

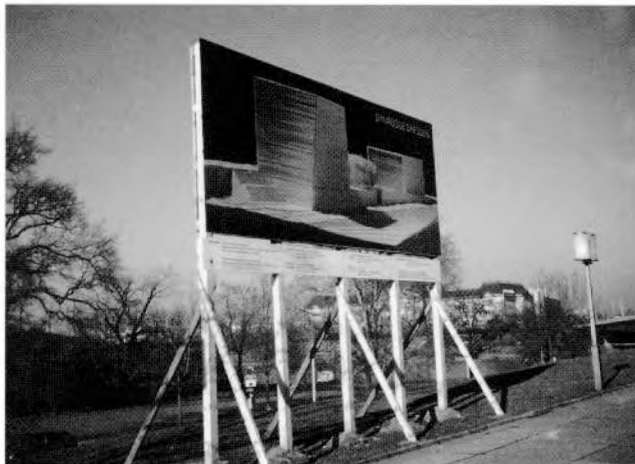


LUND UNIVERSITY

STUDIES IN THEORETICAL
AND APPLIED ÆSTHETICS

URBAN HETEROLOGY

DRESDEN AND THE DIALECTICS OF
POST-TRAUMATIC HISTORY



MARK JARZOMBEK

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MARK JARZOMBEK

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The text presented here is a short version of a longer manuscript that is currently being developed as a book.

I would like to dedicate this article to my parents.

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FOREWORD

Since the Reunification of Germany in 1989, Dresden's city center has been radically transformed. This article discusses the various geographies of simulation that govern these efforts. Capitalism and preservation now divide the city's center into separate but mutually reinforcing sectors, with the new synagogue becoming the leverage by which I unlock some of the paradoxes of a much larger problem, namely how to locate not only memory, but architecture itself – and indeed even *civitas* – in a post-traumatized environment. This paper, in looking also at broader contestations, such as those of the "East-West," discusses the historiographic geographies that now attempt to eradicate any but the most stubborn traces of the socialist world-view that was the determinant of the city's post war shape. Serving as a model Nazi city before the war, and then as an ideal planned socialist city, the current city is fast becoming a model post-capitalist city, with the failures of the former incarnations rhetorically enhanced to elevate the "successes" of the latter. I will argue that historians who operate within the interdisciplinary demands of postmodern capitalist urbanism submit to the lure of often historicizing the city from within the ready-made framework of the State-mandated practice-of-success without realizing the density of the city's self-representational claims. A critical approach to the city has to focus on the historical voids that are folded out of sight. This means not only that the history of Dresden has to become ungrounded, but also that historians have to accept a degree of ambiguity between their disciplinary requirements and the multiple locations of Dresden's "history" in contemporary politics. This ambiguity creates the potential for design as the method by which, tactically at least, one can expose the problem of who determines the nature of the discourse on civic memory.

MARK JARZOMBEC

Whereas we perceive a chain of events, he [the angel of history] sees a single catastrophe which unrelentingly piles up wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would very much like to stay, awaken the dead, and piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has caught in his wings so strongly that the angel can no longer fold them. This storm propels him, irresistibly, into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris in front of him grows skyward. This storm is what we call Progress. (Walter Benjamin, Thesis on the Philosophy of History).¹

INTRODUCTION: CITY/"CITY"

The extravagant capital outlays that the current growth economy can summon have changed our cities in fundamental ways. Transformations have fallen into three separate but interrelated categories: new transportation infrastructures, new touristic and commercial infrastructures, and finally new cultural infrastructures. Engineers work in the domain of the first; architects and building contractors in the domain of the second. As to cultural infrastructures, the search is always on for star architects to provide the finishing touches. Dresden fits the model pretty well. Like other cities, it has impressive new highways and bridges. It has new luxury hotels and sleek, postmodern office buildings. And the city fathers have also managed to attract a number of star architectural firms. The firm of Behnisch, Behnisch and Partner has designed a high school, Coop Himmelblau a cinema, and Daniel Libeskind is working on the corporate headquarters of Siemens AG. But before one decides that this picture, as important as it is, constitutes a framework for a discussion about the contemporary

history of the city, one first has to realize that Dresden, even more than Berlin, is a city where the difference between the post-war socialist city and the new, post-Reunification capitalist city is so clearly spelled out that one has to view its post-war urban history through the lens of the various philosophical and ideological geographies that have determined the city's present shape. Unlike the German cities of the former West which have seen decades of contentious debate, such discussions have yet to fully play themselves out in Dresden.² This might seem an odd thing to say for anyone familiar with Dresden, for the city, even under the socialist regime, has made its destruction on the thirteenth and fourteenth of February, 1945 the core of its urban identity. But despite the current efforts at rebuilding, what we are seeing in Dresden is a new development in German attitudes about war and memory. The city fathers want to protect Dresden from the antagonisms that have marked the recent history of Berlin and Munich. In Dresden one will find no anti-monument monuments. Everything is done correctly, by the book, so to speak. The Catholic church has contributed to the rebuilding of the synagogue, Queen Elisabeth has come to apologize for the bombing, and the Duke of Kent has helped in raising funds for the rebuilding of the *Frauenkirche*. And as to the much maligned socialist architecture it is being refurbished, concealed, or, more likely, replaced. The Westernization of Dresden, in other words, will be a complete one.

THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE • MARCH 3, 1996

TRAVEL

Dresden builds a future German city reconstructs its demolished past

"The skyline was extreme and enigmatic and evocative and sacred. It looked like a Sunday school picture of heaven."

Karl Vosskopf
"Slaughterhouse Five"

By William S. Clark
Special Writer

DRESDEN, Germany — When you walk from the east bank of the River Elbe across the Augustus Bridge toward the Old Town of Dresden, you're following in the footsteps of Goethe and Napoleon. But, impressive as it is, the view you see isn't like heaven one that delighted them.

For more than 100 centuries the skyline of Dresden was one of the wonders of Europe: a poem in stone. Then, on the night of Feb. 14, 1945, the historic heart of Dresden, which was of no military significance, was reduced to smoking rubble by waves of American and British

air bombers. More than 35,000 people were killed in the destruction, most of them civilian refugees fleeing the advancing Soviet Army.

One of the survivors of the raid was the writer Karl Vosskopf who was interned with other captured American soldiers in a prisoner-of-war camp, a former stockyard, or slaughterhouse. In his novel "Slaughterhouse Five," Vosskopf uses the bombing as a metaphor for the insanity of war, calling it "a massacre of innocents."

Today, the massive POW camp is a supermarket and the Old Town is being meticulously restored, the architectural poet reunited with reconstruction crews.

In Dresden's heyday as capital of the Kingdom of Saxony, towers, fountains, spires, domes, ramparts, and palaces lined the west bank of the Elbe River. Most were built in the first half of the 18th century and in the ornate Baroque style favored

by two art-loving Saxon kings, Frederick Augustus I ("The Strong") and his son Frederick Augustus II. Because of the extraordinary art collections amassed by these two free-spirited monarchs, Dresden became known as "The Florence of the North."

Noted artists, such as the Italian landscape painter Antonio Canaletto, settled in Dresden at royal invitation and painted many views of the Old Town. Dominating the lineup of splendid buildings in these evocative paintings is the great dome of the Frauenkirche, or The Church of Our Lady, crown jewel of the Dresden skyline.

The largest Protestant built church in Europe, the Frauenkirche was topped by "the bell of stone," a 310-foot-high dome comparable to that of St. Peter's in Rome — which was the idea. A remarkable engineering achievement.

DRESDEN, Page M24



Dresden glows brightly at night.

Fig. 1

I would like to hold out some critical objectivity to this mythology of reconciliation, for what we have here is the opportunity to study the distributive operations of Western capitalism. The victory of the West has brought with it a stalemate between pro-socialists, on the one hand, and the radical, conservative right, on the other hand. This stalemate allows the current political regime, astutely, to act as a moderating and progressive force. Even though this is to be supported at some level, one has to admit that consequence is that with both extremes out of play and the center aiming to establish itself as an a-political, business-minded consensus, we see the equation of *civitas* with progress and professional expertise.

The absence of a more vigorous discussion about the modernity of our current age will become filled in as Dresden becomes more European in nature. Until that happens, the work that needs to be accomplished is largely "intellectual" in the sense that one has to write a history that though akin to the a more scholarly understanding of history prepares the way for a complex and politically diverse notion of *civitas*. The role of history in this context is an uneasy one must try to open up the space for a politics not through the performativity of modernity, but rather through the dialectics of epistemology.

A Boston newspaper recently proclaimed: "Dresden Builds a Future: German City Reconstructs its Demolished Past" (Fig. 1).³ It would be more accurate if we were to put every single word of that headline in quotation marks, and this because nothing about Dresden's past, at least since 1933, has been neutral, which means that any attempt to engage the city's history cannot presume to stand apart from the ideological formations that have attempted to control that discourse. Even the very premise of a "new" Dresden is itself not new to Dresden. In fact, Dresden consists of two cities, separated by the Elbe, one of which, called *Dresden Neustadt*, was built in 1732 over the ruins of the old medieval city that burned in a massive conflagration in 1685. A good portion of that "new city" is now, ironically, the oldest part of the city since much of it was spared in the bombing raids. And so today, *Dresden Neustadt* with its traditional Baroque lay-out attracts the young often Western-trained intellectual types who value the European feel of its streets. This "new city" thus stands in an ambiguous semantic relationship to "Dresden." Not only does the one city, in a sense, look at the other, but together they force Dresdeners to continually inhabit the problematics of their self-reflection and history.

The multiple historical incarnations of Dresden as a "new city" means that urban history when it is applied to this city has to extend itself beyond the usual disciplinary understanding of what a city is, for what we have here is a history of a city/"city." This does not mean that urban history in its traditional sense is abolished, only that it needs to be reconstituted by admitting up front that the history of Dresden – framed in the context of its self-representation — has to be partially defined by and partially resistant to the history/"histories" that already exist within the fabric of the city itself.

But how do we go from Dresden to "Dresden" and back to Dresden? The answer is partially suggested by the rich field of images that have currency in the general discourse about the city, images like *Elbflorenz* (Florence on the Elbe), *Kunststadt Dresden* (Dresden as center for the arts), and *gloria dresdenis*, not to mention *Stadt der Apokalypse*, Target Dresden, Inferno Dresden, and *die unbesiegbare Stadt* (undefeated city). There are also slogans like *Stadt der Ahnungslosen* (city of the clueless), *Stadt des Porcellan's*, and *Stadt der Hygiene*. These ready-mades should, however, not be perceived as descriptors of historical fact. They have to be interrogated for their co-opted and co-opting semantic substructures.

I will argue that these and a myriad of other representational glyphs of the city create tensions that do not disappear now that we, in the post-reunified world of Germany, have a supposedly better understanding of Dresden's history. Rather they open a field of investigation that possesses a logic of its own, namely one in which urban history, in being lodged in the refraction of academic and public realities must elucidate its narrative in the context of its own subject matter. This logic is not something imposed on the reality of the city, but is rather embedded within it. In other words, the collapse of the concept city into city/"city" is not a cynical attempt to destabilize the notion of Dresden's new *civitas*. On the contrary, this collapse is a natural condition in the modern city in general and of the post-modern/post-traumatized city in particular.

Since the space between the (re-)building of a city and the (re-)building of history will by necessity become a site of semantic ambiguity, we will have to admit up front that the relationship between words and history is not only fluid, but that this fluidity is both the starting and end point of analysis. In the end, this history/"history" manifests itself as an aesthetic which, despite the duplicity that can sometimes function at its core, might be able to lead us to answer the question as to what design operations can both reflect this condition and reconnect (even though it would have to remain hypothetical) to an underlying *civitas*.

