constraints. As Robins writes, "[w]e are content to live in a world of 'uniform distancelessness', that is, in an information space rather than a space of vivacity and experience" (1997: 208). In the urban environment, the phenomenon of subordination of physical proximity by remote interrelationships is identified by Virilio as the "shrinking effect": "With acceleration there is no more here and there, only the mental confusion of near and far, present and future, real and unreal - a mix of history, stories, and the hallucinatory utopia of communication technologies" (Virilio, 1995: 35).

4.2.1.1. Shrinking of the Globe

Speed, today, reconstructs the social and economic interactions, from the very intimate relationships to the wide-range global capital flow. It defeats distance to the extent that "you will be able to initiate a business conversation by shaking hands at a distance or say goodnight to a child by transmitting a kiss across continents" (Mitchell: 1995d). In this placeless terrain, "Being There" and "Face-to-Face" interactions take the shape of "Getting Connected" through the "Interface" (Mitchell: 1995d). It is the "anything- anytime- anywhere dream" of technologies of virtuality, as remarked by Graham and Marvin (1996: 88). With the electrically or digitally transmission of information, physical location and geographic space becomes almost redundant.

Physical proximity loses its significance, as the immaterial communication technologies perform equal resistance for interacting with the next apartment, or the other side of the world. It is even possible to claim that these communication nodes "appear to be especially linked to each other, rather than their immediately surrounding urban contexts" (Eeckhout and Jacobs, 1999: 52). As Stratton also

mentions, the construct of invisible networks departs from the point where the speed of communication has eliminated the experience of the duration of transmission: “in metaphorical terms, we could say that as the time taken to cross geographical space decreases, that space is decontextualized and replaced by a distinctly non-geographic hyperspace” (2000: 722). Notion of distance, as argued by Fishman, is redefined in this regard, as the distance between two points are no longer measured by kilometers and miles, but by the time taken to pass through (quoted by Eeckhout and Jacobs, 1999: 46).

4.2.1.2. Insomniac City

The convenience of immaterial technologies to communicate and transmit data through long distances made possible people to “project their personalities and priorities into far corners that they could never physically reach” (Brown, 1997: 134). To take the reverse, these diverse realities are converged into a single location. The global networks of both finance and leisure communication superimpose the timelines of different geographies onto each other in the contemporary cities. The local time bears no wholeness anymore, but it is rather a collage of fragments of time. The detachment of organization of life patterns in contemporary cities and the conventional geographic daytime pattern eliminates the dependency between space and time. These involvements give rise to the insomniac city that lives the 24-hour continuous time of the entire globe. The liberal new economy and 24/7 motivation of service-based business, for Keibel, results in “the constant implantation of fresh organizational principles into our societies, where work continues anytime, anywhere, and where private –or state-, political –or cultural institutions share the same infrastructural interests” (2001: 40). However, since “with insomnia you are never really asleep, and never really awake”*, the city never fully succeeds to be neither a virtual-city involved by the

* Quote from the movie “Fight Club” (1999), directed by David Fincher

worldwide invisible network, nor a self-sufficient entity refusing any external connection. It is in an in-between state at the threshold, combining the both.

Moreover, this new restructuring of time relations has profound effects on spatial organization within the contemporary cities as well. They “produce elementary changes in modern lifestyles; the traditional distinction between ideal forms of living and working has become almost meaningless” (Kebel, 2001: 40). The division of the day into three –work, leisure and sleep- has long lost its relevance within the contemporary lifestyles. Hitherto separate and irrelevant activities and functions start to intertwine with or replace each other and these new combinations render their initial meanings outmoded. Graham and Marvin reveals how this logic operates “simply to displace the need for physical form between home and work, while urban functions will no longer have a physical presence as services are delivered in electronic form” (1996: 243). Spaces start to take on multiple functions. The ICT infrastructures become the inseparable feature of these spaces, as they make available connection to everywhere from a single spot, and convert a single space into multiple. Spaces become multi-functional entities that can accommodate various activities.

4.2.1.3. The New Model of Time as a Hybrid of Cyclic and Linear

The conception of time before the industrial revolution was the time of Nature that operated in a cyclical loop, embedded within the rhythmic cycle of the earth (like days and seasons, tides, migration patterns etc) or spiritual beliefs (like reincarnation of the body). Uninterrupted and self-sufficient, cyclic life concept suggests a pattern that constantly repeats itself, rather than moving forward to an ultimate acquisition. However, “the conception of time as the flux of organic continuity experienced as duration, as memory, as recorded history, as potentially and prospective achievement, stands in frontal opposition to the mechanistic notion

of time simply as a function of the motion of bodies in space –along with its spurious imperative of ‘saving time’ by accelerating motion, and of making such acceleration in every possible department the highest triumph of the power complex” as Mumford writes (1974: 391). What he calls the mechanistic notion of time corresponds to the linear model of time, entailed by the industrial capitalism and notion of modernity, which detaches nature from man and replaces it with a new association that privileges technological progress. The logic that brings along the conception of nature be controlled and dominated by technology also accompanies an orderly, uniform, chronological and progressive conception of time that perceives time as a man-made ‘construct’. It suggests a definite evolution of events, in which “the past is unrepeatable, the present is transient, and the future is infinite and exploitable. Time is homogenous; it is objective, measurable, and infinitely divisible; it is related to change in the sense of motion and development; it is quantitative” (Hassard, 1990: 12). The idea of ‘today’, in this model, is regarded as a precise rupture from past, and bears a curiosity towards tomorrow. This notion was challenged by the reappearance of the cyclic construction of time in 1970s, with the ‘post-modern’ way of thinking, under the sovereignty of the cyclical nature of fashion and consumer culture. Drawing on the ‘postmodern condition’, Olalquiaga expresses two mental diseases that are characteristics of simulated environments, one of which is the obsessive-compulsive disease (OCD). For her, OCD is a “doubling disease” and “the obsessive compulsive person gets stuck in time, which repeats itself as a futile gesture of imitation caught in a twilight zone between the organism and its setting” (1991: 7). Trapped into a vicious circle of bygone experiences and images, this repetition is a distinguishing feature of postmodern culture.

By the end of 20th century, a new conception of time emerges lead by the notion of immateriality and the proliferation of the overlapping networks that are no longer visible and perceptible by senses. The over-accelerated or digitalized transport, communication and information technologies “disrupt the time space coordinates of natural space” (quoted from Lash and Urry by Graham and Marvin, 1996: 66). The

two patterns of life, that are linear and cyclic, which are attributed to modern and postmodern way of thinking, are both coexistent in this situation. The utopian fascination with technological improvements with the expectation to lead us to a better and livable world, and the virtual representation of reality that repetitively refers to the vocabulary of existing world or the past, are both apparent. Furthering the gradual involvement of technologies of virtuality into our lives, the evolutionarily nature of the logic of immateriality is stuck into the infertile cyclical pattern that incessantly mimics, exploits and distorts the real/material.

