Victimary Thinking, Celebrity and the CCTV Building

Benjamin Matthews

Adjunct Fellow
School of Humanities and Communication Arts
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia
ben@benjaminjamesmatthews.cm.au

Introduction/Abstract

The growing influence of globalisation and its accompanying mobilities, both corporeal and remote, are particularly clearly portrayed in the context of the cityscape where the built environment contains evidence of contemporaneous developments in culture. This is in no small part because the global population is now primarily housed in cities, a shift that has occurred concurrently with the growing economic significance of cities that now compete with one another in a manner that exceeds national boundaries. An associated set of highly complex cultural dynamics and an emergent aesthetic sensibility have been identified by a growing number of scholars; one that is marked by a set of concerns that appear contradictory, at times paradoxical and ever ambivalent. Stark illustration of this both kinetic and unstable sensibility is offered through the buildings constructed based on the designs of celebrity architects, or "starchitects." The figure of the starchitect is paradigmatic of how agency has been effected by the changes outlined here, which seem to indicate the emergence of phenomena on a global scale that move beyond the conditions of postmodernity. These demonstrations of prestige participate in cultural narratives associated with the historical relationship between high and popular culture, and by default, the market system and its culture. It is argued below that Eric Gans's explanations of the epochal conditions that exceed postmodernity—and their cultural implications—under the label of "post-millennialism" offer a very fruitful means by which to explain the activity of the starchitect. The discussion takes as an explanatory case study the example of the CCTV building in Beijing, the headquarters of the Chinese public broadcaster designed by Rem Koolhaas. The building portrays his consciousness of the paradoxical doubling of our survival and demise, the ecology of which is emergent from both our capacity for symbolic representation and the exploitation of the material conditions that constitute these non-exigent ecological circumstances in the first instance.

I. Post-postmodernity and Originary Anthropology

Theory across all humanistic disciplines now attempts to grapple with the acceleration of globalization that has unfolded over recent decades as new forms of information technology, transportation, and communication underpin material conditions that allow unprecedented corporeal and non-corporeal mobility. Social structures thus complexly redefined by deterritorialization and marked by growing interconnectedness and speed have been mapped with increasing rigor, and in some cases, despair for their human effects (Castells 1996; Giddens 1990; Harvey 1989, 1996, 2011; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton 1999; Urry 2002; Virilio 1988, 2009). Terms that have been employed to describe these new conditions in sociology and anthropology include "hypermodernity" (Charles and Lipovetsky 2005), "supermodernity" (Augé 1995), "liquid modernity" (Bauman 2000) and "late modernity" (Beck 1992, Giddens 1991, Lash 1990), where each in turn claims a new fluidity, growing anomie, and still greater transience than that present in earlier phases of modernity(1).

As part of efforts to encompass the growing effects of globalization during what appears to be a post-postmodern epoch, theorists have begun to attempt to create points of departure rather than continue the pattern of reacting to a set of precedent epochal conditions that is implicit to the "post" gesture(2). Some of these attempts focus on aesthetic modes of representation, leading to the emergence of terms such as "digimodernism" (Kirby 2009), "altermodernity" (Bourriard 1998, 2009), and "metamodernity" (Vermeulen and van den Akker 2009). Each in turn asserts and describes the conditions of an alternative state of modernity to that associated with postmodernity, and maintains that these are not reactions to postmodernity; instead, they are asides from history. *Digimodernism* focuses upon the unprecedented presence of digital technology, whilst *metamodernism* asserts the emergence of conditions that permit a liminal mode of aesthetic representation and experience that takes the form of unresolved oscillation between modern and postmodern sensibilities. Lastly, Bourriard's *altermodernity* has gained the most traction and is most attentive to formally aesthetic modes of representation, and serves as a useful example to précis in more detail here because of its correlatives with Generative Anthropology.

Bourriard emphasizes the limiting effects of attaching current patterns in cultural production to their origins, suggesting that the potency in contemporaneous conditions of aesthetic experience is to be discovered in a liberating potential for the subject to transcend the limiting generativity implicit in such (originary) thinking. Here, networks created by digital communication technologies and corporeal mobility are considered to have allowed for scenes on which novel cultural emergences are feasible via relatively autonomous processes of creolisation. These emergences Bourriard sees as vital alternatives to the homogeneity created by global capitalism after the end of postmodernism(3). As the originary thinker knows, history is intransigent, and detaching the present from its origins not so readily achieved. Bourriard's argument is laudable in its desire to encourage the

energy created by the elevated capacity of human networks underpinned by digital communication and broadly available corporeal mobility. However, cultural explanation does not so simply yield a point of departure, and certainly not one capable of exceeding the centrality of origin. Simply put, the individual artist who participates in Bourriard's network remains the inheritor of their cultural circumstances, and turning one's focus from this fact does not liberate the artist from the generative influence of history.

The homogeneity Bourriard identifies is the result of increased production, distribution and consumption of culture where both the vertical and horizontal integration of networks operates on an unprecedented scale. The scalability of culture under such networked conditions permits a relatively uninhibited horizontal exchange of culture, and a level of access that leads some theorists to assert the conflicting narrative of a *loss* of history. This contradicts Bourriard, who celebrates such exchange as a potential that can be generative of invaluable aesthetic heterogeneity: an alterity that exceeds the controlling influence of history (as *doxa*). As architect and theorist Rem Koolhaas argues, "[w]e live in a very flat digital world in which everything is accessible but increasingly there is less and less memory. We are, you might say, condemned to the perpetual present" ("Rem" 75). Such presentism is considered an attribute of a cultural setting in which attention is the watchword of cultural success. The reduction of memory is a trait of the horizontality in question, whereby the very fact of access is asserted to be the guarantor of the loss of memory. Ironic, since the relationship between the hardware that constitutes the network (the Internet) and the software that supervenes upon it (the world wide web) is governed by the growing depth of universally accessible computational "memory" capable of replacing the biological function of human memory *vis a vis* cultural memory. The latter relation is, of course, integral to history and our access to it. But here, the presence of history has been overcome by the super valency of an access culture underpinned by the ever-widening availability of the necessary hardware. This Adam Katz has described as leading to an attention-governed context in which celebrity plays an intensified role, such that:

> The intensified culture of celebrity and publicity thereby generated most obviously privileges the transgressive over the continent, the brash and boastful over the modest—the invisibility of the virtues of manuscript culture is intensified by the demand that everything be made visible, literal and blatant. ("Mimetic")

In this account, the *depth* in culture is contravened by the logic of publicity, whereby attention is the watchword and gaining it the primary motif of the network in which rapidly produced, radically presented content dominates. Access, therefore, is not simply access to the technology and that which it presents, but a culture that governs and is generative of an epoch in which a lack of depth replaces the possibilities held in time. Temporality—as it is given over to asynchroneity and distal sublation—is the modality of this epoch, and the

outcomes are visibly confronting, and surface-oriented.