In the following pages, I will touch on these and other issues relating to the rebuilding of Dresden, not only to provoke a discussion about the intersecting of city and epistemology, but also to recapture the loss that inevitably occurs in the gap between the reconstructions of history and the reconstructions of belonging. Just because "history" can be returned to the ruined city and thus be "renormalized" should not lead us to suppose that a full sense of *civitas* has also been restored. Here, as elsewhere, the various agendas of appropriation that are involved in the city's reconstruction have to be kept at a critical distance to avoid equating *civitas* with either the state approved reclamation of history through self-promoting regimes of power or the reclamation of belonging through marginal regimes of "alternativity." From a historian's point of view, it would, therefore, be wrong to write a history of the city that is nothing more than the grand narrative of success, reconciliation, and

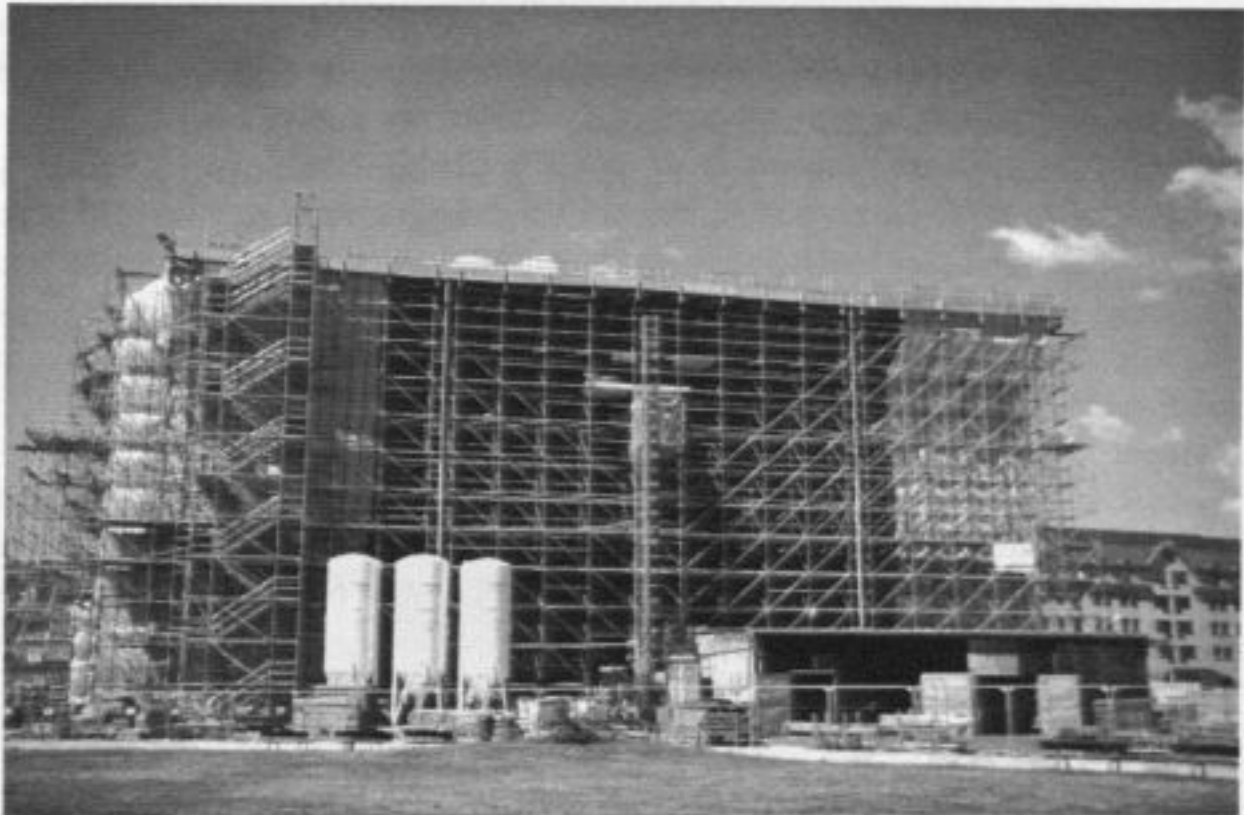


Fig.2

REBUILDING AND FORGETTING

After the war it was more or less assumed that Dresden's *Frauenkirche* would get rebuilt (Fig. 2). Even the noted Dresden art historian Eberhard Hempel stated after the war that he was willing to give up the destroyed city to the cause of modern architecture, if only the church would get rebuilt.⁵ Not even the aggressive modernist proposal of Mart Stam dared touch it (Fig. 3). And so, when five decades later in 1992 the decision was made to rebuild the church a flood of remembrances was triggered not only about the circumstances of its destruction but also about the destruction of the city itself. In one fell swoop, the *Frauenkirche* became the symbol of the city's past, its survival, and its rebirth. There were speeches by politicians, visits by dignitaries, candle-lit prayers and somber memorial services. There was also the euphoria that came with the promise that after decades of socialist indifference, its magnificent eighteenth-century Baroque dome would once again be restored to the famous Dresden silhouette. Queen Elisabeth, the Duke of Kent and other English notables, were invited to Dresden in various ceremonies of reconciliation.⁶ Even Henry Kissinger has weighed in on the matter.⁷

The rebuilding of Dresden's Frauenkirche demonstrates an international commitment to overcome the cruelties of war and to build bridges among nations.

Despite all this, it would be short-sighted to reduce the architectural history of the church to the official narrative of its destruction, subsequent neglect, and, with Reunification, its reconstruction.⁸ As it turns out, the building is being rebuilt with the help of a sophisticated three-dimensional modeling technology developed by the French military called CATIA (Fig. 4). This technology was also used for the Bilbao Guggenheim and indeed, there is something uncannily similar about these two buildings as both are central to a narrative in which political symbolism, regional identity and international tourism are conflated (Fig. 5). But since this building has become the site of a much publicized and certainly laudable German-English and Catholic-Jewish rapprochement, it presents itself as an antidote to the recent tradition of "anti-monuments monuments" that one can find in other cities in Germany.⁹ The Dresden city fathers have neither accepted nor been forced to accept more extreme forms of remembrance. In Munich, Berlin, and other cities there are several recent monuments that are purposefully unsettling. Such monuments are not to be found in Dresden, nor, I suspect, will they ever.

Fig. 3



Ironically, the *Frauenkirche* under the socialists was just such an anti-monument monument. Left as a pile of rubble it commemorated the English-American atrocities (Fig. 27). Any reflection on the Soviet complicity in the Allied bombardment was silenced over and forgotten. After Reunification such a monument could obviously not be tolerated. The only response was to obliterate it, and this is very much what the current reconstruction accomplishes.

But even if we accept this reconstruction as a healthy and positive development, where then does one reflect on the horrors of World War II, or even on the destruction of the city on a more private and secular level? Oddly enough it is the much maligned and now practically forgotten socialist public art that maintain focus on the human

elements of the tragedy. The Trauender Man (Mourning Man, 1985, Fig. 6) by Wieland Förster represents sorrow in the face of overwhelming loss; the Trümmerfrau (Lady of the Ruins, 1952, Fig. 7) by Walter Reinhold honors the volunteers who helped remove 10 million cubic meters of rubble;¹⁰ and the more didactic Bauleiter und Lehrling (Construction manager and his apprentice, 1961, Fig. 8) by Wilhelm Landgraf speaks of the difficult task of rebuilding more than just buildings.



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Fig.5

The *Trauernder Man* was rather special, since it was intended by the artist to express not only grief but also the shame Germans should feel. Initially, the statue had been rejected by the city and approval to display it was only given with the arrival of *Glasnost* in the 1980s.¹¹ These works, and others, I argue, because of their small scale and the micro-narratives that are embedded within them, namely those of mourning, cleaning, and rebuilding, should be an essential part of any future discourse of healing. They could all be viewed within an easy ten minute walk.¹²

If we can renaturalize the *Frauenkirche* and pretend to see the computer as only the "tool" that assisted in its form-making, if we can see the *Frauenkirche* not as the product of an alienated military technology – ironically the very type of technology that destroyed it, and if we can see beyond the fact that the *Frauenkirche* repossesses the dialectic of its destruction, then we can certainly see beyond some of the ideological intent that went into the construction of these statues.



Fig. 6



My point is not to present them as more authentic than the church, but rather to use them to figure forth a delicate historiographic space that is caught between remaining and resistance. It is a space-of-narration caught between a state of survival and a state of not being fully alive. And it is in *this* space that we can test the true framework of our obligations to the past, for these statues do not exist in the artificial space of a museum. But just because they can be *seen*, does not mean that the story of remembrance that they embody is allowed to be spoken.

My claim needs further elaboration, for as the noted historian Charles Maier has observed, we live in an age in which the once personal attributes understood by the word memory have been extended into something larger and communal. Culture-industry, in other words, has transformed itself into a "memory-industry."¹³ But the memories I am talking about here are different from the memories which are now at center stage of Germany's urban-aesthetic discourse. Ever since the 1980s, the postmodern search for national and regional identity, sustained as it is by a world

that is becoming increasingly (quasi-) sophisticated in psychological matters, has opened debates on past traumas that in an earlier age would have been easily suppressed. As a result, the word Holocaust that was once applied only to the Nazi extermination of the Jews, is now applied to a myriad of other engineered mass killings. Stalin's Gulag in Russia, the murder of civilians by Pol Pot in Cambodia, the mass murder of generals by the Soviets in Poland, and in the United States even abortion have all been described by the word holocaust. The bombing of Dresden certainly falls into this emergent category. Unlike twenty years ago, when it was used by socialist propaganda as a tool to vilify the West now that the West is in control of the narrative and is eager to demonstrate that it can "fix" what it has destroyed, we see the *Frauenkirche* not as an example of the abstract cruelty of imperial capitalism, but as a site where the West "reaches out" to those who suffered in this tragedy. The socialist statues cannot be part of this meta-narrative since they were created with by an ideology which claimed to see *beyond* the terribilit  of war.



Fig.8



Fig.9

It can be admitted, however, that in the expanded realm of victimhood, of holocausts, and of their associated sites of emotional restitution and political representation, we have gained a heightened awareness of history and humanity. We have been able to bring into the open the traumatic underpinnings of twentieth-century brutality, and we have, hopefully, returned modernity to a fuller appreciation of the sanctity and fragility of life. Nonetheless, having become increasingly expert in recognizing and dealing with events of this nature, we have stressed the institutional and the aesthetic

over more complex historiographic realities. We have reclaimed painful memories for our cities and nations, but when it comes to reclaiming the density of a city's history, we have failed.

But how does one move from the increasingly official public discourses of memory, restitution, monuments, and obligations, to the residual presence of other types of histories without opening up a seemingly unfathomable space of uncertainty about the nature of the public realm. In addressing the question of victimhood, private space becomes increasingly associated with public realities that in turn are controlled by a select group.

But in Dresden, uncertainty about the city's victimhood has left a great deal of ambivalence about the socialist past. Take for example the recent book *Dresden, a City Reborn*, a work that deals with the broad spectrum of Dresden's history. It was authored by English scholars – with an introduction by the Duke of Kent – and is dutifully laudatory of the English contribution to the rebuilding of the *Frauenkirche*. The new golden orb, made by English craftsmen and personally handed over to the city by the Duke of Kent, is featured in the book's only color plate. In contrast, the socialist contributions are described as "primitive," and their politics as a combination of "scandalous neglect" and "ideological desecration."¹⁴ A more neutral observer may well ask: Is this "desecration" being repaired by folding the city back into the world of capitalist self-congratulation?

The three statues described above tell a story that is more humble but no less heroic, and we should, therefore, not overlook their message, for through them, through the very fact that they exist in *public* space, we can assert both the historicity of past events and the crucial role that interpretation plays in the events themselves. The three statues require no capital campaign, no acts of contrition, not even a corresponding anti-monument monument response. We only have to recognize their presence.