4.2.1.4. Time as an Artifact

This paradoxical coexistence is accompanied by the diverse time patterns/layers in different intensities and frequencies overlapping and associating with each other. Time is not a hierarchical integrity in unity anymore, but a complex multi-layered web that rather suggests discontinuity and disjunction, randomness and chaos, with its splits and break offs from the linear progress towards the future. In this sense, Mitchell “extrapolate[s] to an entirely asynchronous city” in which “[t]he distinction between live events and arbitrary time-shifted replays becomes difficult or impossible to draw” (Mitchell: 1995e). The distortion of the spontaneous flow of time entails the conception of time as an artifact that can be stretched or squeezed, dilated or contracted, accelerated or slowed down, molded, frozen, bended, twisted, reversed, multiplied, morphed.

Referring to Homi Bhabha, Christine Boyer also underlines the fragmentation of natural continuity in the contemporary metropolis, in which “there are many lag-times, temporal breaks in the imaginary matrix, and areas of forced delay put on hold in the process of postmodernization” (Boyer, 1996: 20). These ruptures in the continuity of time also stimulate a similar consequence within the urban environment, for the city also has these ruptures that are leading to an unpreventable fragmentation process. By the discrepancy/ contradiction between

the acceleration of technology and the natural flow of time, some points get over-developed, while some remain leftover urban voids, which prompts Boyer to see the invisible infrastructures within the cities as “radically anti-urban” (1996: 27).

Since time is neither linear nor cyclic, cities are experienced under an accelerating flow and motion, time and place does not overlap or synchronize anymore; our experiences are becoming fragmented and discontinuous in effect. The coexistence of different layers and conceptions of time furthers the inability of the citizen’s mapping out the city. The urban fabric, once complete and uninterrupted, is dissolving and getting diluted gradually by these involvements concerning time.

4.2.2. Reconceptualization of Space: Immaterialization of Urban Phenomena

“The architecture of cyberspace offers the opportunity to mend the rupture between how we know the world and how we conceive and execute architecture. It allows a far greater latitude of experimentation than any previous architectonic opportunity. It is once again possible to seek to know what is known and to conceive a corresponding architecture, without always falling back upon the sacred geometries of ages past. This engagement only makes architecture more relevant to the world, more in keeping with what is sensed as a new condition. In fact, architecture’s role in articulating spatially the outlook of an age is strongly reasserted”.
(Novak, 1995)

The issues revolving around virtuality and immateriality are contemporary indeed urban phenomena. They provide a fertile background for unraveling and redefining the urban, and its socio-cultural and spatial extensions. As Christian Huebler says, “[t]he urban is a machine that connects and disconnects, articulates and

disarticulates, frames and releases” already (quoted from Huebler by Kerckhove, 2001: 18), just as the concept of virtuality also bears similar contradictions and oppositions within. What the intertwinement of the urban socio-cultural practices with the new technologies denotes most fundamentally is the very possibility of coexistence of oppositions in the contemporary city. As Chambers writes,

“[t]he city exists as a series of doubles; it has official and hidden cultures, it is a real place and a site of imagination. Its elaborate network of streets, housing, public buildings, transport systems, parks, and shops is paralleled by a complex of attitudes, habits, customs, expectancies, and hopes that reside in us as urban subjects. We discover that urban “reality” is not single but multiple, that inside the city there is always another city” (1986: 183).

Regardless of her/his approval or resistance towards the notion of virtuality, one definitely cannot avoid the encounters with it and its consequences within the urban matrix. On the other hand, the outcomes within the contemporary metropolis that will be mentioned later are not taking place through simply immateriality and virtuality, but equally as a result of mass production and mass consumption, post-industrialization, global economy and culture etc. So to say, cities are gradually being susceptible to invisible interventions rather than physical ones.

However irrelevant within the context of the contemporary city may these concerns on virtuality seem, their more material and profound consequences may be observed within the urban environment. Correspondingly, to quote Ed Soja,

“We are all living in an increasingly postmodern world that is creating new contexts and new challenges that cannot be effectively responded to by clinging to older ways of thinking and acting politically. The city and the urban still remain sites of contestation and struggle, but the social processes and spatial forms, and the spatial processes and social forms that define these struggles are now significantly different from what they were ten years ago” (Soja, 1997: 29).

The traditional cities before 20th century were shaped by rather material impetus such as the landscape, climate, defense, control and surveillance, public gatherings, trading patterns etc, and were centralized and static arrangements, as argued by Eeckhout and Jacobs (1999: 48). However, with the involvement of firstly high-speed transportation systems, secondly and the new immaterial communication and communication technologies, the structure of the cities enters a process of radical transformation.

The notion of virtuality reshapes the urban fabric and lifestyles in many ways. In this study, four different aspects of this transformation will be discussed, which are Hypertextuality, “Space of Flows”, Deterritorialization and Hybridity. These occurrences are indeed related and intertwined to each other. They might share their origins and consequences within the context of contemporary cities, and similar matters might be mentioned under each title. However, each of them crucially needs to be discussed separately in this study. Needless to say, these issues are not new concepts, and some are borrowed from different disciplines. But they take on new meanings and significances in the intersection of urban condition and virtuality, from an architectural standpoint.

4.2.2.1. Hypertextuality

Virtual environments, today, are developing into territories of the self-legitimization of multiple realities and notions. This negotiation between different phenomena and experiences is parallel to hypertextuality, a term generally used by informatics, which denotes a non-linear and complex web of interactions between multitude nodes and paths; one that resembles the logic of the world-wide-web.

For Joyce, hypertext is “a tool for inventing, discovering, viewing and testing multiple organizational structures as well as tool for comparing these structures of

thought with more traditional ones and transforming one into the other" (1996: 42-43). Hypertext justifies itself by endless references and links within, having no regular or fixed structure, but rather an erratic web of information and communication. It is non-hierarchical and de-centered in nature, and thus the meaning is never closed. It enables infinite secondary meanings and denotations. Similarly, the contemporary city now is the site for many paradoxical impetuses and oppositions, in which no fundamentalist tendencies and views are acknowledged anymore, like center and periphery, east and west, etc.

The current urban condition is one of inclusion rather than exclusion, as Van Toorn says:

"The political and social lexicon of space, city and architecture and of the distinctions between public and private has become obsolete at a stroke and has to be rewritten. Formerly the dominant forces were separation and specialization, the struggle for clarity and the reduction of the world to calculable proportions; now we talk about simultaneity, multiplicity, uncertainty, chaos theory, networks, hubs and nodal points, interaction, the hybrid, ambivalence, schizophrenia, space of flows, cyborgs and so on ... In one way or another conflicts and experiments are emerging that cut a path beyond all either-or polarities. In short: we live in the age of "the And". The And is a process that never stops and that refuses to be understood in linear fashion" (1999).