The difficulty that accompanies attempts to synthesise the complexity of global phenomena is revealing. Imagining and representing "global" culture reminds us of the importance of having a historically grounded definition for the human. In this global context of culture, mobility is certainly of central importance to the discussion, and as will be discovered, it is not without its irony that a key element of the cultural narratives associated of what is asserted as a new sensibility is a normalizing of the acceptance of necessary decay, decline, or ruin. Here the discourse is freighted with baggage from postmodernity, where decay is considered an integral feature of knowing, and where questions outweigh solutions. James Clifford captured this in 2012 in the ambivalently millenarian/optimistic conclusion to his piece "Feeling Historical," summing up the effect of the 25 years that had passed since he convened the influential collection, *Writing Cultures,* as follows:

> "Globalization" is not, or not simply, "the capitalist world system." It is of course capitalist… and more. I hold on to the much-abused word as a sign of excess, a name for the evolving world of connectivities we can't represent. Globalization in this sense is obviously not the 1990s version—"the end of history," "the flat earth." . . . Globalization, for me, is a place-holding name for an articulated, polycentric totality. Multiple zeitgeists. A bush, or tangle, of historicities. . . . The vulnerability to political violence and economic insecurity that many of us feel today is intensified by ecological threats that can no longer be managed or exported. What happens when the supplies run out, when the resource wars get really desperate? Of course this feeling of exposure is a version of what most people in the world have always known. The certainty of having lived in a "First World" bubble of security that is no more. Good riddance to that. And now? Twenty-five years after *Writing Culture*: the excitement, the fear, of being in the real. (425-6)

These final words are of course a nod toward the abandonment of certainty inherent to postmodernity, along with an expression of the fall out to this epoch, in *retrospect*, or as Clifford writes in his segue to these comments on globalization, "from my shaky perch in the new millennium." Twenty-five years ago, Clifford's concern was with promoting reflexivity, and how ethnographic representation participates in determining "order, diversity, inclusion and exclusion" ("Partial" 2). Now, however, "good riddance," Clifford affirms, to the heady brinkmanship and confounding complexity he describes, and the violence it may be generative of. Thus, the post-postmodern sensibility: a deliberately paradoxical result of history (here, human culture successfully becoming a threat to itself on the scale of the whole human community).

II. Post-millennialism and Pre-humiliation

As explanations of cultural emergences during an increasingly energized period of human history, the abovementioned attempts with their epochal bounding provide a lens to recent developments in theory, where such definitions rely on epochal thinking that ensures a coherent definition of the human is not adopted. Indeed, the paradoxical situation of theory associated of the sensibility generated through postmodernity and realized in post-structuralism is such that more than preventing the adoption of a coherent definition, this epoch became the scene for a genesis of discard: throwing the baby out with the bathwater, as it were, through the adoption of the (deliberately paradoxical) always already available symbolic, the decentred subject and the polyvocal text.

Generative Anthropology has the capacity to address this absence and to supply a genuine point of departure from the pattern of epochally defined reflexivity that can explain both the aesthetic and structural shifts in focus here(4). In his discussions of such post-postmodern conditions, Eric Gans has employed the term “post-millennialism” to demonstrate this application, and addressed his desire for a new epoch during which the victimary mode of postmodernity declines in its capacity to defer violence (by preventing the build up of resentment) in favour of the elaboration of a true reciprocity(5). For Gans, the emergence of post-postmodern epochal conditions can be traced to the decline of the broader dialectical opposition/s generated through the postmodern conditions of global capitalism. Here, the “end of the fundamental opposition between the market system and its culture is a corollary of the disappearance of the system’s political Other,” a situation that has led to a destabilising of the victimary mode of postmodernity (“Post-Millennial”). This new epoch “cannot afford the automatic validation of victimary credentials,” and as a result, the means by which deferral of resentment will be achieved is via “the establishment of the mode of reciprocity—the economic—that is the least culturally constraining” (“Post-Millennial”). In the information age, the means of conducting reciprocal exchange have been elevated as the networked transaction of the symbolic and intellectual are enhanced via the facility of the marketplace. The latter is the means by which the hardware (the Internet is the prime example) is established to permit the software—both public (computer) and private (the internal individual)—to stage the procedures by which exchange might be mediated. However, the post-millennial subject cannot escape the possibility of victimary resentment, since to do so would be to enter a utopic or dystopic state in which the subject has and knows their place. For Gans, this possibility must be deferred, since “[w]hat makes post-millennial victimary discourse effective is that it continues to circulate and transform itself rather than stagnating and fermenting into a monstrous ideology” (“Victimary”). This paradoxical lack of a stable centre of, or locus to, culture becomes the governing mechanism that guards against a building of resentment in any particular form and narrative, or what might foment the descent into violence as it adopts the coherence of an overarching cultural narrative to underpin a “monstrous ideology.”

In his initial description of “post-millennialism,” Gans indicated that the post-postmodernity that marks contemporaneity could be constituted by “non-victimary dialogue” that would act to inhibit resentment in general, and that the resentment of capitalism and liberal democracy postmodernity insists upon might also be reduced (“Thoughts”). He later adjusted this position via his thesis, “[v]ictimary thinking is the post-millennial replacement for utopianism,” and observed that rather than “leaving the victimary postmodern era and entering a ‘post-millennial’ era of non-victimary dialogue,” it is more likely “we are leaving the acute form of the victimary for the chronic, the heroic for the banal” (“Victimary”). In keeping with this observation, Gans has explained the changing function of victimary thinking in terms of the isolated figure of the moral hero.

The hero, real or fictional, acts on behalf of the victim and must be relatively isolated, occupying the position of the “Girardian scapegoat” (“Moral Heroism”). By its nature, therefore, heroism is dangerous, and cannot be recognized as heroism in the immediate community, against which the hero takes a stand. After postmodernity the victim has become more difficult to discern as a result of the growing historical complexity outlined above, and as such, the hero is no longer a reliable figure, a situation that has led in popular culture to the irenic function of the celebrity. Gans argues,

[t]he modern solution to the danger of the sacred center is preemptively to desacralize its inhabitants, to ‘prehumiliate’ them, as Doug Collins puts it. The term ‘celebrity’ by which we designate our unheroic public figures reflects an increased proportion of resentment to adoration in our ever-ambivalent attitude toward the center. (“Moral Heroism”)The *celebrity* is an adumbrated hero. Placed at the shifting centre, the celebrity is dangerous and sacred, adored and resented, represented in such a way that this is a subject who can’t be taken seriously any longer. The “prehumiliated”(6) figure of the celebrity Gans associates with a shift in the nature of the attention paid by the human community toward the centre, which despite remaining ambivalent is marked by growing resentment toward the centre. They move in and out of collective focus, at once disliked and admired, at once subject to and the authors of the dynamics of attention from which emerge publicly performed and communally experienced narratives of love and resentment. Here, the banal celebrity participates in the diffusion over time of attention from foci of a kind that involves direct influence over scenes of culture. By virtue of their lack of a capacity to enact any real (will to) power they remain free and clear of the violence their triviality shields them from.

III. Origins of the “Starchitect” and the “Bilbao Effect”

In a contemporaneous situation of culture that is marked by such growing resentment toward and declining adoration of those to whom attention is usually drawn, the creation of material culture frequently enacts the ambivalence that foreshadows and shapes said attention. This occurs in the context of a range of cultural formats, from high art through to the popular setting of such phenomena as film clips and advertisements, but one

particularly compelling context is the built environment. Central to the creation of large structures that come to define our cityscapes is the architect, who intervenes in the construction of the built environment via the formal infrastructure of a discipline that is encoded in systems of law. The architect is a peculiar figure in that they straddle the position of artist and "practitioner," and are associated with a formal academic discipline that is at once interested in aesthetics and pragmatics.