There is, however, no reason to be overly optimistic, and largely because the conventional methodologies by which we historicize cities are woefully inadequate to the task of Dresden. Take Heinz Quinger's marvelously researched art- and architectural guide, *Dresden und Umgebung* (1993), published by DuMont Press. It is "ein Muss" for anyone who takes more than a passing interest in the city.¹⁵ But Quinger, a native of Dresden, confuses erudition with *civitas*. Though its very first sentence refers to the war-time destruction of the city, the *Trauender Man* is discussed only on page 152. Furthermore, the one sentence that deals with the statue is prefaced by the statement that when a visitor to the city comes upon it, it provides him with "an unexpected view."¹⁶ One may ask, why is it so "unexpected"?

Wilhelm Landgraf's statue *Bauleiter und Lehrling* is not mentioned, nor are works of that era by Karl Loose, Alfred Hesse, Erich Otto, and others. Johannes Penschel's elegant monument from 1975, honoring those murdered by the Nazis in a

prison on *Mathildestrasse* is also omitted (Fig. 9). All these works are located in the socialist district just west of the *Pirnaischer Platz*, an area of the city which a visitor using *Dresden und Umgebung* as a guide would not even know to enter!

My point is not to demonstrate any perceived inadequacies of this book. Rather I want to focus on the paradox of how trauma is projected and then deflected in the contemporary space of *public* knowledge, a space that, in focusing on the heroic, loses sight of a more comprehensive understanding of history. And here in Dresden, viewed through the lens of its own cultural projections, it is clear that the city has lost sight of its own attempts to deal with its tragedy. At stake is more than a mere forgetting, but a loss in its own right.



Fig.10

FROM APOCALYPTIC PICTURE TO SOCIALIST CIVITAS

In 1978, ten years before Reunification, pieces from Dresden's famous art collections were sent as a traveling exhibition to Washington D.C., New York, and San Francisco. The exhibition was discussed in the accompanying catalogue with the usual Marxist lesson about how the socialists, though they have removed the rationale for such paintings, have nonetheless accepted the duty to protect these works which are

a cultural heritage in the hands of the working class, whose diligence and socially oriented cultural politics created new museums for these art treasures in the framework of the reconstructed cultural centers of the city on the Elbe.¹⁷

Few visitors would have understood the true scope of this claim, but for the *cognoscenti*, the contextualization of the paintings by the East German curators spoke volumes. The first painting in the catalogue, Bernard Bellotto's *Dresden from the Right Bank of the Elbe* (1748) is used to show how the city looked before the bombardment (Fig. 10).¹⁸ But the "bombardment" the author refers to took place in 1760 at the hands of Frederick II of Prussia during the Seven Years War. A world war in its own right, it involved all the major European powers and was fought not only in Europe, but also in the Americas and even in India. Initially, Saxony, founded on the wealth of near-by silver mines, was an important player, but by war's end, with Prussia emerging as the victor, Saxony's role in European politics had been permanently

reduced. Still today, the war is described by local historians as "*der erste Untergang*."¹⁹ And indeed, until the unification of German principalities in the 1870s, Saxony, though certainly of economic and artistic importance, was little more than a buffer between France, Prussia and Austria.

Bellotto was in Dresden just long enough to make a painting of the *Kreuzkirche* in the aftermath of the assault (Fig. 11). It is a striking image and the curator notes, insightfully, that the church's ruin, "like an open corpse, offers a strong image of the desolation wrought by war."²⁰ But the author of the exhibition catalogue does not necessarily lament this fact, for the city, the author claims, was destined any way to become little more than a "romantic chinoiserie" of buildings. The reference in the catalogue to the city as "chinoiserie" is double-edged. Not only did socialists see chinoiserie as part of the fetishistic world of the bourgeoisie, but Dresden was noted world-over for its porcelain production. For socialists the dialectic of Dresden's "obsolescence" was thus foreshadowed in its economy.

Fig. 11



It is clear from all this, that the author is viewing these paintings from the perspective of the twentieth-century resolution of Dresden's fate, one in which the much predicted Marxist dialectic of destruction had finally come about. *Der erste Untergang* of the city thus anticipated a second one that focused not on the *Kreuzkirche*, but on the nearby *Frauenkirche*, and a bombardment that, terrible as it may have been, culminated in the final and true destruction of the bourgeois state (Fig. 12).²¹ And what a destruction it was! An English reconnaissance photo taken after the bombing shows the enormous extent of the damage (Fig. 13). But whereas today we are more likely to interpret this event as the destruction of an innocent city, the post-war socialists were less forgiving. As the promotional Marxist pamphlet *Kultureller Neuaufbau Dresdens*, published shortly after the war, proclaimed:

Youth ! Do you want to know what fascism was? Look at the ruins of the Zwinger and the blown-up walls of the Semper Opera building. Look at the pathetic remains of our city.... Look at the huge field of ruins, 15 square kilometers worth, and you look into the face of Nazi Germany...Never loose sight of this apocalyptic picture of our city.²²

The task of removing the rubble was so enormous that it was not completed until 1962. Placards ask for volunteers to help in the removal (Fig. 14). Eventually what was created was as a *tabula rasa* on which a new socialist city was to rise. Still today



Fig.13



Fig.14



Fig.15

the photographs of the flat landscape take one's breath away (Fig. 15). It looks more like an airstrip than a former city. I will have more to say about the tabula rasa later, but at first glance it would seem that the new city that was built on its surface has all too much in common with other hastily reconstructed places in war-ravaged Europe. In fact, the "before" and "after" plans could easily be used to tell the sad fate of many a city (Figs. 16, 17).

Fig. 16



But the notion that the socialists were unable to build a city needs to be carefully reassessed. After all, the underlying plan for the new Dresden had been an ambitious one. Originally it was thought that the new city was to connect itself in spirit to the old, and a 1946 exhibition, entitled "*Das neue Dresden*," and visited by 100,000 people, gave hope for a speedy transformation. The schemes presented by various architects showed a variety of possibilities, some of which transformed the city into a Corbusier-styled city of towers and gardens. The mood was optimistic. A banner placed on the ruins promised that "Dresden will become even more beautiful than before" (Fig. 18).

Fig. 17





Fig.18



Fig.19

Legenplan, entworfen von Erich Kirchberg. VEB Bau-Union Dresden: 1. Altmarkt, 2. Platz, 3. Schmuckplatz, 4. Haus der SED, 5. Hochhaus (Haus des Volkes), 6. Taschenberg-Palais, 7. ehemaliges Schloß, 8. Kreuzkirche, 9. Rathaus, 10. Neues Anstellungsgebäude.



Fig.20

An idea competition was held in 1950, followed by another, more restricted one, in 1951, with a decision coming down in 1952. The winning entry, designed by Herbert Schneider, featured a slew of civic buildings that, in running north/south, boldly shifted the orientation of the city by ninety degrees. Though not particularly subtle, it called for a sequence of buildings and squares that made good use of the newly-established open space. Connecting to the old castle was to be a new exhibition hall, or *Kulturhaus*, which would open unto a new square, followed by a tall and massive building, the *Haus des Volkes*, which in turn would have opened onto the old, but much expanded, *Altmarkt* which in turn would have framed a new administrative building for the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* (Fig. 19).²³ Though there was a heated debate about the size and height of the *Haus des Volkes*, certain elements of the plan were finalized and begun. The first stone was laid on May 31, 1953 for a building on the west side of the expanded *Altmarkt*. It was designed by Johannes Rascher in a simplified version of the local Dresdener Baroque (Fig. 20). Its street level colonnade is particularly elegant. The traditionalist nature of the design should, however, not be attributed solely to Socialist Realism. After the war, one could see many new buildings with neoclassical traits in both East and West Germany. It was part of the German response to what many perceived as the anti-historical rationality of fascist architecture.

The most important aspect of the planner's vision, however, was the monumentally-scaled, east-west boulevard, *Ernst Thälmann Strasse*, that bisected the scheme (Fig. 21).²⁴ An overlay of the new street onto the old fabric helps us visualize the dramatic scale of this intervention (Fig. 22). The street served several symbolic purposes, most, of course, having to do with Thälmann himself (Fig. 23). Born in 1886, and rising to prominence after the death of Karl Liebknecht, he was the first president of the German Communist Party. Not known as a moderate, and steering a course close to the policies of Stalin, he ran in the bitter 1933 national election against Hitler. The success of Hitler sealed his fate. He was arrested by the Gestapo, sent to prison and eventually put to death in Buchenwald.²⁵ The Socialist-era film, shown at schools and elsewhere, *Ernst Thälmann - Sohn seiner Klasse* (Ernst Thälmann - Son of the Working Class), directed by Kurt Maetzig gives us a glimpse of his role. Taking place in 1918, it shows the young Thälmann on the German western front, sitting in a small hut, drawing up a bulletin that calls on the soldiers to turn their guns away from the alleged enemy on the front and point them instead against the real enemy in their own land.²⁶

Not only did the *Ernst Thälmann Strasse* conform to this purifying logic, but so too did the *Kulturpalast*. The first designs show it as a monumental tower, 76 meters high, with a regionally-inspired, baroque flourish on top (Fig. 24). The Dresden newspaper proclaimed that it was all part of the contextualist fight against the modernist abstractions of "American-imperialist formalism."²⁷ A 1953 exhibition at



Fig.21



Fig.22



Fig.23

the town hall, entitled *Vorwärts zum Aufbau des Sozialismus!* helped Dresdeners relate this project to other Stalinist-era buildings, like the *Stalinallee* that was being planned for Berlin (Fig. 25). An exhibition of Soviet paintings reinforced the message that all aesthetic matters had to refer back to the socialist realism of the motherland

Fig. 24



With the death of Stalin in 1953, and the resultant shift in official policy, a 1955 conference of East German architects produced the motto "Better, Quicker and Cheaper." And in the 1956 meeting of the Socialist Party in Berlin, the call went out to reject all forms of "architectural dogmatism."²⁸ As a consequence, the *Volkshaus*, now renamed the *Kulturpalast*, became a simple and elegant glass box, a design in keeping with the growing international trend toward professional-rationalism (Fig. 26).²⁹ By being less contextual, the *Kulturpalast* could better reinforce the claim that a new era had begun. Backing into the ruined remnants of the monarchical structures that once lined the Elbe, the building, replete with five bronze doors celebrating the socialist liberation of the working class, provided a vivid socialist-styled lesson.

Fig. 26



Other aspects of the city were incorporated into this message, even the nearby fire-scarred heap of rubble that was once the *Frauenkirche*. Though originally there were suggestions that it be rebuilt, it was eventually left abandoned as a monument to allied imperialism and the defunctness of religion (Fig. 27).³⁰ The heap of stone even had an uncanny resemblance to Bellotto's image of the *Kreuzkirche*. But not everything was left in ruins. The neighboring Renaissance-era palace known as the *Johanneum* that lies between the *Kulturpalast* and the *Frauenkirche* and which survived the bombardment with most of its walls standing, was lovingly rebuilt (Fig. 28). The reason transcended simple pragmatics. Its antiquated bourgeois historical form stood in stark contrast to its new contents, a Museum of Transportation which exhibited the latest in socialist tractors and railway engines.³¹ The tactic, similar to that used after the French Revolution, put the usurpation of the building on display, to demonstrate the victorious arrival of communist industrialism. In fact, until Reunification, the fourth of May was celebrated in Dresden with enormous fanfare as the day when, in 1949, thirty seven trucks arrived from the USSR carrying one thousand new tractors (Fig. 29).