The And-And Logic, put forward by Van Toorn, is a dynamic socio-cultural framework, operating like the structure of the hypertext. It highlights tolerance and approval towards unfamiliar notions. The virtualization of urban spaces proliferates and intensifies this process, which suggests a constant impermanence and fluidity of interactions among equally legitimate assertions. The chaotic nature of encounters is the very nature of contemporary spaces that accommodate both countless interventions and real and virtual experiences.

Hypertext can be seen as a reader-oriented organism, implying randomness rather than an inert or pre-ordered schedule. From this point of view, spatial arrangements in the contemporary city resemble the electronic organization of cybernetic systems. They are both comprised of webs of choices and access, in which indefinite routes might be chosen by the participation of the inhabitant. In this way, hypertext acts as a spatial structure generating new possibilities of perceptions and awarenesses. Bjørn Sørensen expands this concept of experience to the degree in which the user/inhabitant of the hypertext practice is “getting lost and enjoying it” (1992). Similarly, Gal Zeevi asserts that

“The city is behaving more like the matrix of hypertext, in which the reader can choose his own routes between a multiple of choices. The city of today, the sprawl, is full of inconsistencies, to the extent that we would soon prefer to navigate with the help of a satellite coordinated street finder, than to trust our reading of paths, edges, landmarks, nodes, and districts” (1998).

The structure of hypertext can be perceived as a model for the contemporary cities. In the cybernetic system of the hypertext, paths take on the function of connecting nodes; they are cognitive, imaginary, and immediate, and their primary function is to sustain the existence of the nodes. The whole city can be reduced into a dynamic system of nodes, and paths (visible and invisible networks of transport such as motorways, subways etc and information), and can be construed as a dynamic interaction between these two. The growing importance of the high-speed transportation creates a new mode of perception in the contemporary city, which is mostly dependent on speed and motion. Nodes, on the other hand, are focal points, that have stronger connections to the other nodes than to their periphery, thus creating dissociation from the city. The visible and invisible networks are the most recent impetus for which urban voids are opening up in cities. With its multiple hubs, the city ceases to be centered. The city now rather suggests discontinuity, uncertainty, and disorder.

The overlapping of the reader and the citizen, as also discussed in the third chapter, gives a clue about the new architecture in the age of virtuality. Architecture is now a container of a series of reciprocal relations and interactions that supports multi-users, rather than a pre-determined passive entity with its borders clearly defined and fixed. Solidity gives way to inconsistency and flux, in which no reference is reliable. The contemporary 'reader' is in always in motion, and experiences while moving -both physically and metaphorically- between nodes of meaning and stimuli. Her/his perceptions are bound to the flow of images and meanings, which lack any particular beginning, end or center. Connectivity and belonging give way to fluidity and superficiality.

The urban phenomena can no longer be construed as an object composed of binary oppositions and the either/or mentality, but rather juxtaposition of diversities, extremes and marginality, and indulgence towards differences, as writes Van Toorn (1999). In this context, the challenge of architects, maybe, is not to strictly designate the activities and spaces, but to provide neutrality and simplicity, which will contain the complexity of relations; one which Ibelings depict as an "architecture that refers to nothing outside itself and makes no appeal to the intellect, automatically prioritizes direct experience, the sensory experience of space, material and light" (1998: 89-90).

4.2.2.2. "Space of Flows"

The abandonment of fixed and linear understandings of traditional paradigms entail the redefinition of social interfaces, which now can be conceived as a complex network within the "space of flows" (Castells: 1989). Castells relates the concept of "space of flows" to the informational economic organizations within the contemporary metropolis. He discusses "the formation of a complex, hierarchical, diversified organizational structure that is characterized by a variable geometry depending upon time, place, and realm of activity" (1989: 168). Thus, it is quite

possible to borrow the term in order to refer to socio-spatial dynamics that contain endless connections, associations, movements, circulations, interactions, and transitions in the contemporary urban fabric. As Sadie Plant remarks, “[c]ities, like cyberspace, are not objects of knowledge to be planned and designed, but cybernetic assemblages, immensely intricate interplays of forces, interests, zones and desires too complex and fluid for even those who inhabit them to understand” (1995: 36).

Cities have been dynamic constructs that support constant motion and flows of “power, money, symbols, news, the presence of other people, decisions, proposals, reports, linkages, references, affirmations, measurements, laws, entertainments, conferences, classes, stories, real and imaginary images” (Benedikt, 1993). What is different today is the proliferation of the amount of these interconnections and its acceleration. These phenomena enable borrowing of the term “situatedness-in-displacement” (Robbins, 1993: 184-185), and broadening its limits from the context of *traveling in the material world* into *flowing through the network*. The contemporary self is not an inert dweller of spaces anymore, but a kinetic voyager who is always rushing in-between. This dynamic experience results in “a loss of sensible references and a decay of architectonic markers” (Graafland, 1996: 41).

The speed of flow has increased to the extent that it has become impossible to observe or perceive its occurrence. Moreover, the infrastructures and materials that support ‘flows’ are not only amplifying in effect, but also shrinking in size, into microchips and other tiny miniaturized devices. These incidents are only visible to the eye through their effects on the city. As Palumbo writes, the “contemporary body, which is in perennial transition, corresponds to an architecture that increasingly tends to move away from the world of *objects* and draw closer to that of *flows*, movements, connections” (2000: 58).

In the “space of flows”, not only people, information and capital are in motion, but also meanings are. It has no consistent referent, so it is non-static and non-

hierarchical. It is dependent on erratic phenomena such as economy, technology and culture, more than rigid ones. Thus it has no fixed situation, but rather is decentered. Consequently, it connotes temporality rather than permanence. Castells writes, "the more organizations depend, ultimately, upon flows and networks, the less they are influenced by the social contexts associated with the places of their location" (1989: 170). This notion's architectural relevance indicates the annihilation of the dependence between geography and architecture.

The growing significance of movement and flows highlights the spaces that contain continuous motion within, like motorways, subways, and most significantly airports, which supplies "unlimited access to the world as the ideal of the movement" (Ibelings, 1998: 79). The airport, as widely discussed, is a structure (node) that provides connections (path) to other airports and city. "Today's airport is only partially connected to the environment around it. It is directly connected with other airports with which it is linked in an increasingly vital network" as Friedman remarks (1999). Airports are places that temporary flow and motion remains uninterrupted. It lacks the properties that make its temporary inhabitants / by-passers establish any connection with itself.