The globalising of capital has led to a growing concentration of populations within, and rising competition between, cities. So called "world cities" like New York, London and Tokyo now compete as economic entities that transcend national boundaries. It is arguable that one effect of this has been the building of a number of landmark buildings, as it has become a *de rigueur* element of civic planning to appoint one of a growing number of "starchitects" (a portmanteau of celebrity and architect) to design, and in some cases oversee the construction of, iconic public buildings. These buildings are of course very expensive to build, and rely upon attracting the attention of an elite architect, who brings with them the presence and prestige that only a wealthy, economically vital and culturally significant city can hope to attain. These buildings are often associated with the high cultural paradigm of artistic practice and production, such as museums, galleries, and concert halls. This phenomenon has therefore bought new life and attention to formats of cultural production associated with a deep history, and simultaneously reinvested them in popular culture.

The pattern generated by this intersection between agency and practice is revealing, and has inspired Witold Rybczynski to describe what he calls the "Bilbao effect," after the cultural and economic impacts of the construction of Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim (1997) inspired other cities to commission the construction of (what are intended to be) iconic buildings by high profile starchitects. Such buildings have certainly bought attention and contributed to the identity of cities for a lot longer than this, but the scene of origin for the generation of the "spare no expense" starchitect-constructed building would seem to be Bilbao. After Bilbao, a pattern has emerged in which the city in question constructs a public drama around the process of commissioning. The selection of an architect and a building is most commonly conducted via a competition that is mediated to the extent that the process itself generates the circumstances of attention. Starchitect is pitted against starchitect and their respective models, plans and rationale advertise the prestige of the city by participating in a narrative of future-tense economic and cultural vigour. As Rybczynski describes it, this "charged atmosphere promotes flamboyance rather than careful thought, and favors the glib and obvious over the subtle and nuanced" (139). The Bilbao effect, therefore, describes a set of outcomes that are directly generated by a striking shift in the disciplinarity of the architect as it comes into contact with the distorting pull of the popular.

There is, of course, a very postmodern influence evident in Rybczynski's perspective. He is (intentionally or otherwise) riffing on Baudrillard's "Beaubourg Effect," described in *Simulations and Simulacra* as the paradoxical outcome of the decision to build the Pompidou

Centre (1977) in the rundown Beaubourg area of Paris. For Baudrillard the arts centre is a kind of factory, whose machine aesthetic literally pumps the disaffected visitors (victims) of late capitalism through its tubes and pipes, reminding them of their position and serving as a paradoxical representation of the problem the presence of the building pretends to act against: "[h]ere cultural objects, as elsewhere the objects of consumption, have no other end than to maintain you in a state of mass integration, of transistorized flux, of a magnetized molecule" (67). Thus, the paradoxical situation of the interleaving of the marketplace and the machine aesthetic under the conditions of modernity are perceived to shape subjective agency toward a numb state of disaffection. Baudrillard's analysis typifies the context of early critical assessments of popular culture, where the latter is seen to invade parasitically the circumstances of a high cultural paradigm of art, as he participates in a history of intellectual resentment toward capitalism.

Rybczynski's complaint cannot be removed from this complex intersection of cultural narratives. This is apparent in his warning that the global pattern the Bilbao Effect describes involves attracting attention in a manner that is less informed by the history of thought as it might instruct the generation of material culture through the discipline of architecture, and more by the drive toward focussing shared attention upon a city with the (banal) goal of economic advantage. As he argues, "[g]reat architecture carries many messages, about society and individuals, about our values and our dreams. It should have more to say to us than 'Look at me'" (142). The result Rybczynski fears is a shallow use of the symbolic potential of the built environment; one that might otherwise participate in progressing human society. The presupposition, therefore, behind his argument is once again that the *depth* in culture is contravened by the logic of publicity, and that attempts at attracting attention have the potential to strip the materiality of culture of its most valuable quality beyond meeting our basic needs (shelter etc.): symbolic representation. What is undermined into the bargain is the stability of the community, and if Rybczynski is resentful he is resentful of this shift away from valorising this sacred potential.

Bilbao Guggenheim _User:MykReeve (CC BY-SA 3.0)

IV. Rem Koolhaas and the CCTV Building

An interesting case study is the headquarters for the Chinese public broadcaster in Beijing, known as the CCTV(7) building, which was designed by starchitect Rem Koolhaas in collaboration with (lesser known) architect Ole Scheeren and the OMA(8) team. In a spectacle(9) that aligns with Rybczynski's description, Koolhaas' design won an international competition to deliver construction in time for the 2008 Olympics. The facade was completed and the building officially opened on the first of January in that year, though

it was actually finished over four years later, in May 2012. It is a reimagining of the traditional tower form, which is broken at four points to be twisted into a loop that appears from different perspectives to be impenetrable and monolithic, and from others, about to tumble to earth under the weight of its own curious angles. The design is somewhat dogmatically described on the OMA website as a "truly three-dimensional" resolution to the "exhausted typology" of the "two-dimensional tower" with its isolated, singular aesthetic that competes "in the race for ultimate height and style" ("CCTV—Headquarters"). It is reinforced by the external presence of cross-hatched support so that:

> The innovative structure of the building is the result of long term collaboration between European and Chinese engineers to achieve new possibilities for the high-rise. The structure of the CCTV Headquarters, and the forces at work within it, is visible on its façade: a web of diagonals that becomes dense in areas of greater stress, looser and more open in areas requiring less support. The façade itself becomes a visual manifestation of the building's structure. ("CCTV—Headquarters")

The OMA rationale contains references to an intentionally poorly concealed commentary that presents China as a global "other," and the CCTV headquarters as the material evidence of and symbolic portrayal of the nature of this alternate status. The "exhausted typology" and the pursuit of unconsidered height that carries a "two-dimensional" paradigm (towers are not two-dimensional, of course) toward its inevitable failure would seem to be a reference to a global-capitalism-inspired pattern of unfettered growth. The collaboration between China and Europe to generate a three-dimensional solution—one that has a horizontality the paradigm of the tower lacks—drives this home. Inferred is a *doxa* in which the fusion of communism and capitalism that China has adopted should be understood to be just so: purposed with a clear end, and one that involves greater horizontal integration of individual agency and more direct governance of the capitalistic system. The OMA rationale emphasises how it is that the facade with its external evidence of structure reflects the fluidity of the system of support. The structure provides support where needed, and opens up to reveal greater openness at other points. The "the forces at work within" the building are tantamount to this openness and support, which are made visible via the apparent structure. We might conclude that this suggests the hidden mechanisms of control that constrain the agency of the subjects of liberal democratic national states, where the state does little to govern capitalism and the wealthy hold great power. Perhaps Koolhaas and OMA mean to say, "at least you can see who's in control here."

The "Overhang" and structure of the CCTV Building, July 2009 _Dmitry Fironov

Perhaps the last takes too greater licence, but it is certainly uncontroversial to state that the OMA rationale is a provocation, and in keeping with the provocative design of the building. What seems evident as we consider these details and the recent history of Koolhaas' career is that this building is a study in the material conditions of post-millennialism, and the correlated shifting cultural agency of the celebrity as Gans portrays them. Here, the market system and its culture are no longer so clearly opposed, and capitalism's last remaining political "other" has abandoned its pretension toward the utopic in favour of participation in global trade. But the result has not been the evaporation of victimary resentment. Instead, the function of celebrity has been integrated with the professional agency that comes to define the cityscape as part of a spectacle designed to draw a particular kind of attention. The prehumiliated condition of the celebrity is ameliorated by their status as architect, and since the latter is already an ambivalent figure (neither artist nor practitioner) the politics of the flamboyant designs created by the starchitect are a propos to the hypermediated post-millennial condition where attention is first, and quality second.