Fig.27



Fig. 28

Nevertheless, Dresden's cultural heritage was not overlooked. In fact, it is remarkable how much was actually rebuilt. But even the restoration of the Zwinger, one of Germany's most famous baroque buildings, was not without a dose of ideological purpose.³² The considerable expense of reconstruction was partially justified by the claim that the building, designed by a Daniel Poppelmann, a merchant's son, demonstrated the "emergence of the bourgeoisie" from the oppression of the feudal aristocracy.³³ Semper's Opera House was also slowly rebuilt as were parts of the famous *Brühlsche Terrasse* that overlooked the Elbe. In the 1970s, with the advent of more pro-nationalist socialism, preservation slowly made its inroads into the discourse.

Fig. 29



As a whole, the *Ernst Thälmann Strasse*, the *Kulturpalast*, the Transportation Museum, the *Frauenkirche* Memorial, and the *Zwinger* could easily be written off as an example of failed social engineering. But that would be incorrect. What we have is a powerfully effective three dimensional map of a socialist *civitas* (Fig. 30). Not only did the new masters struggle to define the elements of a new city, they also rebuilt the city's water and gas pipelines as well as its electrical systems. They constructed streets, bridges, industries, and schools. Today all of this would be viewed as part of the lowly world of infrastructure. But for the socialists, this infrastructure was the very basis for their new industrial utopia.³⁴ All in all, it was no small effort.³⁵

THE CITY "REBORN"

The story of Dresden is a double story of a double destruction. The first story, crafted by the socialists, sees the history of the city's bombing through the lens of an eighteenth-century war that predicted the city's final dialectical demise. After Reunification a second "story" emerged that relocated the history of the city's trauma. Jürgen Paul, an historian, spoke for many when he claimed that the first destruction came not with the Austrian bombardment of 1760, but with the Allied bombing of 1945; the "second destruction" then came with the failed socialist attempt to rebuild the city.³⁶ The socialists, he argued, transformed Dresden into little more than a "a chaos of disconnected fragments." The first scenario envisions modernity as a post-apocalyptic resolution to history. The second scenario envisions modernity as a dark force that was responsible for the physical and spiritual destruction of the city.



Fig.30



Fig.31

Whether or not the socialist city constituted Dresden's second rebuilding or Dresden's second destruction, there was no escaping the fact that what was done was a far cry from what was envisioned. The fault lay not only with the increasingly depleted coffers of the DDR, but also with the type of modernity into which the post-1955 socialist regime had entrapped itself. And it was a modernity that was hardly confined to the socialist East! Nonetheless, after Reunification in 1989, the new planners, most coming from West Germany, felt that they had to undo the city's utopian text. Using an approach already tried in West Germany, a team of urban design professionals was created by the Saxon government to come up with studies and make suggestions to the local planning boards.³⁷ The task was difficult due to the addition of the West

German legal systems on to the older systems that had to be grandfathered in, some even from pre-war days. Land that had been appropriated by the socialist State for the construction of the new city center had now to be distributed back to a myriad of owners for financial recompensation. Here as elsewhere in the former East, the story is complex and seemingly interminable.³⁸

As far as the design process went, pragmatism ruled the day. Using a process called *Verdichtung*, or Densification, the planners aimed to insert buildings into the socialist fabric to simulate a more compact, nineteenth-century urban grid. A large model of the city which was put on display in the town hall showed the anticipated location of the new buildings (Figs. 31, 32). Though some aspects of the model are clearly optimistic, much of the city center has indeed been transformed along its guidelines, and the result is that the old socialist armature has become absorbed into the commodity-type ready-mades of international Postmodernism. This is particularly true of the area known as the *Prager Strasse*, just south of the *Ernst Thälmann Strasse*. Built in the 1970s, and consisting of apartment blocks, hotels, and a central plaza, along the lines of a CIAM-styled "civic center," it has been transformed into a large and vibrant shopping district. It has a Burger King at one end and an enormous and well-supplied shopping store, *Warenhaus Karstadt*, at the other, with new bank buildings, shopping centers, tourist offices, ATM machines, and cinemas in-between. From a contemporary planner's perspective, it is an unequivocal success.

Fig. 32



What differentiates the socialist-era from the post-Reunification one cities is not so much the presence of this new shopping paradise, but the simple fact that for the socialists the city's civic identity was allied with modern architecture whereas for the new Dresden it is allied with pre-modern architecture. The post-Reunification era planners, familiar with all the "sophistications" of two decades of Western postmodern thinking, have equated "civic identity" exclusively with the monuments of the past. Behind this facade they construct a city of a monumental scale. Dresden's civic heritage thus becomes the gateway to both the restored legitimacy of the city's past and its newly-founded legitimacy in the world of capitalism. In all this the fortuitous timing of the 1987 Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas must have played a part, not to mention the world-wide interest in revitalized city centers. In fact the city of Dresden has asked that the city's Elbe silhouette be placed on the World Heritage Trust list.



Fig.33

The project of rebuilding is a vast one that includes the reconstruction of the *Schloss*, its stables, the *Frauenkirche*, the *Brühlsche Terrasse*, as well as other former government buildings, palaces, and museums. Buildings that had been restored to their original appearance under the socialists were simply appropriated into this over-arching scheme, and the result is a concatenation of buildings identical to the last finial with what was there before the war. This reconstructed area is defined as Dresden's *Kulturmeile* (Fig. 33). Berlin, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Linz, Freiburg, Hamburg, and numerous other German cities, have also used the word to describe environments that have both cultural significance and touristic potential. The word, a neologism

developed in the last decades, carries with it a complex set of meanings. The word *Meile* dates back to the Roman word *mille*, and thus, when connected to the word *Kultur* – a word with particular importance in German bourgeois self-reflections since it is posited in opposition to a mechanized *Zivilization* – evokes a condition of pre-lapsarian continuity.

Because of the significance of the *Kulturmeile*, there is only minimal planning for new large scale civic structures in the rest of the city. One will not find museums and libraries, or even churches, as identifiable structures, in the model at the city hall! The only new public buildings of any consequence that have been created are only "public" in so far as they are dedicated to urban entertainment, Coop Himmelblau's dramatic "deconstructivist" cinema building being the prime example (Fig 34). The *Prager Strasse* shopping district, though certainly more real than the *Kulturmeile*,

Fig.34



accepts its clip-in fakeness, its *Zivilization*, so to speak, as a logical counter-statement to the "restored" cultural voice of religion, humanism and even nobility along the Elbe shore. But one should not forget that this geography of civic representation is also a geography of tourism. After all, it will be the buildings of the *Kulturmeile*, and not those of the commercial district, that will be used by the Travel Industry to market the city.³⁹ With Leipzig and Weimar not far away, and with both of them significantly more tourist-friendly than Dresden, Dresden will have to work hard to provide its tourists with more than just a quick tour of the Zwinger. The new Hilton between the *Frauenkirche* and the *Schloss* is an indication of this. It answers the ideological position that was once held by the "Transportation Museum." The ethos of technology and labor has been replaced by an ethos of business and entertainment.

In essence, the old socialist city has been divided into two zones, the *Prager Strasse*, dedicated to high-capital, and the *Kulturmeile*, dedicated to the city's heritage-industry. Though both required a good deal of political will to create, both were completely predictable when framed within current professional/political practices and the split in German discourse between *Kultur* and *Zivilization*.

As fate would have it, the old *Ernst Thälmann Strasse*, now renamed *Wilsdruffer Strasse* after a village north of the city, separates these two areas. The street, now stripped of most of its socialist referents with the exception of the *Kulturpalast*, is a powerfully calm statement that brings a sense of stability to the city. Undoubtedly, Hausmann's Paris, Socialist Realism and even CIAM lurk in its historiographic story-line, but it now seems to transcend the problematics of those ruptures. With the socialist-era buildings disappearing behind new façades, some buildings being removed altogether, it is ironic that this street, as space, keeps alive a piece of the city's modernist history, and that only because nothing can be done to fill it in. The street that once represented the absolute and victorious annihilation of the past now survives, transmuted by a McDonalds across from the *Kulturpalast*, as the city's most successful urban statement. Not even the simplistic and short-sighted attempt to transform the *Kulturpalast* into a Philharmonic Hall by adding new facades to cover up the old socialist box can undermine the street's original narrative of an unembarrassed modernity.

And so one has to ask a simple question. Even though Dresden's city center may now look like a city in the eyes of the postmodern West, is it really a city – assuming that the word "city" still has semantic validity in our culture – unless we make its now increasingly invisible realities a part of its archaeological memory? I ask this not to evoke the nostalgic possibility of some alternate, more phenomenological resonant picture of "Dresden," but rather to ask How does one locate architecture, or at least something akin to it, in a world which has instrumentalized architecture out of existence?

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It then proceeds to a literature review, followed by a description of the methodology used in the study. The results of the study are presented in the next section, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the main points and a list of references.

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THE QUESTION OF THE SYNAGOGUE

The two zones of Dresden define different but interrelated political geographies. They also conform to two types of architectural-historical thinking. The *Kulturmeile* privileges a type of history that accounts for a building's origins and the complex scientific work that goes into contemporary restoration. A recent book on one of the important palaces in the *Kulturmeile*, entitled *Das Taschenbergpalais zu Dresden: Geschichte und Wiederaufbau der Sächsischen Thronfolgerresidenz* (1998) is a typical example.⁴⁰ With glossy pictures, plans, and texts it covers the building's original construction and patronage, its subsequent physical transformations, and the complex work of rebuilding. In contrast to this is the discourse of promotional magazines and architectural journalism that traces the emergence of the architecture of the new commercial district. The first celebrates the victory of science, the latter of professionalism. Neither, I argue, have anything to do with deepening our sense of *civitas*.



Fig. 35

The only structure that breaks free from the predictable continuum is the new synagogue. But before I discuss the building I want to remind my readers that I am discussing the building as a question of public space. How do we understand the building as an object in the city's public space?

The site of the synagogue, just south of the *Brühlsche Terrasse*, and located not more than a hundred meters to the west of the *Frauenkirche*, is the same as of the old one, but the conditions of the site have been altered just enough by the construction of a socialist-era bridge embankment that the reconstitution of the original building was no longer feasible (Fig. 36).⁴¹ The socialists memorialized the

site and the building by placing a large stele there in 1973 (Fig. 35). In 1997, the new government held a competition and in July 2000 ground was broken. As Saxony's Minister President Kurt Biedenkopf explained, the new building was not only "essential for the religious and social life of the Jewish congregation," but also as "an important element in the picture of the city."⁴²

But the situation was not without paradoxes. With only about a hundred or so Jews in the city, many being secular Russian immigrants, the State of Saxony became the *de facto* sponsor. Biedenkopf, together with some of Dresden's Protestant religious leaders spoke for the missing Jewish voice.⁴³ While one must give credit to the integrity of this new generation of German politicians, one also has to keep in mind that, with Reunification in 1989, the former East Germany had to conform to the standard of West German commitments, including those relating to the Holocaust. It was not always an easy message to get across. In Dresden, the plans for the synagogue would never have gotten off the ground without Biedenkopf's support.



Fig. 36

It is worth recounting the history of the Dresden synagogue since it leads directly into the thematics of representation-and-history. Unlike other eclectically-styled synagogues that are stuck in the margins of nineteenth-century architectural history, this building, designed by Gottfried Semper, had a prominent place in the architecture of the German Enlightenment. For the first time in the history of that nation a synagogue was included in a city's panoptic display of domes, towers, facades, and gardens. Semper's Opera House formed the northern terminus of Dresden's silhouette, his synagogue, its southern. The building's restrained classicizing exterior in combination with its softer, quasi-orientalist interior became a model for other synagogues, in that it spoke of the compromise of appearances that was so important to Jewish life at the time.