In this context, it is possible to take the airport as a metaphor for the city, as Koolhaas does, in his essay 'The Generic City'. Comparable to airports, contemporary cities are sites that show no resistance to the motion and flows. Moreover, like airports, they are transitory spaces that no constant meaning can dwell and establish roots, but can only pass through or visit for a short time. Thus, both the structures of the cities and the experiences of the inhabitant/ by-passers are fluid and temporal. Bewildered by the speed of flows and transformation, the citizens cannot clearly manage to map out the city, as argued by Eeckhout and Jacobs. It also results in non-places, "consist[ing] principally of networks and junctions in a world without frontiers: they lack the peculiar features of places and sites (like centers and monuments) because they cater only to average demands" (Augé, 1999: 55).

Another dimension furthered by this overlapping is the proliferation of the notion of a decontextualized “architecture of transit and impermanence: hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, supermarkets, airports and highways. Non-place becomes the new norm, the new way of existence” (Manovich), that cannot bear any congestion, delay or deceleration. These spaces come to the fore in the urban matrix, and render the others outmoded and obsolete. This new architecture justifies itself with a series of oppositions to a stable urban organization with the prefixes “-dis”s and “-un”s, such as dislocation, unsteadiness, disorder, etc. In this way, it would not be wrong to claim that the contemporary city is one of ‘becoming’, capable of modification and adaptation.

4.2.2.3. Deterritorialization

While the association of physical and virtual, namely place and space has become redundant, the concept of "deterritorialization", largely developed by Deleuze and Guattari, start to gain significance within the urban context:

“The town exists only as a function of circulation and of circuits; it is a singular point on the circuits which create it. It is defined by entries and exits; something must enter it and exit from it. It imposes a frequency. It effects a polarization of matter; inert, living, or human-it is a phenomenon of transconsistency, a network because it is fundamentally in contact with other towns” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 432).

The word deterritorialization implies the lack of involvement of spatial and socio-cultural practices from geographical places, or “the loss of the ‘natural’ relation of culture to geographical and social territories” (quoted from García Canclini by Tomlinson, 1999: 107). This occurrence, being basically *nomadic*, as Deleuze and Guattari say, involves not only mobility of human bodies, but also their culture,

social practices, rituals, etc. The marriage of virtuality with real spaces involves liquidity instead of stability, transformation instead of conservation, indefiniteness instead of steadiness, uncertainty instead of sureness, travel instead of dwelling.

According to Palumbo, uprooting below from the earth also implies a revolt against totalities and discipline, and this is the reason the contemporary architects involved with the issues on virtuality interrogate the association between the architectural work (whatever it may be) and the ground: “the building refuses to take root, it rebels against the laws of gravity, it collapses and breaks up, recomposes into precarious equilibriums, in a form ready to change again, centreless, without an axis perpendicular to the ground or an evident order between the parts, a continuous challenge to the formal and structural capacities and materials, because a secret perspective is hidden on high, the inebriation of flight is hidden by the vertigo of the fall” (Palumbo, 2000: 52).

The disembedded nature of the contemporary urban network that is freed of the surrounding socio-cultural urban context generates both “interconnections and interdependencies that characterize modern social life” (Tomlinson, 1999: 2). Deterritorialization is not necessarily a destructive force within the cities, but rather they point out to a ‘nomadic architecture’; but one with no departure of arrival; and have little to do with movement or travel of migration. Nuttgens asserted that “[t]he story of architecture begins with the story of civilization, when primitive men and women gave up their nomadic ways and established settlements” (1983: 17). However, today, we need to reconsider the notion of nomadism, for it may open up new horizons within the “space of flows”. At last, the contemporary man is already a nomad, which can gain access to and experience various places from the very place he exists. Not that architecture is “infused with certain speculative concepts: architecture as transition, diffusion, dispersal, nonconformity, transparency, fluidity, organicism, fragmentation, a rhizomatic architecture, a nomadic architecture, an architecture which always resists stratification” (Stefan, 1989: 197).

Motion and flow is now a constant component of spaces, requiring the interrogation and reconceptualization of inhabitation and possession. Architects are stretching the limits of the concept of “owning”, and seeking new ways of ownership: “Are we better off owning those things, or borrowing them?” (Berkel and Bos, 2001: 37). The notion of ownership, even if can be mentioned, has become only a metaphorical one, for what we own is only access into the network or an immaterial and fluid entity which is inherently temporary.

4.2.2.4. Hybridity

Today, it isn't likely to talk about neither an absolute virtuality (like Virtual Reality), nor a raw physical environment deprived of any digital installation, within the limits of contemporary urban condition and experiences. The incorporation of virtuality into architecture, as argued in the previous chapter, suggests the blurring of boundaries, and the approximation of polarized notions. Irreconcilable dualities give way to concurrence; rigidity melts into flexibility. Different layers of meaning and functions merge. “Space is re-configured through communication, collaboration, networks, exchanges based on a multiplicity of virtual and material means. There is an unavoidable multidimensionality in both the literal and metaphorical articulation of space” (Lycouris, 2001).

Architecture, both theory and practice, “facilitate[s] complex network interrelationships and new chimerical* hybrids” (Imperiale, 2000: 48). However, this intersection between the material and immaterial is not always a peaceful encounter. Just as virtuality involves “electronically extended bodies living at intersection points of the physical and virtual worlds” (Mitchell: 1995f), spaces that involve virtuality turn out to be a threshold between the visible and invisible. As in

* Chimera: a fire-breathing monster [in Greek mythology] with a lion's head, goat's body, and a serpent's tail. (The Oxford Reference Dictionary (1986) Oxford University Press: Oxford.)

the assimilation of all differences into one single entity, difference and diversity conflict, combine, blend and synthesize into heterogeneity through architecture, which suggests superimposed and concurrent spatio-temporalities.

“What part of us contains space without territory? As our horizons shatter, new spaces open within their fractured razor’s edges: the places of neither here nor there, or both, or other than both: the hybrid territories. Into these territories we will now bring all our social instincts, animal and human, for better or for worse. Hybrid territory and hybrid territoriality: hybrid terror to reality, terriToReality” (Novak).

In this way, architecture develops into being a mediator between different realms. Integrity and multiplicity become the keywords within contemporary architecture, as rigid and radical paradigms collapse. The relations, interactions and transformations of this multiple reality could be the new architectural generator of our age.

4.2.3. Reconceptualization of Culture:

Virtual Communities

“... all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/ genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (Andersen, 1983: 15).