However, the CCTV building does not necessarily bear out Rybczynski's generalised fear of a loss of symbolic potential or considered application to history. For example, the building has a porthole at the meeting point of the elevated horizontal sections—known as the "Overhang"—that one can stand upon and look down into a garden designed by Koolhaas' partner, Petra Blaisse. The garden is based on Piranesi's famous etchings of Rome, in which the artist is renowned for making additions to the ruined elements of the city: imagined projections built up from the remains (of these architectural designs). Blaisse's garden is divided into three-metre-diameter "pixels," and when viewed from the height of the porthole these pixels come together to give both an impression of the striations in Pirenisi's etchings, and of Rome. Blaisse's website claims that this digitalizing procedure presents a paradoxical synchronicity with the nearby cityscape because it "echoes the city tissue of older parts of Beijing and complements the clear character of the new buildings because of its intricacy" ("CCTV/TVCC site"). The meaning of this construction and rhetoric does not require full explication for us to conclude that the intent evident here is the creation of a text that compels reflection upon the scenicity of culture, upon the rise of empires, and upon the structure of representation; the implicitly digital quality of which is deeply imbedded in a history that is necessarily generated by a sequence of such scenes, each indebted to the last.

Koolhaas has been frequently questioned on his role in the political function of the building, and in no small part because OMA did not enter the competition to build at Ground Zero. In 2002 when both competitions were advertised, Koolhaas was disillusioned and resentful after many failed pitches in the US, so much so that he had recently moved the OMA headquarters from the US to the Netherlands. This seems to be borne out in published material related to the building. In a 2011 interview with *Der Spiegel*, Koolhaas was questioned as to why he built a symbol of power in a dictatorship, and answered:

> The only reason I chose not to take part in the Ground Zero competition was that the project's connection to the past was too clear for my taste. There is more willingness to experiment in China. So much is being built there—entire cities!—that greater risks have to be taken. There, failure is not a disaster. . . . Under neoliberalism, architecture lost its role as the decisive and fundamental articulation of a society ("Interview").

But if Koolhaas is energetic about the direction China is headed, he seems convinced of the decline ahead for the US. As he somewhat less diplomatically described the design in *Wired* magazine in 2004, "it was conceived at the same time that the design competition for Ground Zero took place—not in the backward-looking US, but in the parallel universe of China" (129). On the same page Koolhaas presents in juxtapoise the destruction of the temple of the Philistines, the external weblike structure of his CCTV building, and the famous image of Ground Zero in which nothing but charred, prismatic metallic members remain. It is not a coincidence that the somewhat irrationally contorted format of the CCTV building participates in this narrative of ruin. Indeed, the strange shapes the building offers to the surrounding cityscape give the impression of impending collapse, a brinkmanship that Koolhaas clearly embraces in the aesthetic composition of his design.

Wired 8, 2008, p128

Koolhaas' observations about the shifting subjective agency of the architect in the US under neoliberalism, and his will to intervene (even recklessly) in China and to subsequently escape a set of overly deterministic historical circumstances become very interesting when one examines the design of the CCTV building, which bears striking resemblance to a contorted World Trade Center tower. Beyond the formality of the current-day OMA website, Koolhaas in a more outlandish mode seems more interested to comment—as per Blaisse's intervention in the pixelated Roman garden over which one is suspended when standing in the "Overhang"—on the nature of imperialism. Rather than an expression of the internal coherence of the Chinese public broadcaster, his structure has become a statement of the danger inherent in centrally controlled media and the significant likelihood that the Chinese ascent to power will lead to the same decline that the US' rise will, and the Roman ascent did.

V. High vs. Popular and the Built Environment

Part of what makes the CCTV building so interesting is that unlike other starchitect commissions one might attribute to the "Bilbao effect," this is a building constructed for a public broadcaster. Here is a challenge to the pattern that associates the efforts of the starchitect with a kind of democratizing of high culture. The creation of the starchitect is

intended to both facilitate a city's success in the global marketplace and to sell to a popular audience cultural formats that are traditionally elitist. Predictably enough, however, the success of the Bilbao "franchise" of the Guggenheim museums has been criticized for participating in a process of gentrification in that city. It follows that as the city becomes more economically successful, so too *must* its inhabitants. In other words, the market system and its culture are not under these conditions opposed, but with the popularising of the elite comes a concomitant paradox: the importation of wealth-based stratification to centres of consumption dedicated to the process of democratising high culture. Similarly, the Beaubourg area of Paris has been radically affected by the construction of the highly successful Centre Georges Pompidou Baudrillard critiques in terms of the "Beaubourg effect"; and the Centre Pompidou is such a popular "brand" that it has been adapted to become a travelling exhibition that appears temporarily in other locations, and has been established in two provincial locations in France (e.g., Centre Pompidou-Metz), and other locations in Europe, Asia, and Central and South America. In other words, a high cultural paradigm of art is being "enfranchised" with the capacity to spread with the viral tenacity of global capitalistic growth.

The placement of the CCTV broadcasting facilities inside such an iconic starchitectural creation illustrates a set of emergent material conditions. There, visitors are taken on tours of the building in guided groups, are able to see the "TV Culture Hall" and the "Culture Corridor," which display in six-metre-high passageways the history of the CCTV and of Beijing respectively. They can then visit a large observation deck and eat in a rotating restaurant, before visiting a nearby marine park where sea creatures wander quietly behind glassed enclosures. Transparency is the watchword, and it is played out as a kind of scopophilic reaction to the need to democratise access to this: China's state controlled television production. The irony of the shared acronym, CCTV (Closed Circuit Television), seems to take on even more weight as one imagines a rotating restaurant set atop this monolithic, and twisting, advertisement of transparency. Imagine the shifting view out over a heavily polluted, class-stratified Beijing with its slums and high-rise buildings resting cheek and jowl. This is a centrist vision that brings to mind our ambivalent attitude toward high culture, which is resented for being elitist, and our ambivalence toward economic success, which is resented for disenfranchising the poor, and opens for inspection important ethical concerns associated with the period after postmodernity.

Eric Gans observes that the *high* of high art is to be discovered in its attempts to defer resentment, whereas in the context of the popular, the resentment of the inhabitants of the periphery is legitimized independently of a concern for the whole human community—these are two distinct ethical attitudes, therefore, and the popular is

> entertainment for those who, like the proletariat of Rome, feel unburdened by social responsibility . . . an attitude of indifference to the functioning of society as

> a whole. . . . Popular culture takes advantage of the world of representation to take revenge on reality, whereas high culture never loses sight of the fact that the originary function of representation is the preservation of the community through sacrifice. The tragic is the ultimate high-cultural experience; in obeying the artist's will, we profit from the tragic hero's suffering. . . . We attain the catharsis of our own excessive desires through this process, whereas popular culture discharges these desires in imagined satisfaction (*New Way* 228-9).