It was precisely because of the building's architectural importance in this respect that the Nazis vented their fury against it with excessive venom. They not only burned the building on *Kristallnacht* but later, in a training film on how to scientifically demolish buildings, they used the building's remnants for their demonstration.⁴⁴ To add insult to injury, the name *Rhathenu Platz* onto which the synagogue fronted was replaced with the name *Schlageterplatz* after Leo Schlageter, one of the earliest members of the Nazi party.⁴⁵ He was arrested and shot in 1923 by the French for detonating a bridge, which he did to protest French occupation of the Alsace. His deed resonated triumphantly over the blasted-out remnants of the synagogue. A near-by monument to the Nazi "Pioneers," as some of the earliest members of the Nazi party were called, rounded out the equation.

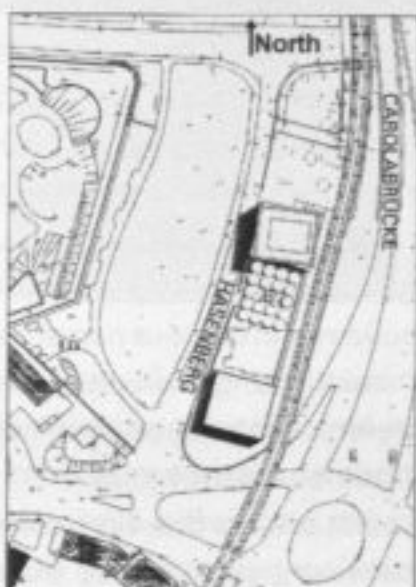


Fig.37



Fig.39

All this explains why Biedenkopf, seeking to elevate the status of Saxony in the eyes of the world community, put the case of the synagogue in the bluntest of terms: "It was the citizens of Dresden who destroyed the original building, and accordingly it is an act of justice that they support the construction of a new one."⁴⁶ This terse statement subsumes the illusive issue of trauma to concentrate on the hear and now. But in an age with little faith in its capacity to equal the feats of the great urban architecture of the past, the decision to erect a new building may have fateful consequences. To understand the design that is presently being built, one has to remember that the postmodern buildings of the commercial center, though also certainly modern, are here as elsewhere not meant to confront the city as an intrusion. On the contrary, they are willing participants in the world of international glitz. The designers of the synagogue had to opt for a solution that resisted both temptations and that relied exclusively on architectural innovation. The building, coming from

the architectural firm Wandel, Hoefer, Lorch from Saarbrücken calls for two almost prismatic, whitish boxes, separated by a garden (Fig. 37).⁴⁷ One box is twisted slightly so that the orientation of the top is toward Jerusalem. The design, a mix of several influences, points to 1930's High Modernism, to a 1950's Louis Kahn-esque grandeur, and to post-1980s' Vietnam-War-Memorial-minimalism.

But if the artificiality of the *Kulturmeile* will, with time, wash away to allow buildings like the *Zwinger* and the *Frauenkirche* to regain, for most people at least, a vague aura of "age-value," as Alois Riegl might have put it, the stark modernism of the synagogue in this particular setting will always point to the problematics of rupture.⁴⁸ Whereas the status of the *Frauenkirche* has been transformed from being a monument to allied atrocities into a symbol of Dresden's reconstructed Westernized culture, the role of the synagogue is by no means clear. In fact, the building sets in play a series of problems that, though at some level inadvertent, are nonetheless troubling. As an uncompromising statement of formal purity that is both abstract and tragic, and positioned within the same visual field as the reconstructed *Frauenkirche*, it fits uneasily in the landscape of the *Brühlsche Terrasse*. Apart from the intimidating socialist-era S.O.M.-styled annex to the nearby Police headquarters (!), it is the only structure associated with the *Kulturmeile* that has no columns, domes, or aedicules. The fact that the only other example of high architecture in the center of Dresden is Coop Himmelblau's cinema, puts these two buildings in obvious narrative alignment. The conflation of Jews and cinema may not make younger members of the world-community uneasy, but that legacy, accidentally re-enacted here, undermines the intentions of the government and might play right into neo-fascist hands.

In this context, the new building is fated to evoke not only its one-time onus of *entartete Architektur* but also the caesura of the local Jewry, such as it is, from their own impossible-to-reconstruct community. There can be no doubt that a building like this should express the scars of Holocaust. But there is a problem when that scar — in this case reinforced by the scar of modernist abstraction — becomes the building itself.

In 1840, when Semper's building was completed, the event was celebrated by parades and speeches and indeed throughout Germany as an example of the degree to which the Jewish community had been accepted by the broader layers of Dresden's society.⁴⁹ Not only does that ambition no longer have a place in this new urban profile in which the Jewish building is set out as different from the rest, but it encumbers any future effort at acceptance. A structure such as this one, planned as a site of restitution, could easily be perceived as an intruder.

It would, however, be possible to argue that the synagogue's difference-as-such is something that needs to be praised. Even though many Jews still prefer the designation "assimilated" others can now adopt a more open presence. And indeed, this new building, so visible in the urban landscape seems to celebrate

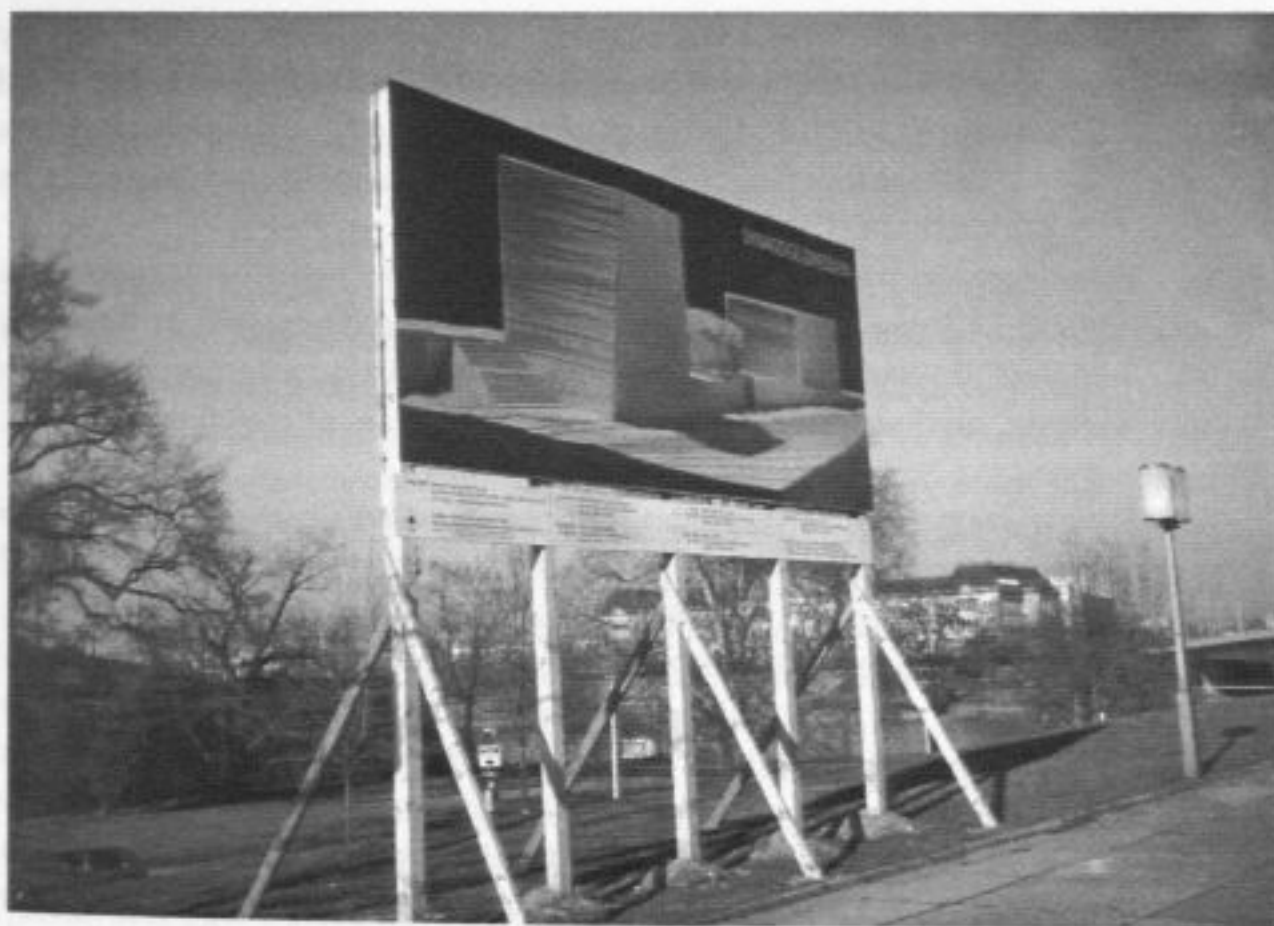


Fig.38

this new Germany. Should one not support it for that very reason? Though historically and philosophically, one would hope so, the ambiguity of the building and of its context make that celebration ring hollow. We have the bizarre situation in which the State, although it displays a convincing show of good will, forces Dresden's Jewry into a posture that makes the whole enterprise likely to revive the perpetual crisis of Jews in Germany.⁵⁰ Not being Jewish enough, the State hopes that the building will help in the process of identity-making. But the building, as we all know, will have to receive around the clock police protection that reminds Jews that they are not really German.

Clearly, one has to fight for the building as an expression of cultural healing. It is a necessary part of the broader effort that is demanded by the concept of *Wiedergutmachung*. Yet the word "synagogue" has to remain in quotation marks. These quotation marks are necessary not to condemn the building, but rather to elevate the circumstances in which it is entrapped to a philosophical level. The issues surrounding the building undermine the Heideggerian polemization of the term *Bauen*. According to Heidegger, *Bauen* was reserved for only the most exalted and purified of purposes. Furthermore, *Bauen* was only possible *after* a process of purification and destruction, that he called *Zerstörung*, had taken place.⁵¹ But the sad irony is that German Jews, until the nineteenth century at least largely excluded from the exalted world of agrarian land-ownership, were, nonetheless, victims of its

principle of *Zerstörung* in the Heideggerian sense. That would mean that any new synagogue would have to reverse the relationship of *Bauen* to *Zerstörung*. It would have to be *Unbaubar* (unbuildable) in order to send a message about its *Unzerstörbarkeit*, or indestructability. *Bauen* cannot be renormalized, except as an inverted proposition.

So how should this building get built? The answer would be to keep it as a future condition, or, literally, as a billboard. Only then would it be truly architecture, for as a billboard it would be a counter-statement resisting insertion of a three dimensionalizing, psychologized modernity into the domain of Jewish memory (Fig. 38).

If we study the billboard as it really once existed, we discover that it stood in an important relationship to the *Brühlsche Terrasse*, described as "the edge of a stage" with the buildings rising on it "endowed with an almost theatrical quality, overpowering and magical" (Fig. 39). It is an image that has become practically synonymous with the city's identity, as the petition to the United Nations Heritage Committee demonstrates. The billboard, because it stands at ninety degrees to that silhouette, inadvertently portrays the optic invisibility of the de-populated community of Jews in the newly-recreated sky-line. The building's absence has become a transcending Absolute remote even from the trauma of its own destruction.⁵² To commemorate that latter aspect of the site's history, one can turn to the socialist-era commemorative stele not far away (Fig. 35). Heavy and thoughtful, it clearly reflects the *gravitas* of the synagogue's destruction. But the billboard, removed from the ground, elevates the viewer's perspective toward more fragile and more contemporaneous ethical obligations.

The point is that the billboard exists. We do not need a self-conscious anti-monument monument to speak of the unimaginable horror of the Nazi's. What we need is to discover those spaces within culture that despite themselves give us the necessary object lesson of critique. A synagogue *should* be built, but not here, and not now! By translating architecture into empty symbolic gesture we run the risk of having the worst form of architecture.