The notion of virtuality in architecture directs a profound cultural challenge not only to the product or theory of architecture, but also to the lifestyles and cultures of the inhabitants of contemporary cities. However, what it affects equally significantly is probably the mode of communication between people, furthered by new digital technologies, subordinating face-to-face interactions to

telecommunications that provide instantaneous contact across vast distances. “These developments are important not simply because such new technical media can establish different patterns of social and cultural life but because they can also act ‘as a potential reorganization of social relations themselves’” (Graham and Marvin, 1996: 173).

Yet, these alterations did not occur overnight, but gradually came into life first by the invention of the telegraph, which “marked the decisive separation of transportation and communication” (Stratton, 2000: 722). Telegraph brought about the first physical uncoupling of the sender and receiver of information in the traditional sense. Subsequently telephone, radio, television, fax and other digital networks of media reconstructed the overall fabric of communicative interfaces. Accordingly, as Dear remarks, “the phone, and the modem have rendered the street irrelevant; social hierarchies, once fixed, have become ‘despatialized’” (quoted by Eeckhout and Jacobs, 2000: 89). Likewise, many critics argue that with the telecommunications and the notion of virtuality, contemporary cities witnessed a simultaneous dispersal of urban public spaces. As Oswald writes, “[v]irtual technologies and spaces had been slowly and imperceptibly developing for many years in parallel with the decline in popularity of conventional urban spaces in most major Western cities” (2000: 659).

4.2.3.1. Dissolving of Urban Public Spaces

As two inseparable, interdependent and essentially interconnected notions, cities and urban culture, are affected equally within the process of virtualization. Urban public places cease to function as meeting places, no more bearing the appealing features of communal life. The public domain, instead, “has been displaced to the realm of the mass media and has sprawled through the global networks of communication technologies” (Eeckhout and Jacobs, 2000: 88).

In this way, body and its physical environment –two concepts that are hitherto considered as interdependent and inseparable- tend to detach. Confrontations of the both are getting reduced. So, there occurs a radical shift concerning the ground that urban culture and lifestyles are formed, lived and experienced. The coupling of the above-mentioned urban transformations brought about by virtuality, and the following titles entail a new formation of community, which is not compelled to spatial restrictions anymore. The following titles have played a significant role in the detachment of the contemporary body and contemporary city.

4.2.3.1.1. Simulation of the City

The expansion of virtual networks, as the motive between the parallel dissolving of urban public spaces, is accompanied by the gradual materialization of simulated environments and experiences in contemporary cities. Being discontinuous and eclectic in nature, these *spaces of amusement*, like Las Vegas and Disneyland, exploit the metaphors and imagery of popular culture, creates fantasies of a fake and illusory reality. These places not only create simulated environments, but also simulated communities, cultures, and lifestyles. For Ostwald, “those [simulated] environments in the real world, where falsification is normal, change is inevitable and there is semblance of community, may be called virtual urban spaces” (2000: 660).

The simulation and re-establishing of urban public spaces and everyday life also brings along the reversal of interior and exterior. Interior spaces seek to accommodate the comfort and appeal of the cities, in order to simulate the lively public life. In other words, interiors aim to create cities inside cities, as self-sufficient entities that suggest no relation with the environment. Referring to the concept of atrium as the emblem of the simulated interiors, Koolhaas writes that “[t]he more ambitious these autonomies, the more they undermine the real downtown – its messy conditions, its complexities, its irregularities, its densities, its

ethnicities” (quoted by De Cauter, 1999: 256). The proliferation of these enclosed simulations gradually paralyze the urban publicity and entails its shifting into the sterile sovereignty of the interior.

Simulated spaces generate simulated cultures in return, which are not about inhabiting, but about experiencing. Simulated cultures offer little originality, but only a scheduled re-performing of predetermined acts. Simulated spaces do not open up new spaces for exploration; just on the contrary they suppress unwanted dimensions of human experience, other than its’. The logic of simulation interferes between the conventional interactions between people and architectural spaces.

4.2.3.1.2. City as a Medium of Consumption

Introducing consumption into the public realm, cities after 1970s underwent an intense process of “branding of the cityscape” (Klein, 2000: 35). Major multinational corporations took on sponsoring the public social activities by 1990s. However, “[a]dvertising and sponsorship have always been about using imagery to equate products with positive cultural or social experiences” (Klein, 2000: 29). Rather than supporting the very aim that they subsidize, they replace the culture, rituals and values in which they exist. In this way, not only the city, but also public spaces and public life -such as culture, media, music, sports, celebrities, public celebration, as extensively discussed by Klein (2000: 27-61)- gets branded. The public realm grows into an extension of the company’s policy of dissemination, which robs the communal framework of its meaning and function. Focused merely onto consumption, the branded-community ceases to produce its own meanings, and rather starts to recycle its own values. As Klein writes, “corporate sponsors and culture they brand have fused together to create a third culture: a self enclosed universe of brand-name people, brand-name products and brand-name media” (Klein, 2000: 60).

Correspondingly, cultural and social relations between inhabitants of the city are shifted towards spaces of consumption, like malls and theme parks. Dyson asserts that these are spaces in which “[c]ultural difference is absorbed, and an intense uniformity is produced via the vigorous programming that commercial interests demand” (1998: 29). Devaluating the significance and essence of publicity, the consumption oriented environments weaken the communicative value of gathering spaces. As McAllister remarks, “[e]very time the commercial intrudes on the cultural, the integrity of the public sphere is weakened because of the obvious encroachment of corporate promotion” (quoted by Klein, 2000: 31).

4.2.3.1.3. Privatization of the City

Christine Boyer observes the ways in which contemporary inversions in contemporary cities since 1970s and 1980s operate in order to “privatize public space and publicize private space” (1996: 3). The growing separation between the *pictorialized experience of space and time*, and the city’s worn-out public spaces give rise to the fragmentation of urban continuity –both spatially and temporally. With the decline of the urban communal gatherings, public spaces’ components – such as its rituals, communications etc- start to dissolve. However, this process brings about another consequence, in which “the city’s public is fragmented into marginalized groups, many of whom have no access to or voice and representation in the public spaces of our revitalized and gentrified cities” (Boyer, 1996: 9).

With the occurrence of the unwelcome groups such as homeless, drug addicts, pervers; the inhabitants of the city withdrew from the urban spaces and built their own ‘gated communities’. These are homogeneous spaces of security, surveillance and control, which bear little communicative potential within. This division between the cities and the private defensive spaces entails the radical fragmentation of not only urban continuity, but also the public life. The gathering force between

this phenomenon is the paranoiac tendency, which is just the contrary of Sennett, who asserts that:

“What is characteristic of our city building is to wall off the differences between people, assuming that these differences are more likely to be mutually threatening than mutually stimulating. What we have made in the urban realm are therefore bland, neutralizing spaces, spaces which remove the threat of social contact” (1990: xii).