Under the conditions of Gans's moral taxonomy, the travellers who sojourn to Bilbao are certainly participating in a popular cultural phenomenon, especially considering that much of the contemporary art curated there is for Gans the shadow of high art that remains after high modernism. The corporeal mobility required to cast their tourist's gaze upon the contents of the Bilbao Guggenheim is paradigmatic of the discharge of desire "in imagined satisfaction" Gans describes. Let us explore this dialectic in the context of the starchitect whose buildings have become tantamount to artworks in the manner in which they operate against a history of high versus popular. The popular audience will usually encounter buildings independently of the architect's oeuvre or theoretical writings, and whilst an artwork in the high art tradition typically appears in the reified material conditions of a gallery or museum ("public" works notwithstanding), a building is part of the cityscape and participates in extant victimary narratives irrespective of the surrounds to the building-as-text. In the case of a starchitect, a popular audience has begun to gain some access to their subjective presence in larger cultural narratives, and so the division of the desired object-as-building is bought to the scale of the popular, wherein the desire to be taken aback by the spectacle of the building is indulged.

The alien form and scale of the CCTV building, and other OMA constructions under Koolhaas' direction, actively participate in such imaging. If one takes the time to examine the archive of unbuilt OMA designs(10), one discovers ample demonstration of this aesthetic, and Koolhaas himself is boastful of this approach and the challenge it presents to engineering firm Arup with whom OMA collaborates. As he writes,

To prove the stability of a structure that violates some of the most sincerely held convictions about logic and beauty, the engineering firm Arup had to dissect every detail of our design. The effort to reassure only reveals the scary aliveness of every structure—elasticity, creep, shrinkage, sagging, bending, buckling. Serving as a hypnotic window, the computer analyzes and exposes the shocking vividness of the mineral world with the tenacity of a pervert. I heard one of Cecil Balmond's engineers at Arup describe, without irony or noticeable wavering, how two sloping steel structures in our design could be connected only at dawn. They would be exposed to different solar heat gain due to their relative positions on the ground and would be most likely to share the same temperature after cooling off overnight. I was elated and horrified by the sheer outrageousness of the problem we had set

before them. Why do they never say no? (“Beijing” 129)The visceral quality of Koolhaas’ dialogue with his own planning process is tantamount to self-mythologising here in the popular setting of *Wired* magazine, where the technophile is invited to fetishize digital technologies (again, in the scopophilic mode), as one can see from the layout and artwork. The reader is invited to imagine the collapse of the building as an erotic performance; his anthropomorphic presentation of the structure is described as a computer animated peep show, in a perverted bacchanalian festival of risk. Furthermore, there seems a Latourian dimension to the confrontation between science and nature presented by Koolhaas. The inanimate is made to live, and the “scary aliveness” of the building is in keeping with the profane nature of the “popular.” The last Gans sees as an advantage in a postmodern context, where the artist adapts “forms to the resentments of his audience rather than put the social order in question in order to reaffirm it” (*New Way* 231). But what happens when this postmodern adaption becomes central to such a focused performance as this, in a setting outside popular art and during a time that seems to have departed from the conditions of postmodernity? The CCTV building is framed by Koolhaas as a superlative display of design through the transcendent possibility in the digital, writ large as a too real monolith that challenges the modernist division between nature and culture. Irrespective of ontological complication that emerges from examining the context of audience engagement with the building-as-text, the division of popular and high is a useful one during our analysis of the CCTV building, which like many texts, straddles the ethical positions of high and popular. But this division is amplified when the text is interrogated by a large scale, indeed, global audience, just as it is amplified by the intricacy of the context. In this spectacular performance, Koolhaas presents the paradoxical situation of his restless individual desire to get buildings built, and his ambivalent delivery and rhetoric is both obsequious and subversive.

The results are difficult to predict. Locally it is most likely to facilitate a social context that is far less than transparent. More broadly, we must conclude that rather than reaffirm the social order with his dire warnings of ruin, Koolhaas simply indulges a popular desire to see it all torn down. What is certain is that the building is designed to become an iconic representation of a situation of culture, to startle and capture attention in the scopophilic mode: it is not surprising that Koolhaas worked hard to ensure its opening was staged to coincide with the “ancient” spectacle of the Olympic games in 2008 (it was not actually completed until 2012). There is no resolution to the resentment actualised through the attention gained via this brinkmanship and its portrayals of impending disaster, and the text does not stop here—it is mobile. It has since been subject to the visual mechanisms that overarch and define how culture works in a global, networked way. For example, in the popular discourse around the building locally, a conversation has been had about its profanity, with one Chinese scholar claiming the CCTV and sister TVCC buildings are poised to begin copulating(11). For celebrity Chinese artist and digital media performer Ai Weiwei who regularly posts photographs of the CCTV building to his very popular Instagram feed, it has recently become a litmus test for the smog in Beijing, its relative visibility entering the

ironically “filtered” context of Instagram as a commentary on pollution in China, the engine room of global capitalism.

Despite his concern with collapse, ecological disturbance does not seem to intervene in Koolhaas’ desire to design and construct monolithic buildings that participate in what is soon to become the greatest human machine ever built, China(12). In the scope of this discussion the focus has been maintained on the CCTV building and the discourse that surrounds it. The longer history of Koolhaas’ own oeuvre of theoretical writings will make for an interesting parallel discussion of its own in the context of post-millennialism and pre-humiliation. One example is his essay of 2002, “Junkspace,” written as he was competing to build the CCTV building as a stream-of-conscious style critique of how the built environment reveals the damaging influence of globalisation and modernisation:

> Continuity is the essence of Junkspace; it exploits any invention that enables expansion, deploys the infrastructure of seamlessness: escalator, air-conditioning, sprinkler, fire shutter, hot-air curtain… It is always interior, so extensive that you rarely perceive limits; it promotes disorientation by any means (mirror, polish, echo) …Junkspace is sealed, held together not by structure but by skin, like a bubble. Gravity has remained constant, resisted by the same arsenal since the beginning of time; but air-conditioning—invisible medium, therefore unnoticed—has truly revolutionised architecture. Air-conditioning has launched the endless building. [his punctuation] (p175-6)

Striking, is it not, how closely these observations seem to parallel the comment offered by Koolhaas through the CCTV building. The building is “endless,” a loop that plays with gravity by giving the appearance it may fall at any time. The building disorients with its polished and mirror like exterior, just as it echoes a history with its representation of Rome, viewable through a porthole as you perch hermetically sealed inside the air-conditioned environment of the monolithic “overhang.” If Koolhaas has created an edifice to these insights, it is a pre-humiliated one. His agency has become the very thing it critiques, and it does so intentionally, and in real time.

“Junkspace” was published in anticipation of the design of the CCTV building. One year after the staged “opening” of the building in 2009 at the Harvard based “Ecological Urbanism: Alternative and Sustainable Cities of the Future” conference, Koolhaas’s keynote seems to reflect on the pre-humiliation outlined above. In his—again, ambivalent—address he argues that progress, or “advancement,” and anti-modern “apocalyptic” cultural narratives stand as dialectically opposed perspectives that now come to define how the built environment is composed. The result has been a lack of “depth” in architectural knowledge that has produced

> a skyline of icons showing, mercilessly, that an icon may be individually plausible, but that collectively they form an ultimately counterproductive and self-canceling kind of landscape. So that is out. Unfortunately, the sum total of current architectural knowledge hasn't grown beyond this opposition. That is where the market economy and the evolution of architectural culture have been extremely irresponsible in letting knowledge simply disappear between the different preoccupations. ("Sustainability")

He concludes that ecological concerns mean the end of monolithic icons that collectively advertise the weight of modernity, and that in any case, the market economy and the discipline of architecture participate in a shared dynamic that has not attended to the knowledge required to overcome the paradoxical circumstances of overconsumption. These are such that progress relies on the marketplace; but that market exchange demands growth and is so complex in its operation that governing growth has proved near impossible. As Koolhaas argues with ambivalent clarity, the mimetic desire for iconic buildings demonstrates this "mercilessly," and in our collective history "[w]e have all of these images of buildings that do not perform correctly, but our answers are not necessarily very deep. I don't exclude myself from any of these comments, as I hope you realize" ("Sustainability"). Koolhaas argues for his own agency as an active participant in a mutual resentment toward and desire for participation in the structures and constructions that constrain and liberate his own ruinous will-to-power.