This building, therefore, should not have been built. Instead we should have allowed time to play itself out in a more humanistic way. If it takes twenty years for the fledgling Dresden Jewish community to decide where and how it wants to identify its Jewish presence in the city then that time should be granted. The rush to fix past sins is noble, but in a mobile world normalization has to be coordinated with life itself. To normalize the past against the grain of the present is only to preserve the unending historicity of trauma. The billboard could have served as a neutral space of contemplation, a space that could have demonstrated how one can resist the hegemonies of space and time. With reality infringing on life at all times, impressing itself into the world with unrelenting force, there needs to be a place where the pathology of trauma does not create a pathology of healing.

THE NAZIS IN DRESDEN: REALITY AS UTOPIA

Compared to the multiple layers of the post-war restructuring of Dresden's city center, the Nazis built next to nothing. And therein lies the rub. The entire city served as a perfect legitimating façade just as it was. Streets and squares were renamed – the square in front of the Opera was renamed *Adolf Hitler Platz*, for example – and existing buildings were appropriated for new purposes. But the story is not that simple. At the very center of nazified Dresden was a building that is now part of the *Kulturmeile*, the *Taschenbergpalais* just behind the *Schloss* (Fig. 40). A celebrated example of German Baroque architecture, the building has recently been meticulously restored as a luxury hotel.⁵³ During the Nazi period, however, the building served as the region's *Wehrmachtskommandantur* or Army Command Headquarters (Fig. 41).

This fact is not well publicized and is only mentioned in the book about the building's history in one line, which claims that its use during the war is something "the older Dresdeners would remember."⁵⁴ The reference, though minimal, is telling, for not only does one wonder what those memories actually might be, but it is implied that this memory is not something that needs to get handed down to younger Dresdeners. The restorers did not see any reason to put a commemorative plaque on the building's façade. Furthermore, one may ask why is it discussed as "memory" and not as fact?



Fig.40

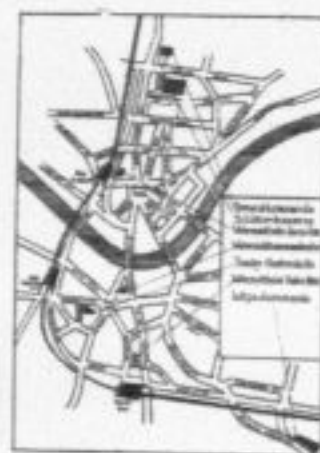


Fig.41

Just because the building's preservationists, by virtue of their profession, are under no particular obligation to deal with the building's former function, that does not mean that we have to follow suit. The *Taschenbergpalais* must somehow become the site where the public, visitors included, can come to terms with this aspect of the city's past. The 1934 photograph of it clearly emphasizes its importance in the Nazi

urban configuration. Naturally, there are many instances where one must understand the logic of the necessary cohabitation with the Nazi past in a nuanced way. But the insinuating nature of the Nazi presence in Dresden has rendered that past almost invisible.

And that is not the only case. At the Transportation Museum, for example, one can see the much advertised film "Das alte Dresden" showing the city as it was before the bombing (Fig. 42). Viewed by hundreds of visitors a day, it portrays a late 1930s city as happy and innocent as can be. The fact that many of the movie's clips come from Nazi propaganda films is not revealed in the credit lines and would not be known to the viewer. Nor is there any attempt by the museum to provide a more accurate picture of what life in Dresden in the 1930s was like. Nevertheless, the West taps into this image of a former "untroubled" Dresden precisely to cleanse itself of its own ambiguity to the past. An idealized image of the past helps the powers that be construct a pragmatically useful precedent for a less-troubled future.



Fig. 42

The seeming absence of the Nazi presence in Dresden should not be interpreted as a lacuna in the history of Nazi ideology. Though our image of the Nazis is one of military excess and cruel demagoguery, one must remember that Adolf Hitler, as Albert Speer wrote, was seen by many as the protector of the nineteenth-century world against the chaos of the new modern metropolis, and it was for these reasons that Nuremberg,

Fig.43



Hitler-Urlauber bei der Stadterkundung vor der Staatoper



Fig.44



Fig.45

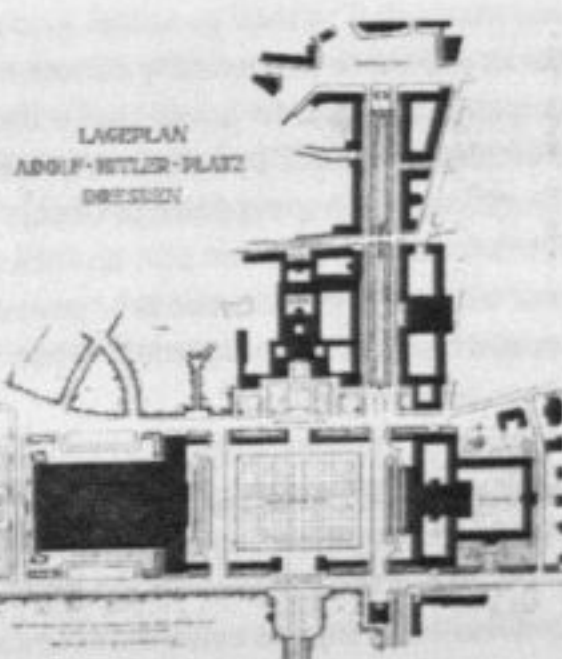


Fig.46

Linz and Dresden figured high on the list of Hitler's favorite places. Dresden, in fact, was featured by the Nazis as prime vacation spot for its officers and soldiers. There, both the soldiers and the public, got a sense of the world that the Nazi Party was propagating. In fact, a brochure was specifically made for members of the Nazi Youth Group (Fig. 43). The local newspaper featured their visits, and celebrated Dresden as a city that, especially when decked out in the Nazi flags, was the consummate *Stadt des dritten Reiches* with "healthy living and healthy families" (Fig. 44). In other words, Dresden's very normalcy was what made it so precious to the Nazi's. It was, once the Jews and the synagogue had been removed, a ready-made Germanic utopia. It is for this reason that filmic representations of Dresden, precisely like those featured in *Altes Dresden*, should be viewed *only* as a pedagogical element in a larger picture.

As a further element in that polemical study of "normalcy," one should include Hans Nadler's large ceramic quasi-panoramic representation of the city made in 1935 and placed on the bridge head of the *Augustusbrücke* under a series of arches. Many contemporary Dresdeners do not know of its existence. It depicts the Dresden *Schloss* on the left and the construction of Dresden *Neustadt* at the right. The strong figures and magisterial poses supervising the work men were meant to evoke a time when architecture, city and power existed in happy concordance (Fig 45).⁵⁵ Though clearly idealized it is difficult to project into this the full malevolence of the Nazi regime.

The invisibility of the Nazi presence makes it difficult to come to terms with that time-period's story-line in Dresden's urban metamorphosis. After all, Dresden was a beautiful city with or without the Nazi's. But the problem is that Nuremberg and Berlin both came to have real Nazi architecture against which the victorious Allies could unleash their protest, and through which we today can project in visual form not only our historical understanding of the various Nazi claims about space and monumentality but also our concomitant ethical obligations. But in Dresden's center there is nothing that points to their presence. And today, their absence is just as insidiously invisible as the more purposefully conceived absence of the socialist dialectic of Dresden's *tabula rasa*. And for some, that is the way it should be. But the problem is not made better by the book *Dresden: a City Reborn*, the authors of which, in a gesture of English fairness, take great pains to discuss the role of the Dresdener, Friedrich Olbricht, in the failed assassination plot on Hitler.⁵⁶ One wonders why this new-found "local hero," a Nazi officer described as a "devout Christian" with a "hatred of Nazism," deserves such a level of recognition, when the Nazi presence in the *Taschenbergpalais* is not even mentioned.⁵⁷

The Nazis, of course, did have their usual monumental plans for an urban statement all their own just outside the city center (Fig. 46). The architect, Wilhelm Kreis, had already designed the Hygiene Museum (1928-30) (Fig. 47). Kreis, who had begun his career as director of the Dresden School of Arts and Crafts, designed in 1901 a monumental, cylindrically shaped tower commemorating Bismark in Löbnitz



Fig.47

not far from Dresden. He also redesigned the old Augustus Bridge that connects Dresden to the other shore, giving it a stronger monumental form. In 1908, he moved to Dusseldorf where he soon rose to prominence as one of Germany's leading architects.⁵⁸ His Hygiene Museum reflects a turn toward a monumental, geometricized symmetry. Nonetheless, in 1933, the Nazi Party saw Kreis as having moved too much in the direction of modernism, but by the late 1930's Kreis, as Albert Speer's introduction to a 1944 monograph on his work made clear, had become the leading "senior" figure in the ranks of fascist architects.⁵⁹ Kreis received several important commissions, one of which was Dresden's regional headquarters of the air force, the *Luftgaukommando* in Dresden (Fig. 48). But the big prize was the commission approved directly by Hitler himself for a massively scaled *Ehrentempel* (Temple of Honor) to be placed on a new square in front of the Hygiene Museum (Fig. 49, 50). It consisted of a new boulevard that cut through the old fabric to connect the town hall with the *Grosse Garten*. Defined by new administrative buildings, the boulevard was to open up onto an enormous square at the south side of which was an equally enormous temple.

Kreis's legacy in Dresden is obviously a complex one. The Hygiene Museum was built before the Nazis came to power and cannot, therefore, be associated arbitrarily with their regime. Furthermore, Karl August Lingner, the Dresden soap manufacturer and progressivist philanthropist who played an important role in the planning of a hygiene exhibition in 1911, and who was the father of that institution,

Fig. 48



had nothing to do with the eventual perversion of that institution. The general drift of the politics of eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s was such that it easily linked itself with the notions of the Nazis. Under Hitler, Germans sponsored the creation of a Racial Hygiene Society, with Dresden as one of its centers.⁶⁰ None of this is admitted publicly or discussed on the Museum current web site. As for the building, we read:

Although the building's exterior reflected the monumental style, typical of later fascist architecture (not only limited to Germany at the time), the interior developed more and more in the "international style" - the Dessau Bauhaus style was not just an ideal but could be found in various design elements and detail work within the building.⁶¹

This statement is utterly misleading. Kreis had nothing whatever to do with the Bauhaus, and if the architecture was "abstract" that was in itself hardly a demonstration of the "International Style," a term that in the 1930s, for the German public, was in the main associated with socialism! Is the Museum trying to discretely redeem Kreis by making it appear as if before the war he had had secret socialist aspirations?

Part of the problem is the deliberate post-war erasure of Kreis' Nazi affiliation. A 1954 monograph fails to list *any* of Kreis's work during the Nazi period! In fact, according to its author Kreis's career "suffered under the Nazis."⁶² Kreis did experience some initial setbacks in 1933, but that, obviously, is only half the story. The broad presence of Kreis in Dresden, even his early work redesigning the *Augustusbrücke*, is absented from *Dresden und Umgebung* (1993).⁶³ His *Luftgaukommando* building is not mentioned.

Until Dresden deals more honestly with its Nazis past, in both its immaterial and material sense, there can be no healing.



Fig. 49



Fig. 50

THE PROBLEM OF GROUND AND THE PARADOX OF BAUEN



Fig.51

The ground on which a building rests is often rendered in architectural drawings as a blank field. It is a neutral entity open to the gambits of power, imagination, capital and prestige. But Dresden's past makes it difficult to see the ground as just a blank slate. It has become quasi-sacred by the fire-bombing on the 13th and 14th of February, 1945 (Fig. 51). Roughly eight square miles of city were destroyed. Many of the dead, estimated between thirty-five to forty thousand, were buried in unmarked graves in the *Heidenfriedhof*. Still today, passions run deep, with the gruesome pictures of burning corpses available in many Dresden postcard stalls (Fig. 52).