In spite of the fact that Sennett’s ideas date two decades back, it is still accurate to claim that the multiculturalism and diversity remain vital issues within the context of public spaces. Likewise, maybe one of the most revolutionary contributions of virtuality is the opportunity of accommodating multiple users and their interactions, regardless of their social and cultural roots.

4.2.3.2. The Immaterial Reconstruction of Public Spaces: Virtual Communities

Having lost their authority and dominance in urban spaces of the city, inhabitants of cities start to restructure the communal interactions in “imagined communities” (term first used by Andersen, 1983). The former nature and practices of urban public spaces are shifted through the virtual realm, in which physical proximity has lost its significance, and different cultures can coexist peacefully. Nevertheless, prior/simultaneous to this development, the contemporary self underwent a conversion a process of split of body and mind.

4.2.3.2.1. Bodies – Cities – Public Spaces

The dissociation of the physical body and the city implies a breakdown of old patterns of the urban realm in which distinctions and boundaries are imprecise and

unreliable. However, this bodiless existence accompanies some problems, and challenges the notion of 'traditional' public space. Thus, the constraint of presence of the corporeal body needs to be interrogated in the context of urban communal culture.

The mutual relation, depending on the dual struggle and transformations between the city and body, urban spaces and citizens is undeniably a catalyst for urban culture. Elizabeth Grosz elucidates this dependency as: "[t]he body and its environment, rather, produce each other as forms of the hyperreal, as modes of simulation which have overtaken and transformed whatever reality each may have had into the image of the other: the city is made and made over into the simulacrum of the body, and the body, in its turn, is transformed, 'citified', urbanized as a distinctively metropolitan body (1998: 43). Being a "particular ingredient in the social construction of the body", the city is:

"the site for the body's cultural saturation, its takeover and transformation by images, representational systems, the mass media, and the arts – the place where the body is representationally reexplored, transformed, contested, reinscribed. In turn, the body (as cultural product) transforms, reinscribes the urban landscape according to its changing (demographic, economic, psychological) needs, extending the limits of the city, of the sub-urban, ever towards the country-side which borders it" (Grosz, 1998: 47-48).

The tendency that conceptually intersects the domain of body and architecture can be mapped out till Vitruvius, who suggested the temples be built with respect to proportions of the human body. Vitruvius also is a source of inspiration for Leonardo, who developed his ideas in the Renaissance era. Maria Luisa Palumbo studies the historical development of the notion of body from ancient times until today's cyborg imagery, which she describes as "postorganic" (2000: 24). She depicts the relation between body and architecture as: "[w]hile the body, invaded and dilated by technology becomes architecture, architecture in turn looks to the body, not as a model of order and formal measurement, but as a model of sensitivity, flexibility, intelligence and communicative capacity" (2000: 5). This

explanation is significant for its primacy of corporeal existence over the machine-like constructs.

However, the rise, proliferation and easy-access of visual media, the innovations in the telecommunication networks that reconfigure the nature of public relations, and the emergence of simulated environments as a substitute for urban spaces suggest little relevance to convergence of city and individual body. Our relations with the urban spaces are weakening as our affinity with these are replacing the former, which led Boyer to claim that “we implicitly speak of a body released from its physical restrictions, a body evacuated, devastated, disintegrated, disappearing” (Boyer, 1995: 74). She draws attention to the distinction between the “materiality of the modernist body” and the “immateriality of the postmodernist body”, asserting that there is an “analogy between the modernists’ engagement with the city and the postmodernists’ withdrawal from the city, which has left it emaciated, evacuated, and disappearing” (1996: 74).

We are actually dependent on our bodies in our urban culture and relations. “The body is traced with the values of culture: the contours of the body are the contours of society: each reproduces the ‘nature’ of both the powers and dangers credited in social structure” (Pile, 1996: 186). As Robins briefly argues: “Experience is inherently embodied” (1996b: 30). Conversely, we are gradually getting disengaged from the real world, with the diffusion of visual and simulated technologies into our lives. “Technologies function to mediate, to defer, even to substitute for, interaction with the real world ... Our technologies keep the world at a distance”, writes Robins (1996b: 19). For him, these new technologies exploit our basic fears about reality and the anxiety of being and living in cities. Referring to Sennett’s book, *Flesh and Stone* (1994), he points to the inseparable coexistence of body and city in the urban culture, and asserts that the physical encounters in the city is the nature of urban experience itself. This frailty of the tactile body and overemphasis on visual experience carries the risk of turning the citizens into spectators.

4.2.3.2.2. Emergence of Virtual Communities

The contemporary self has not remained the same throughout the transformations of the urban fabric. She/he is a not static one, but rather transforms simultaneously by her/his environment. Citizens' lifestyles and personalities are diversified, experiences are multiple and taking place in the realms of immaterial today. As Turkle remarks, "[i]n [her] computer-mediated worlds, the self is multiple, fluid, and constituted in interaction with machine connections; it is made and transformed by language; sexual congress is an exchange of signifiers; and understanding follows from navigation and tinkering rather than analysis" (1995: 15).

Thus, it is possible to mention of a discrepancy and disconnection between the traditional public spaces and modes of communication, and the contemporary citizen. As Flanagan remarks, "[d]uring the past decades, researchers have embraced the idea that community is not a place but a set of social ties, that it is an extra-spatial social phenomenon not to be confused with neighborhood" (1993: 23). As a considerable part of interactions and communications are occurring within the invisible networks that has little relevance to the material fabric of the city, it becomes crucial to redefine the limits of public spaces. Reclaiming the traditional organic community that is basically bound to the context and territory is getting obsolete and doesn't make sense much anymore. As Koolhaas connotes,

"we are stuck with this idea of the street and the plaza as public domain, but the public domain is radically changing...with television and the media and a whole series of other inventions, you could say that the public domain is lost. But you could also say, that it's now so pervasive it does not need physical articulation any more. I think the truth is somewhere in between. But we as architects still look at it in terms of a nostalgic model, and in an incredibly moralistic sense, refuse signs of its being reinvented in other populist or more commercial terms.... you can go to these cities and bemoan the absence of a public realm, but as architects it is better for us to bemoan the utter incompetence of the buildings." (Koolhaas, 1996: 45)

The need for community, thus, isn't likely to be fulfilled merely within the limits of material urban fabric. By the beginning of 21st century, it is becoming clear that future would be shaped in the intersection of both material and immaterial. The citizens are not only organic entities, but their existence is shaped by their interactions with technology. So, the divergence between the two is getting blurred and the two realms are getting closer to each other. Contemporary cities are becoming socio-culturally getting hybrid constructions. The body-machine dualism isn't collapsing only in films or novels, but also in the inhabitant's public life in contemporary cities, and giving rise to the re-emergence of the concept of cyborg in the urban life. However, the cyborg imagery doesn't go far enough to point out to a total replacement of the corporeal body. It still remains as a metaphor; however a constructive one. The combination of body and machine indicates a tolerance towards the coexistence of conflicting notions. It suggests a reciprocal relationship between the organic face-to-face modes of communication and the electronic networks.