These recent cultural emergences incorporate ancient ethical divisions whilst reflecting the effects of contemporaneous conditions of culture, in which the intersection of subjectivities brings us to the issue of whether we are seeing evidence here of a novel—or what Gans has called post-millennial—function for celebrity. On a global stage Ai Weiwei may be considered to exceed the usual circumstances of celebrity in that his heroic status is, from some perspectives, placed beyond question—he has *really* suffered for his cause—but the starchitect has not. The starchitect is not a wholly separate kind of celebrity, since they seem to possess a quality of expertise associated of the artist or author, and this tends to be identifiable with a particular aesthetic, as in the context of the silver clad Frank Gehry buildings that generate large scale ritual visitation. But the celebrity architect intervenes in the cityscape, demonstrating a will-to-power that celebrities do not have. All celebrity is "popular," for as soon as the figure in question is claimed in this public way, they are subject to the kind of pre-humiliation Gans discusses, whether they are possessed of some particular genius or not. This is,

a self-ironized version of what classical culture called fame. Heroes are not celebrities, and we rarely treat them as such; the aura of celebrity exceeds the recognition due to merit, making the resentment it generates both more virulent and more superficial. "Humanizing" celebrities contributes to their pre-humiliation: the trivia of their lives makes them

comparable to ourselves, undecidably objects of greater sympathy and greater resentment. At the same time, the achievements for which we celebrate them help reconcile us to our anonymity. Actors are everymen who centralize our everyday problems; sports figures possess rare talents, but in areas peripheral to the needs of the modern world; and the abilities of entertainers like Michael Jackson are expended in performing our resentments as a sacrificial ceremony. ("The Last Celebrity")The starchitect straddles fame and celebrity, because on the one hand, Gehry and Koolhaas' buildings are, inevitably, subject to the resentment associated of the aura of celebrity. Gaining credibility in a community of architecture students will demand that you are past expressing wonder at the work of a starchitect, just as an art student will need to know who to raise to exceed the baseline of a conversation that celebrates Picasso's pastiche. Gehry is, in some ways, the hero of Bilbao, and in each city to which they lend their prestige the starchitect is both denigrated and celebrated. We celebrate them for their achievements and we cannot wholly dismiss them as one can the celebrity by focusing on the triviality of their lives (actors), their peculiar expertise (sportstars) or performance (performers).

Starchitects participate in acts of creation that some consider to possess unnecessary flamboyance; a largesse designed to advertise the wealth of the city. As we have seen, discourse around Rybczynski's influential notion of a "Bilbao effect" describes such displays as decadent, and the product of a profane influence that corrodes the integrity of culture, adumbrating the symbolic richness of its representative force. This force is assumed to be irenic, and generative of the sacred stability of the human community that dwells in the city. The built environment performs a crucial role in the symbolic order of the city, which is part of a network of cities, and the hub of surrounding human networks that under the conditions of globalisation become the nexus for a system of interlocking communities of all sizes. In attempting to explain the real and imagined dimensions of the effects that might be traced back to the originary scene in Bilboa, it is useful to recall that generative anthropology asserts that across the intricately scalable spectrum of human collaboration, culture is scenic. Gans argues that in modern, secular society the sacred centre to this scenicity is implicit, and the effect of this can be observed in sociality that lies outside the ritual formality imposed by institutions like the concert hall or university. Specifically, as individuals gather in groups of two or more attention is garnered by participants in these scenes by force of purpose or virtue. As such, individuals are subject to resentment should they monopolise attention beyond culturally bounded (normative) measures of justification. Indeed, for Gans the "degree of this implicitness may be said to measure the community's *secularity,* which even in the most extreme case allows us to distinguish between ritual or simply *cultural* phenomena and the interactions of daily life" (The Last Celebrity). The celebrity, however, moves through the everyday via the convention of the institutions that generate attention, such that they come to be surrounded by an imaginary aura of sacrality. The celebrity is entrapped by an "implicit public, 'institutional' scene" that separates them from ordinary people, "a supplement of sacred presence" understood as a *supplementary scene* of interaction rather than an integrated phenomenon. As such, when

we encounter a celebrity in the flesh, we experience this separation directly as an auratic removal. It is this secular "supplement of sacred presence" that the starchitect supplies, or institutionalizes, in the cityscape to calibrate the global situation of the city. To the residents of the city, then, the building is generative of the conditions for a scene of culture that acts as a reminder of their own status ("you are a part of/outside of this scene of privilege") in relation to the city, and thereby, in relation to the starchitect who is an extension of the buildings they create. This is why the view of the CCTV building from the suburbs is so compelling, and why Ai Weiwei photographs the building. It is a product of the culture it generates, and a comment upon it: it is both inside the scene and supplementary to it. Here is the paradox of the starchitect and of culture in general, which sets out to represent individual subjectivity and community (city), and to be a model for it, since the building is meant to generate status, and to draw the city and its people closer to the centre of a global culture.

Thus, the starchitect is possessed of subjective agency that does not stem from excess wealth, and a peculiar capacity to mediate this agency in a fashion that is very much like the celebrity. The latter Gans compares to the secular function of the ancient figure of the shaman, with whom the celebrity shares an aesthetic and spiritual function, rather than an economic one ("The Last Celebrity"). The starchitect refracts this legacy in a more kinetic mode, and is engaged to create a sacred centre to the city—and each city dares to place itself close to the centre of the world—in a manner that is anything but in keeping with Gans's description of the celebrity functioning to "reconcile us to our anonymity" by virtue of their quotidian domains of activity. Indeed, starchitecture is formally tasked to stage the extravagance of agency that exceeds the usual boundaries created by civic planning and architectural disciplinarity. This is the flamboyance Rybczynski decries, highlighting for us that in exercising their so recently endowed agency individual starchitects attract to themselves attention on a protean scale, and with it the style of resentment discourse surrounding analyses of the generative influence of Bilboa is so freighted with. The starchitect plays a role in constructing centres of secular worship, or scenes for the performance of sacred high cultural paradigm activities. We might consider these to be arbitrarily synthesized stages for the performance of ritual behaviours: I travel to Bilbao to photograph the Guggenheim and preserve my tourist gaze for representations of my subjective experience on Instagram or Facebook. Ritual behaviours are thus displaced by supplementary scenes that extend the influence of corporeal and virtual mobilities into particular scenes of culture upon which unfold the imagined satisfaction of desires—where direct experience is very frequently contingent on and conducted through the lens of a digital camera.