Fig.52

Other cities suffered devastating bombings. Yet cities in West Germany have been able to move on in the subsequent fifty years, whereas in Dresden the socialists used the bombing as a polemical ploy to stir up Cold War hatred. Though a memorial was erected and memorial celebrations were held on each anniversary of the bombing, the occasions were exploited by propagandists to blame not only Churchill, but also President Eisenhower, West German "fanatical" militarists, the "English fascists," and

even Wall Street. This displacement of grief into the framework of the Cold War kept the topic alive to this day. We still hear now statements like "Churchill wanted to fry German refugees," and "England and USA are guilty in the mass murder of German citizens" in contemporary radical-right, web sites.⁶⁴

With Reunification that stripped away the superimposed socialist ideology a realistic historical-political accounting has, of course, provided a more nuanced historical assessment. But the new government, obviously, has to play the game of victimhood in a different key. This makes the post-Socialist "return" to the site of the bombing more difficult than it would have been fifty years ago. As the *Kulturmeile* becomes more international, for example, it becomes less and less possible to sanctify its ground. For many Dresdeners it will thus seem that neither the East nor the West can be trusted to respect the experience of the trauma.



Fig. 53

What does this world of reconciliation actually look like? Beyond the *Frauenkirche* and the *Kulturmeile* and the associated rhetoric of success, there are plans to remove the machines in the Transportation Museum and restore the *Johanneum* to a more "appropriate" historical setting. In a similar vein, the *Kulturpalast* will get a new façade and be transformed into a Philharmonic Hall. As to the socialist sculptures,

they have been transported to Munich, so I was told, where they are held under lock and key (Fig. 53). All that is left are the ones which are presumed to have minimal ideological relevance. In their place one now often finds Western-styled "public art." The hyper-real has been replaced by the hyper-bland (Fig. 54). As to the old *Ernst Thälmann Strasse*, it was decided that the whole street be named *Wilsdruffer Strasse* even though in pre-war days the southern half was actually known as *Johann Strasse* after King Johann (1801-1873).⁶⁵ This street's identity as memorial is undermined by the one-dimensionality of geography. The fact that the book *Dresden, a City Reborn* and *Dresden und Umgebung* fails to point out who Ernst Thälmann was, and in what way he contributed to Dresden's politics – he spoke out in opposition to Hitler (Fig. 55) – does little to make the street a meaningful element in the city's communal memory.⁶⁶



Fig.54



Fig.55

Another element of erasure is the urban design strategy of *Verdichtung*. Basically all the new buildings are squarish in shape and, where possible, have a courtyard. These buildings are then organized according to the principle of "figure-ground," trying to strike a balance between buildings and streets. It replaces the socialist idea of liberated ground with the postmodern idea of street. It is, however, not as free from ideology as it might seem, for it simulates a return to organic growth at the same time as it impresses itself onto the landscape as a one-liner. Figure-ground replaces the socialist-era strategy of figure-on-ground. The result, of course, is an illusion, and a bad one at that, for it evokes, if anything, all that was bad about nineteenth century urbanism.

Fig. 56



In the context of all this, the word "*Verdichtung*" takes on a secondary meaning. If its primary meaning, as used by the planners, is the filling in of gaps, its other meaning is simplification. The buildings that are defined under its rubric are patently uncontroversial (Fig. 56). If the primary meaning of *Verdichtung* is positive, its secondary meaning is more troubling and more accurate, for the reduction of the city to a "grid" of banal buildings produces at best a generic city.

The new buildings are hardly enough to re-establish the city's much needed vertical element of visual density. But if that opportunity has been squandered, it is ironic that the new Dresden before it got rebuilt has been transformed into a temporary archaeological zone. As can be expected, archaeologists have been set to work to uncover historical remnants of the city's origins (Fig. 57). Though this might be a unique opportunity that should not be missed, the result is yet another historiographic conundrum. The ruins that were once on top of the ground are mirrored below by a new set of ruins, but these are uncovered with all the care and skill contemporary science can muster. Profound ethical and historiographic issues are raised. The history of the city that is being "uncovered" undermines decades of socialist historiography the principal aim of which, of course, was to emphasize as the city's role the success of the working-class revolution. The *Jahrbuch zur Geschichte Dresdens*, which began publishing in 1974, included a register of important dates of events that took place in Dresden and elsewhere to teach about the people and places that were now suddenly part of their history. A new *Museum für Geschichte der Dresdner Arbeiterbewegung* (Museum for the history of Dresden's Worker's

Movement) was set up, and there were, of course, statues, rituals, parades, exhibitions, and street namings.⁶⁷ By contrast, the new "archaeological history" that is now being uncovered aims to anchor Dresden firmly on its own ground in a Rankian-styled faith in historical positivism. But the fact of the matter is that one emptiness replaces another. And in the case of the new history, it erases the historicity of rupture without admitting its complicity in a new one, for once information has been extracted from the ground, the archaeological zones will be covered up and the knowledge that one gained from it available, in essence, only to specialists in the field.



One of the most important archaeological sites is just across from the *Kulturpalast* on the *Markplatz*. An imaginary section through the site would reveal the historiographic rotation that takes place. At the center is *Ernst Talmann Strasse/Wilsdruffer Strasse*. On one side is the *Kulturpalast*, resting on a Marxist-inspired red granite floor that seals that which is below it from rising against the dominating imprint of communism. On the other side is the archaeological zone. But just as that site is now already resurfaced by asphalt, the *Kulturpalast* is now awaiting its new façade. Both the horizontal façade of the *Kulturpalast* and the vertical façade of asphalt over the archaeological site obscure far more than their pragmatics might indicate.

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THE MISSING OTHERNESS OF DRESDEN'S "HISTORY"

In the current culture of postmodernism, certain time periods are proscribed as backwards and marginal at the very moment their cultural material becomes fodder for its celebratory practices. In that sense, there is nothing about contemporary Dresden that is not postmodern. And indeed, the various Post-Reunification interventions that I have described work so effectively because they accept the oft-repeated line that the citizens of Dresden came into Reunification "clueless." The story is that Dresden resides in a deep valley so deep that it never received Western television and that the Dresdeners labeled their valley the *Tal der Ahnungslosen*, or "the valley of the clueless." Their innocence, naturally, also absolves them of their former socialist affiliations.

Naturally, the socialist old-timers recognize what is in essence the capitalist colonialization of Dresden. They recognize yet another deformation of German history, one in which the individual, now being "liberated," feels reduced to a mere statistic. But this argument, though it makes for good rhetoric, also describes the socialist world, except that its metaphysics failed to recognize the fascism of its own bureaucracy. The West has learned to camouflage its ideological maneuvers behind a polemic of progress, normalcy, and participation. And in this it has one final trump card, for it brings along with its capital a concept of the human psyche that is more attuned to the unique set of stresses and benefits that accompany the postmodern life. Obviously, the new city required more than the acculturation of the old population. It required a new population altogether. This was accomplished – here as elsewhere throughout the former East Germany – by the importation of hundreds of West German intellectuals. Seeing opportunities and possibilities that no socialist-era person could, the Westerners – the new university professors, architects, planners, bankers and merchants – create an atmosphere of vigorous commitment to the "new Dresden." But in the process there arises a widening gap between the "new" individual – one more *psychologically* attuned to the simulated realities of capitalist life than his or her socialist-molded counterparts – and the de-individualizing mechanisms of the post Reunification historiography in which they are embedded.⁶⁸

Since socialism, ostensibly, produced little in the way of cultural material it is perceived simply as a void that is now getting filled. Such a reading requires that "cultural material" from the local environment become a compensatory structure to decades of repression. The focus on local history, geography, and archaeology breathes life back into the traumatized system. But that strategy, if it is pursued without any level of irony, can return culture to the quasi-utopian illusion of a pre-traumatized state in which everything works and in which there is no discord. Dresden once the

East German center for the study of *Arbeiterpsychologie* now has an updated psychology department that can deal with the usual issues of trauma and anger.

The benefits are numerous, but they rarely make inroads into those two domains which prefer simpler, modernist-styled resolutions to cultural conflict: nostalgia for the USSR or nostalgia for the Third Reich. Though traditionally antinomic, they have already been united into a larger wave of dissatisfaction with the West. Dresden is very much at the center of the debate, with the national office of the Neo-Nazi party known as JN (*Junge Nationaldemokraten*) having been founded there in November 1997. Oliver Händel, one of its instigators, who lives in Dresden, helped in the organization of a large neo-Nazi rally held in Dresden in January of 1998.⁶⁹ The remnants of the socialist camp held an impressive counter-rally. But since both the skinheads and the neo-socialists can reconstitute themselves in contemporary politics as a source of "true" resistance, they position themselves as if they were integral to the broader history of the anti-capitalist "avant-garde." And this, of course, only reinforces postmodernist counter-assertions that capitalism is the only reasoned alternative.

We face a theoretical-political Catch-22. The postmodernism that has facilitated Dresden's "return" to the West – the postmodernism of psychological fluidity, capitalist excess and scopic accessibility – cannot be critiqued without resorting at some level to the tactics of postmodernism itself. After all, only postmodernism lets one enter into the tension between the universals of mythic history and the "local" world of uncovering without having to ground itself in either. As a consequence, both history and geography, the most significant elements in any attempt to reclaim the notion of "place," become part of a system that leaves both simultaneously named and nameless.⁷⁰ The system, of course, is blind to the problem and sees only its own successes. All that thus "survives" is an official history in which the bombing is inverted by archaeology, the *Frauenkirche* is restored to a church, and the name *Ernst Thälmann Strasse*, a symbol of socialist self-sacrifice and anti-Nazism, is erased altogether. The synagogue, if it were built, would be reduced to a "Holocaust memorial."

The city assumes that the "figure-ground" look of its new plan will not be defeated by the intrusions of commercialism; it assumes that the ennobling restorations of the *Kulturmeile* will not be debased by the banality of the tourist industry. And with the synagogue, it assumes that the manifestation of Good Will will not lead to a return of repressed hatreds. We know that only after a passage of considerable time, when these assumptions are proven more frail than one thinks will Dresden truly become a city! *Civitas* is not the higher structure that gives identity to a place, but simply a dense way of reading the city, and one that must often be constructed in defiance of a city's aestheticizing goals.

These intersecting claims about Dresden are more than just the usual and predictable insertions of politics into urban epistemologies. Having come so unnaturally

fast they help us focus on their very "naturalness." The difference between East and West, for example, is contested on fundamentally different notions about what ground is and how to build on it. Similarly, the desire to "densify" the urban fabric brings to the fore the dialectical role of the façade as an instrument of cultural recuperation. Does the new façade that is planned for the *Kulturpalast*/Philharmonic Hall reflect the needs of the altered program, or is it precisely the mechanism that asserts the victory of capitalism? The point is not to rail against the change, but to ask how do we deal with – and preserve – the irony of absence. As another example, take the recent exhibition "Back to Dresden" which featured paintings that had been stolen from Dresden after the war and that had now been returned by the descendants of Russian soldiers living in New York.⁷¹ 1500 prints remain missing. There is always that which is irretrievable in the march of History. That is a circumstance of destiny. But the question is, where is the narration of that which is lost?

The Dresdener Bank, a major financing agent of the Nazi regime, has recently admitted complicity in funneling Jewish money to Swiss banks. "*Wir dürfen nicht vergessen*" claims its spokesperson.⁷² But the money that is now being partially retrieved to rebuild the city must be seen next to the perpetual absence of Dresden's pre-war Jewish community. And then, of course, one must remember that in 1977 the Baader-Meinhof Gang murdered Jürgen Ponto, the head of the bank.⁷³ It was easy to commemorate Ponto in West Germany, but in Dresden it will be a different matter altogether. And, as to the bombing, an enormous amount of rubble was removed from the city. Where did it go? Most of it was put along the Elbe shore for new embankments, but still today few people really know where much of it actually went. Should the shore become a memorial to the city?