The cyborg experience, as a model for today's urban communal life, makes the constitution of new connections in the threshold possible. Cyborg is a social construct, as Haraway extensively discusses, and is "about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work" (1991: 154). Contemporary self now dwells in the interface between city and electronic 'flows'. Here, experience is possible without the body but not wholly; corporal experience complements the virtual one. The limits of our urban experiences that are hitherto enforced by our material existence can be surpassed by the accompaniment of the immaterial.

However, globalization has its own enemies with justifiable reasons. Global networks might be exploited as tools of control and suppression. Virtual environments might multiply the logic of surveillance in a way that is freed from space. They might make the existing surveillance technologies more widespread, efficient and unperceivable. They might drive the society into a situation in which invisible observers track our

'digital footprints'. Facilities that the modern society seem either to bring forth or just impose - like our credit cards, mobile telephones, personal computers, ATM machines, along with virtual environments – all can possibly become tools for surveillance and control in information societies. Quoting Crawford, "[n]ew digital techniques for remote surveillance have rendered a physical prison obsolete" (1995). In this way, not only public spaces, but also our very intimate territories might turn into spaces of surveillance.

Despite these dystopian and pessimist views against the global culture, there is no way to reverse or give a halt to the process of globalization and technologies of virtuality. Referring to Sharon Zukin, Eeckhout and Jacobs goes so far to claim that "[d]istinctions between categories like 'multicultural' and 'multiethnic' are often merely a nominal matter, especially in the US, where the word culture is almost automatically equated with ethnicity" (2000: 76). It is almost impossible to think of a pure and uninterrupted culture outside these all-inclusive debates, with all its potentials and negativities. Just at this point, Kellner states that,

"Within the world economy, globalization involves the proliferation of the logic of capital, but also the spread of democracy in information, finance, investing, and the diffusion of technology (see Friedman 1999). Globalization is thus a contradictory amalgam of capitalism and democracy, in which the logic of capital and market system enter ever more areas of the world and domains of life at the same time that democracy spreads and more political regions and space of everyday life are being contested by democratic demands and forces" (Kellner).

He proposes the conception of "globalization from below" instead of "globalization from above", "which would protect the environment, labor rights, national cultures, democratization and other goods from the ravages of an uncontrolled capitalist globalization" (Kellner). In this way, virtual realm might create its own counter-culture that has the power to show resistance towards the oppressive dictates of capital power.

4.2.3.2.3. Virtual Subcultures

The disorderly and decentered nature of technologies of virtuality lay the ground for the subcultural formations, which welcomes subjective interventions. Virtual environments become spaces in which diverse ideas can be expressed freely. “[V]irtual communities”, as Stone argues, are “passage points for collections of common beliefs and practices that united people who were physically separated” (1991: 85). They enable gatherings of ideas independent of physical proximity. Within virtual communities, contradicting or corresponding ideas circulate, support, conflict, or intensify the others without friction. They can act as a ground for reuniting people of various local, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Virtual subcultures, in which “participation is mediated by technology” (Kellner) are indeed subjective, and against suppressive totalitarian beliefs and views. The decentered structure of virtual environments renders it almost impossible to control and restrain unwanted socio-cultural movements. This characteristic allows not only sustaining the existing beliefs and ideas, but also enables new meanings are formed and spread. Griswold stresses that the electronic media “allow the *raw* expression of ideas and emotions, making possible an immediacy that had previously occurred only in face-to-face communication” (1994: 144), which make possible the self-expression of counter-cultures. David Bell mentions two kinds of subcultural relationships in virtual environments. They

1. signal an expressive relationship to digital technology
2. make use of it to further their particular project (Bell, 2000: 205).

The significance of the both formations is that they are exploiting technology for their own rights and intentions. Even though it might seem as if their existence and continuity is bound to the conceptual limits of the imaginary environment they are accommodated in, their more significant influences can be observed in the material world. Virtual communities are socio-cultural formations that oppositional

movements arise, disseminate, circulate, intensify and finally become visible in the urban culture and life. As Kellner extensively discusses, “oppositional politics can use new technologies to intervene within the global restructuring of capitalism to promote democratic and anti-capitalist social movements aiming at radical structural transformation”.

The former features of cultural formations lose a part of their significance, as the physical appearance is inappropriate in the virtual realm. In contrast, hitherto recessive and dormant groups such as women, black people, marginalized groups, citizens of third world countries, elderly and physically disabled people are becoming gradually active. In this point, it is important to note that these groups are bound together not by the common geography, but by the personal and mental attributes, such as their tastes, ideas, interests, world views, beliefs, lifestyles. Due to these imagined connections between people, one might be a complete stranger in his physical surroundings, but feel safe and comfortable once she/he has gained access to the virtual domain. The invisible networks that associate the whole globe (apart from the economically disenfranchised) makes such paradoxical connections emerge in the urban culture.

Today many counter-movements are being held in the digital worldwide networks. There are a number of instances highlighting the possibility that the real-world problems can be solved within the virtual realm. “If forces struggling for democratization and social justice want to become players in the cultural and political battles of the future”, remarks Kellner, “they must devise ways to use new technologies to advance a radical democratic and ecological agenda and the interests of the oppressed”.

However, a radical shift from physical communication to virtual doesn't seem likely in this point of urban and virtual condition. Instead, “[h]uman beings may well learn to operate simultaneously in global, relational communities and in local,

spatial ones” (Griswold, 1994: 150). Virtual communities may not replace real life face-to-face interaction, but can actively accompany it and fill its insufficiencies.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

It is now becoming clear that a certain part of reality will be shaped within the digital medium. Although many studies have been made since the notions on technologies of virtuality and immateriality have emerged, concepts and their consequences are still generally ambiguous, and need to be reexplored. Even though immaterial technologies and their consequences defy the idea of physical spaces, they cannot demolish the whole frame of architecture. Rather than pointing to a radical rupture or a paradigm shift, it should be considered as the continuation of today's urban phenomena. As Bouman and Van Toorn assert, "one cannot deny that architecture has already changed its narrative during the post-Nietzschean shift in social and philosophical thought, although it didn't change its basic characteristics, being shelter, meaning, fundament, occupation and so on. Since architecture is much more than art, science and language, it's not so vulnerable to the paradigm shifts..." (1994: 144). For now, the notion of virtuality suggests new dynamics to be construed for architecture, more than restructuring the function or meaning of it.