VI. Conclusion

The secular ritual of return, then, to a sacred scene, or scene of origin, is entangled with a global imaginary generated through refracted memories of sacrality. The post-millennial

pilgrimage is one conducted by the wealthy minority to attend sites of secular cultural significance; after all, does one *really* go on a sacred pilgrimage (along with millions of other adherents) to visit the Bilbao Guggenheim, or to take a tour of the memorabilia that festoons the halls of the CCTV building? Rare, to put it mildly, is the occasion on which a Muslim pilgrim, having travelled the many miles to Mecca to perform the Hajj, pauses to take a selfie amid the throng that surrounds the Masjid al-Haram. Gans's description of the relation of the marketplace to popular culture captures this secular imaginary as follows: "popular culture remains utopian as ever, reconstituting originary deferral in myriad ways, but this utopian closure is accepted as entertainment, as a kind of (soft or hard) spiritual pornography, rather than as defining the goal of our moral existence" ("Post-Millenial Age"). Here the individual is governed by the popular to the extent that the popular guides subjectivity toward continuous restaging of the event of deferral, and is invited to identify with this *directly*. That, as they say, is entertainment; the imaginary, mimetic participation in and satisfaction that is derived from dramatic formats of representation that direct attention and focus desire upon the suddenness of the popular. Perhaps this is why the secular pilgrim is compelled to continuously adopt the pose of narcissus; futilely attempting through the virtualising procedure of creating digitally mediated and horizontally distributed narratives to gather and surround themselves with the supplementary sacred status that is generative of the aura that surrounds the celebrity we might happen across *in the directness of everyday life*.

The secular pilgrim may fail to imprison themselves with the celebrity on a supplementary scene of culture, but they will succeed in and gain satisfaction through a suspension of parallel kind via the measure of history, deliberate as they are in the performance of such narcissistic rituals. To be entranced by the self at the expense of the world, and only able to experience being *there* simultaneously with being elsewhere (digitally present), certainly appears to be just so: a refraction of popular culture. It does not seem extravagant to consider that these practices of self-representation might be products of ongoing engagement with spiritual pornography, particularly given that such ritual behaviour is evidently narcissistic and conducted in the scopophilic mode (think now, if you will, of the endless parade of celebrities whose home made pornography and nude selfies "leak" into digital networks of exchange). In any case, the post-postmodern—or post-millennial—sensibility, it seems, is one marked by such representations of paradoxicality. This sensibility is shot through with a formalised paradigm of ambivalence, as is so ably captured by James Clifford's declaration of "good riddance" to the loss of a previously imagined security 25 years after *Writing Cultures*. Recall from section one of this discussion that Clifford describes a paradoxical desire for the ruinous collapse of the "'First World' bubble" that has provided the security and stability that permits him to adopt this reflective, academic pose in the first instance. This is less a form of nihilism though, than the release of unbelief, and an ecstasy of visceral immersion in unmediated reality, in his words: (as quoted above) "the excitement, the fear, of being in the real." Clifford's position is certainly a guilty one, and one in which nature has been the victim of his earlier, privileged

perspective and all the bias that came with being exterior to the “exposure” he now purports to feel, which he describes as “a version of what most people in the world have always known.” But is it *really*? Or is it a performance driven by a victimary mindset that leads him to imagine boundaries that have now been somehow transgressed? Clifford, after all, is still speaking from the “bubble.” His is a secular, cloistered perspective that participates in an ambivalently framed attempt to claim something other than the guilty position of the wealthy persecutor of victims that include the global poor, and nature itself.

For Koolhaas, the built environment is continuous with the lack of reflexivity Clifford now feels he has transcended, particularly in large buildings where air conditioning has contorted buildings into “junkspace” that “is sealed, held together not by structure but by skin, like a bubble” (176). The bubble is metonymic with the illusion of control that is substantive of progress in the logic of late modernity, and the celebrity architect is tantamount to the loud one in the conversation; attracting the resentment of the group, and as Gans argues, is certainly at risk of becoming “a Girardian scapegoat as soon as his centrality no longer appears indispensable” (“The Last Celebrity”). While the celebrity does not play a central functional role in society and therefore does not usually become the victim of direct violence, the psychological pressure of being subject to collective desire and resentment is profound. In some important ways this is exactly what is represented in the context of the CCTV building, which is a performance of a collapse, and where Koolhaas has constructed the building to appear as though it is tumbling to earth. This effect is a common one in his architecture and connects to a growing pressure for his designs to succeed, and the larger context of his resentment toward the US. The central position of the anthropomorphized latter means that it too is exposed to the kind of schadenfreude that effects Koolhaas’ design, where the centre of the centre is distorted into a looped version of itself, a parody of its own destruction, and a demonstration of the end of culture—where culture generates itself even as it represents. It is no coincidence that his reflexive resentment toward an anticipated removal from Ground Zero inspired Koolhaas to distort the vertical into a prism of destruction, where the final caress is a porthole—a circle—about which one stands (on top of which one stands for the vertiginous and obscurantist thrill) in order to see the centre of the centre of the ancient regime of Rome. The layers of irony here are not subject to the conditions of coincidence, they are instead anticipated in the originary structure of language, and generative of this scene.

Works Cited

Augé, M. *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Howe, J trans. Verso, 1995.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000.

Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society*. SAGE Publications, 1992.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Esthétique Relationnelle*. Presses du réel, 1998.

—. *The Radicant*. NY: Lukas & Sternberg, 2009.

—, ed. *Altermodern: Tate Triennial*. Tate Pub., 2009.

Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of Network Society*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

"CCTV—Headquarters, China, Beijing, 2002: New headquarters for China Central Television." *OMA Website*. n.d. Web. 17 June. 2014. http://www.oma.eu/projects/2002/cctv-–-headquarters/

"CCTV/TVCC site." *Inside Outside Petra Blaisse*. n. pag. Web. 17 June. 2014. http://www.insideoutside.nl/en/cctv-tvcc-site.htm

Charles, Sebastien, and Lipovetsky, Gilles. *Hypermodern times*. Cambridge: Polity, 2005.

Collins, Douglas. "*L'Amour intellectuel de Dieu*: Lacan's Spinozism and Religious Revival in Recent French Thought." *Anthropoetics* 3.1 (Spring/Summer, 1997).

—. "From Myth to Market: Bataille's Americas Lost and Found." *Anthropoetics* 5.2 (1999): 2000.

—. "The Great Effects of Small Things: Insignificance With Immanence in Critical Theory." *Anthropoetics* 8.2 (2002): 2003.

DeLanda, Manuel. *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006.

Eshelman, Raoul. "Performatism in Architecture. On Framing and the Spatial Realization of Ostensivity." *Anthropoetics* 7.2 (2001): 2002.

Gans, Eric Lawrence. *A New Way of Thinking: Generative Anthropology in Religion, Philosophy, Art*. The Davies Group, 2011.

—. "The Last Celebrity." *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* 377 (2009): n. pag. Web. 11 July. http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw377.htm

—. "Moral Heroism." *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* 237 (2001): n. pag. Web. 9 June. http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw237.htm

—. "The Post-Millennial Age." *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* 209 (2000): n. pag. Web.

3 June. http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw209.htm

—. “Thoughts for a Dying Millennium.” *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* 224 (2000): n. pag. Web. 30 Dec. http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw224.htm

—. “Victimary Thinking Forever.” *Chronicles of Love and Resentment* 230 (2001): n. pag. Web. 31 March. http://anthropoetics.ucla.edu/views/vw230.htm

Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

Haraway, Donna. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181.

Harman, Graham. *The Quadruple Object*. Hants: Zero Books, 2011.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

—. *Justice, Nature, & the Geography of Difference*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

—. *The enigma of capital: and the crises of capitalism*. Profile Books, 2011.

Held, David, McGrew, Anthony, Goldblatt, David, and Perraton, Jonathan. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

“Interview with Star Architect Rem Koolhaas: ‘We’re Building Assembly-Line Cities and Buildings.’” *Speigel Online International*. December 16, 2011. http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/interview-with-star-architect-rem-koolhaas-we-re-building-assembly-line-cities-and-buildings-a-803798.html

Katz, Adam. “Mimetic Culture, Liminal Culture.” *GABlog: Generative Anthropology in the Public Sphere*. April 25 (2014). n. pag. Web. http://gablog.cdh.ucla.edu/2014/04/mimetic-culture-liminal-culture/

Kirby, Alan. *Digimodernism*. *New York: Continuum*, 2009.

Koolhaas, Rem. “Beijing manifesto.” *Wired Magazine*. August (2004): 120-129.

—. “Junkspace.” *October* (2002): 175-190.

Lash, Scott. *The Sociology of Postmodernism*. Routledge, 1990.

Latour, Bruno. *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press, 2012.

Mackenzie, Andrew. “Rem Koolhaas’ Current Fascinations: On Identity, Asia, the Biennale, & More.” *ArchDaily.* 19 Mar (2014): n. pag. Web. Accessed 21 Mar 2014. http://www.archdaily.com/?p=488067

Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. 2013.

Rybczynski, Witold. “The Bilbao Effect.” *The Atlantic* 290.2 (2002): 138-142.

Thrift, Nigel. *Knowing capitalism*. Sage, 2005.

Urry, John. *Sociology beyond societies: Mobilities for the twenty-first century*. Routledge, 2002.

Vermeulen, Timotheus, and van den Akker, Robin. “Notes on Metamodernism.” *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 2 (2010): 1-14.

Virilio, Paul. *The Futurism of the Instant: Stop-eject*. Trans. Julie Rose. Polity, 2010 [2009].

—. *The Vision Machine*. Trans. Julie Rose. London, UK and Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press in collaboration with British Film Institute Publishing, 1994 [1988].

Notes

1. Latour’s critique of structure via the concept of the “network” is an important point of departure. He attempts to map subjectivity based on a critique of the plastic modernist platform, famously claiming, “we have never been modern” and highlighting the misleading effect of dualisms such as nature/culture, and subject/object (Latour, 1991). However, Latour does not offer a tangible alternative to the dualisms of modernity and despite his protests, the “Prince of Networks” has become the regent presiding over the relativist, and curiously *structured* actant network research methodologies that have found great traction in the inchoate and apparently “nonmodern” discipline of public relations. (back)

2. Elided from this list for the purpose of brevity are a range of movements in theory and philosophy that attempt to move beyond the human, and into a state and approach now commonly known as “posthuman.” Here the goal is to adopt emergent, ontologically unstable precepts that exceed the genealogy of influence inspired by linguistic analysis by adopting nonhuman agents as their vehicle such as animate and inanimate natural entities and technologies. Key concepts in this shift are derived from the later work of Deleuze and Guattari, and on concepts developed by Latour and Stengers. Much of the formally identified posthumanist criticism is inspired by Donna Haraway’s “cyborg,” whilst more recent examples in philosophy include the “flat ontology” and “assemblage” of Manuel

DeLanda (the latter a Deleuzean concept), the "hyperobjects" of Timothy Morton and the object oriented ontology of Graham Harman. See the following texts for further reading: DeLanda's *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*; Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*; Harman's *The Quadruple Object*; and Morton's *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. (back)

3. Bourriaud's most recent published discussion on the topic is *The Radicant* (2009). (back)

4. A notable exclusion from this discussion is the "performatism" of Raoul Eshelman. Eshelman takes up Gans's originary conception of the ostensive in order to argue that we are entering an era marked by a reaction to poststructuralism and postmodernism, "in which the stylization of ostensivity qua performance is becoming the unavoidable mode of aesthetic expression" ("Performatism in Architecture"). Eshelman confines himself to aesthetic experience in describing what he considers to be monistic performances that require an "out-of-the-ordinary act" in which "subject sign and thing" come together to create "aesthetic experience out of transcendency" ("Performatism in Architecture"). He has applied this approach to the context of architecture in post-wall Berlin. Whilst his analysis of Berlin architecture is apropos to this discussion, it does not fit within the scope here. Eshelman identifies nine devices of performatist architecture, including "impendency," of which he writes "[b]uildings of this kind are architectonically so dynamic that they seem to be on the verge of collapse; they work, as it were, by putting fear of the Lord and awe of the architect into the viewer at the same time." Impendency would seem to be very relevant to the CCTV building, and in particular, a number of other unbuilt designs as mentioned at footnote ten below. (back)

5. Gans's discussions of post-millennialism are conducted across several of his *Chronicles of Love and Resentment*, including nos. 209, 224, 230, 237 and 377. (back)

6. Douglas Collins employs the term *prehumiliation* as an explanatory mechanism in three discussions published in *Anthropoetics* (3.1, 5.2, 8.2), but does not directly explain its meaning. Eric Gans, similarly, employs the term in several discussions in his *Chronicles of Love of Resentment*, and observed that prehumiliation is "a concept of his that I found very useful for talking about popular culture" (email communication with the author).(back)

7. CCTV is the acronym adopted by the Chinese public broadcasting service, and stands for Chinese Central Television. (back)

8. OMA is described on their website as "a leading international partnership practicing architecture, urbanism, and cultural analysis" (quote taken from http://www.oma.eu/oma, visited 15/10/14). (back)

9. There are some correlatives with Guy Debord's attention and arguments in the *Society of*

the Spectacle (1967) and *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (1983) with the use of spectacle in this essay; this is not the intended use here. (back)

10. See the *Smithsonian.com* article "The Unbuilt High-rise Designs of Rem Koolhaas and OMA" for a discussion of these, including images at http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-unbuilt-high-rise-designs-of-rem-koolhaas-and-oma-31406521/ (visited 6/6/13). (back)

11. Xiao Mo, a retired professor of architecture from Tsinghua University published a vehemently critical article to the Tecn academic web portal entitled "The Structural Similarity of the CCTV Headquarters and Hindquarters." He cited a series of pornographic images in the OMA periodical publication *Content*, arguing that Koolhaas had deliberately designed the CCTV to resemble a naked woman on hands and knees. It has since been removed from the web, but republished in English translation on a number of websites. See, for example http://www.danwei.org/architecture/rem_koolhaas_and_cctv_porn.php (visited 5/6/2013). (back)

12. Koolhaas and OMA won a competition to design the Shenzhen Stock Exchange in 2006. The building was completed in October 2013, and carries a similar set of ambivalent symbolic gestures as those evident in the context of the CCTV building. It is described on the OMA website as follows: "The essence of the stock market is speculation: it is based on capital, not material. The Shenzhen Stock Exchange is conceived as a physical materialization of the virtual stock market: it is a building with a floating base, representing the stock market – more than physically accommodating it" (http://www.oma.eu/projects/2013/shenzhen-stock-exchange-hq/, visited 27/09/14). (back)