Like most of the innovations that profoundly affect people's lives, virtuality also has adversaries. The technophilic idea that technologies of virtuality would lead the world into a holocaust, just as in the science-fiction films, still exists. However much overstated they might be, today's world might suffer from or come across to similar threats in the future, such as being the extension of the consumer culture, or a new medium of a perfected control system. "Technology, after all, always creates a crisis for culture, and the technologies of the twentieth century have been at once the most liberating and the most repressive in history, evoking sublime terror and sublime euphoria in equal measures" (Bukatman, 1993: 4). The technology-oriented modes of virtuality, without doubt, opened up new horizons and in result directed new challenges for architecture. It not only demolished the physical constraints on architecture, but also freed the idea of space-making. Yet, however innovative may these issues concerning virtuality may be, it could not drastically rewrite the critical culture and discourse of architecture. The notion of virtuality and its effects of the contemporary cities gain significance and make sense only when combined with the already-existing urban phenomena.

One may support or oppose to the notion of virtuality. However, as might be anticipated, the technologies of virtuality and virtual experience are here to stay. So, the thing that should be done, in an architectural perspective, is to embrace the optimistic ideas that see virtuality as a contingency, while holding the critical stance point of the pessimists'. Because, as Kay remarks,

"Real space and virtual space are defined only *in* each other. Here, real space must be approached in its *absence*, at the limit or disruption of the work's virtual spaces, for to 'conceptualize' real space is precisely to write over it" (Kaye, 2000: 32).

As discussed extensively in the previous chapter, the concepts launched by virtuality challenge the traditional relationships and dynamics of the culture of architecture. Architecture opens itself a new area of discussion, and poses a shift towards new conceptualizations regarding architecture and architectural design.

- Both the contemporary city and virtuality can be depicted within a framework of space, time and culture. Thus, from an architectural point of view, the effects of virtuality are most significantly perceptible within the context of urbanity. The notion of virtuality has brought a new perception of architecture that is transitory and erratic. As Van Toorn writes, “[w]e suddenly realize that the representation of meaning in space and time depends on the movements in the network and not on the static representation we find in many digital cities” (1999). Rather than regularity, this new conception is characterized by multiplicity and disorder.
- Cities have become complex networks, which cease to be comprehensible as a whole. References are volatile and are melting as soon as they are defined. They suggest no continuity or order anymore. Instead, they can be understood as a set of fragments or multiple layers of architectural dynamics superimposed onto each other. So, architecture develops into a mediator of this diversity, and its new challenge becomes construing these relationships with the city.
- Architecture, henceforth dealing with “space of flows”, is always ‘under-construction’, re-establishing and redefining itself again and again. In this way, virtuality marks the beginning of an architecture that tackles with free-floating associations rather than material concerns.
- Technologies of virtuality bring together public and private, in architecture. The most intimate spaces of one also accommodate publicity to some degree, due to the electronic networks. Similarly, within the limits of a spatial closure, its primary function ceases to be the only determinant of activities. In one single space, one can be a consumer, spectator, citizen, lecturer, worker, artist, lover etc. The identity of the inhabitant and the space he occupies turn into shifting constructs. Accordingly, it becomes possible to assert that the inhabitant-

physical space relationships also develop into a fluid and changeable one. Architecture increasingly becomes hybridized and it becomes more and more difficult to tell apart the different functions, activities and meanings that spaces take on.

- Virtual communities are intrinsically global, just as the invisible networks of information, communication and finance are. Virtual communities do not discriminate involvements that are naturally bound to the corporeal body of the self, such as race, gender and physical appearance. Moreover, social and economic status is irrelevant in the virtual experience. So to say, diversity and inclusion are the very characteristic of virtual public spaces. In this context, it wouldn't be inappropriate to claim that, not only architectural conceptualization is nomadic, but also human body and experiences are.
- The new domain of architecture is the intersection of the material and immaterial world. It turns into a threshold, or an interface, which is exposed to both. So it becomes crucial for the profession of architecture to reconcile the oppositions: the realm, which is defined by invisible flows, and one that is defined by static boundaries. In this context, what architecture will be engaged with are the reciprocal relationships between the slick architectural referents. The notion of virtuality most significantly teaches architects to not to consider urban experiences as inert or rigid, but rather generating its own dynamics
- As a certain amount of the activities and functions are shifted through the immaterial territory, their spatial implications are losing their significance as architectural determinants. Architecture ceases to be practiced merely upon notions such as function or physical appearance. Architectural constructs such as malls, museums, supermarkets, public spaces, and even cities are reappearing in the virtual realm. Architecture starts to share its elements and challenges with the immaterial extension, to which architectural spaces shift a part of their functions and concerns.

- Architecture in the context of virtual culture suggests various themes that can be conceived as an integrity with the previous section concerning the spatial implications. The virtual culture also entails the detachment of authentic roots and architectural meaning. Having separated the contextual referentials with location, culture and time, the other characteristics of this new architecture are simplicity, neutrality and blankness, in which new meanings might be made.
- Architecture, in product, is gradually disposing of rather heavy and massive materials. As Puglisi asserts, the new age is marked by three phenomena: immateriality, sensorality and multimediality, and its new values are lightness, indeterminateness, transformability and the involvement of the user, replacing the notions of weight and structure” in architecture (1999: 7). In this context, the architectural form is “dematerialized” and the “construction is losing solidity”: the cost of the structure of the building keeps on going down, while the cost of the technical and digital (immaterial) devices are increasing gradually (Puglisi, 1999: 58).
- Moreover, technologies of immateriality imply placelessness. As Mitchell mentions, “[t]hey are not rooted in the ground, so they completely eliminate the ‘earthwork’ that Gottfried Semper identified as the first of his four elements of architecture” (1998: 207). In this way, practice of architecture detaches itself from its context, and spaces cease to be place-bounded. As Palumbo also remarks:

“The strategy of [new architecture] is to break down, to disassemble, to lose the whole nature of construction; this does not entail disassembling the traditional elements before re-using them in contemporary architecture, but, on the contrary, a radical opposition of the very tradition of building, unhinging the certainties of architecture, the concepts of foundation, finality and hierarchy” (2000, 52).

In the framework of this study, some questions remain unanswered, as this thesis aimed to constitute a groundwork for new meanings and interpretations be made, in the age of virtuality. It aimed at discussing the ways in which virtuality alters the contemporary cities and the culture of architecture. Given that the technologies of virtuality will accelerate and intensify their effects in the future, the above-mentioned discussions might gain more importance, completely give way to new conceptualizations, or change their directions towards relatively new dimensions. However, in today's context, technology, especially technologies of virtuality will be one of the leading forces behind the transformations of the culture of architecture.



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