The first part of the book is devoted to a general discussion of the history of the theory of the origin of life. The author starts with the ancient Greek philosophers and goes on to the modern scientists. He discusses the various theories of the origin of life, from the spontaneous generation to the modern theory of the origin of life from non-living matter. He also discusses the various experiments that have been conducted to test these theories. The second part of the book is devoted to a detailed discussion of the modern theory of the origin of life. The author discusses the various steps in the process, from the formation of the first organic molecules to the formation of the first living cells. He also discusses the various experiments that have been conducted to test this theory. The third part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the various problems that are still outstanding in the theory of the origin of life. The author discusses the various hypotheses that have been proposed to solve these problems and the various experiments that have been conducted to test these hypotheses. The book is written in a clear and concise style and is suitable for both students and general readers. It is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the origin of life.

DESIGN AS NEGATIVE PRAGMATICS

In the preceding pages, I have drawn on various types of visual material, a billboard, a palace, a film, a placard, a model of the city, even the ground itself, all because they were intended to construct if not actually reconstruct the citizens' temporal and historical understanding of the city. Even though any city can be studied through this type of lens, the situation in Dresden is particularly relevant to such a study not only because of the intensity of its history, but also because of the extensiveness of Dresden's discourse-of-identity. But there is an added dimension. Because the city's representational historiography is being rapidly extended and redefined we should be asking questions about the future of that city's historical narrative respective its public space? What I am talking about, as should be obvious, is *not* whether one should preserve this or that particular monument. I am trying to raise the question of *civitas*.

I have start this by not asking political questions up front, but by asking historiographic questions in order, however, to return to the political in the end. I have, therefore, brought these works into the discussion to point out that they should be first understood as existing in a type of "archive." Though not governed by a single institution, these object-lessons, whether it be the model in the city hall, or the *Trümmerfrau*, are protected and controlled in one way or another by the city and its various layers of bureaucracy. The contents of this archive, however, can be viewed without a letter of introduction. They can experienced ekphratically and even "democratically" by walking through the space of the city. These two frameworks, namely between bureaucracy, on the one hand, and experience, on the other hand, are not unrelated. In fact each relies on the other in symbiotic fashion.

Between them, however, and in an ideal world possibly linking them, lies a historiographic domain that escapes all but the most patient. But where is that voice of that domain to be found? Just as it cannot be provided by politicians or by the victims of one or the other atrocity or by a political faction, it cannot be simply assumed that this voice is to be that of "the historian" either. This does not mean that the efforts of historians are of little consequence. On the contrary. It means that the historian has to learn to speak with a *prosthetic voice* that reconstitutes suppressed narratives, recognizes residual presences, and holds onto the merest of traces. It is a process that forces us to think of *civitas* as a contrary logic embedded within the traditional systems of affirmation.

My purpose is not to diminish the accomplishment of the current government, but rather to break through the silence that pervades the city's historical consciousness.

What should the means be? The story of the *Taschenbergpalais* and the *Luftgaukommando* have yet to be made known. But how does one go about that? A letter to the mayor, or a more vigorous protest action? The film in the Transportation Museum? That I believe requires firmer action. As to the billboard. It is already gone. Here the medium that carries our message has to be remembrance itself.

Civitas is not just an orderly appreciation of democratic regulations. It is not just what happens when one sits in a cafe and enjoys a late afternoon conversation. It is not just the flow of daily activity. *Civitas* is a set of obligations that ties together the surface and the subsurface, and it is here that one finds the return of the political. In this world of disguised visibilities, as in all incomplete revolutionary periods, we must always ask What is it that lives on, and who takes responsibility for it?

If we were to proceed in this direction we would possibly arrive at some imaginary entelechic end of Dresden's urban historiography. But even that is significantly more open than the ones currently available. One type of urban consciousness would have a history in which everything that is built is a sign of the victory of the present over the past; another wants a history-as-erudition. One trajectory ends in preservation magazines, tour guides and public relations; the other in a psychology of localism and protectionism. Both uncritically equate *civitas* with the politics-of-pride. But to go to Dresden and focus exclusively on the official discourses of therapy – the new commercial center "healing" the trauma of a failed socialist economy, the *Kulturmeile* "healing" the trauma of the war, the State "healing" the trauma of the Holocaust the new cinema healing Dresden's former provincialism – is to overlook the more complex aporias of urban reflection. It is to overlook the fact that against the project Dresden there looms a more ambiguous "Dresden" which stands before us as in all truth a melancholia of systems in which even normalcy becomes opaque.⁷⁴

The recognition of the vastness of that system in relationship to the calculated epistemological under-determination of a city's history should not lead to a posture of resignation. Rather it should carry with it the seeds of a remembrance that feeds a particular type of *intellectual* criticality that calls to mind, perhaps even poetically, the true impossibility of ever transcending our obligations to the past. And so in seeking out a more substantive linkage of our physical world to the question of life's obligations, one must accept the dialectic which sets out for itself the obligation to base reflection in the (non)ground of life's dislocations. It is not, therefore, a traditional notion of dialectic of which I speak, one in which life is eternally trapped in a morass of history from which it can only escape through the sublime temporalities of violence and rupture.⁷⁵ Rather it is a dialectic that haunts the system as a form of confusion, in which neither the origins of that confusion nor its resolutions are clearly defined.

Naturally, one would want to put into practice the robust processes of "working through" the problematics of this anxiety and indeed the history of the

city, as I have tried to envision it, is conceived in that manner. It means to present itself as an element *within* the assimilative tendencies of postmodern culture. These assimilative tendencies function – and indeed *should* function – toward making the process of working-through less visible, and less ideological. Our culture has made trauma remembrance increasingly public and increasingly part of various national identities.

Nonetheless, there must be something that reminds us of the shock itself. Preserving the billboard would give reminding us that the process of “working through” cannot be done in absentia by people whose interests lie elsewhere. There has to be something left over. There has to be something to point to that which is not done, which is not yet done. After all not everyone can afford to hire the grief counselors that now flood our psychologized systems. For many, the only thing left is melancholia.⁷⁶ Melancholia/mourning, like city/“city,” is a composite that proves the permanent incompleteness of our humanity as it resides uneasily in everything historical.⁷⁷



Where might one ask, for example, can one find a REAL trace of the war itself? The only building that has not yet been restored is the Courland Palace, erected in 1729 for Johann Christian Knöffel (1685-1752). With trees and shrubbery growing inside, it is the only building in the *Kulturmeile* that has not been consumed by the Preservationists (Fig. 58). Its basement is being used as a jazz club. Plans are under way to restore the building. Too small for a hotel, it will, no doubt, be sold to some consortium.

But realizing that politics, simulation and architecture are fated to blend into each other, does not mean that we have to submit resignedly to the steamroller forces of the high capitalist world that aim to control a city's physical and representational forms. History is indisputably a metaphysical force in social consciousness, and it is thus out of *this* force, irredeemably linked through its over-modifications to a sense of loss, that we should attempt to articulate an alternative urban architecture. What is needed, however, is not a list of buildings and their successful adaptations, but a commitment to the necessary illusion of building, for that, in our age, is precisely how all cities, Dresden included, construct their civic identities, namely as places where both power and memory play themselves out in a field of opportunities in which politics and building are both connected and disconnected.

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As the philosopher Werner Flach has pointed out, all inquiry into the ultimate principles of the foundation of knowledge is of necessity pure heterology.⁷⁸ It is in this heterology – in which we recognize both the passive and the active aspects of history — that we find our true political nature and our true humanity. And before it we stand in awe. But this does not mean that we reduce knowledge to the level of pure epistemology. Despite the simulacra, to state that only history or critique is possible without architecture is too extreme a proposition. One must still assume that behind the spectacle there are real forces of oppression, and that resistance (and thus to some degree, enlightenment) is still possible. But without a belief in authenticity, how does one muster resistance without also calling into play mankind's darker ambitions.⁷⁹

Metaphorically speaking, we face the challenge to reconstruct both the plane and the elevation of a possible architecture.⁸⁰ If we return to the premise of dissimulation we instantly touch on – and wound – the reality behind it while at the same time entering into negotiation with a reality that forces both them and us to show our cards. This return to politics will, however, be resisted in the capitalist world, which reduces architecture either to the service of program (i.e. politics of profit and profession) or of memory (i.e. state sponsored politics of resolution of guilt). Everything else is deemed "impossible," whether it be the "comradery" of extremists or the reasoned search for the resolution to past trauma. But it is precisely the condition of impossibility that one finds in the history of Dresden. Its history is *already* a series of "impossible" events! Who in the 1930s could have believed something like the Holocaust would take place? Who in the early 1940s could ever have thought that Dresden would be destroyed in the war? Who could ever have thought that the name Ernst Thälmann would be encoded in the urban landscape. Who could ever have thought that Dresden would be bulldozed into oblivion? And who, even in the 1980s, would ever have thought that the city would be part of a united Germany? No fiction writer could have imagined such scenarios. What is needed, therefore, is a more insistent deconstruction of the difference between fiction and reality, one that exposes the fateful illusions on which urban epistemologies are constructed.⁸¹ The point is not to go so far as to mistake fiction for reality or vice versa. Rather one must recognize that "history" is the site of the multiple cross-contaminations.

DESIGN AS DENSITY

Basically, the socialist city, in being subjected to the transformation of Post-Reunification evokes a series of (im)possible responses that, in the name of history, a third history, if you will, *must* take place even though every one knows fully well that this attempt, or for that matter, *any* attempt, to "re-ground" Dresden will *never* become reality. Nonetheless, *civitas* possesses a cunning that is a life-force all of its own, a force that understands the need for semantic fluidity and constructs it almost instinctively. And in Dresden, this has indeed happened. I have mentioned several instances already, the billboard as (non)memorial site and the Courland Palace as night club, both of which I argue, are, amazingly enough, examples of good design. There are others, such as:

SCHILLERGALLERIE AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF HERITAGE: South of the city center, near the bridge called "Blue Wonder," there are currently plans to construct a shopping mall called Schiller Gallerie (Fig. 59). Schiller lived in Dresden between 1785 and 1787 and is commemorated in various places in the city, such as in the portal of Semper's Opera House. Hopefully, however, the shopping mall will be themed around nostalgic images of Dresden's "classical" past. The shopping mall would then demonstrate a willingness to negotiate the gap between popular culture and high culture.

TASCHENBERGPALAIS, and the PAULANER KELLER: In 1832, the *Altstädter Wache* was constructed according to plans by Friedrich Schinkel. It has been refurbished on the inside in a modern idiom and is now used as a ticket office and café. On the east gable is a representation of Saxony and on the West, a representation of Mars. Across the street and moving south a bit there is in the basement of the *Taschenbergpalais* the *Paulaner Keller*. It is a wonderful space themed "a la rustico" with large cut-out decorations on the wall portraying a medieval German square. The *Altstädter Wache* and the *Paulaner Keller* bring together high culture and low culture, but in their "proper relationship." The *Keller* also evokes the myth of the Platonic cave, with the message of an Enlightened "civilized" Germany into which one emerges from the darkness. The truth in all this is not far from parody, for it might just be that the "traditions" evoked in the *Keller*, even those of cultural flattening, might be just as genuine, and just as false, as those evoked in the fancy *Schinkel Café* above.

These existing "realities" break through the controlled system of symbols and representation. They prove that Dresden constructs its own "Dresden," and it is a *healthy* sign. With these and other similar examples in mind we can now envision a series of possible interventions. This attempt to start with the pre-subjective conditions of urban culture, could be interpreted as a quasi-phenomenological argument. But if that were true, then one would also have to recognize that the "lived" aspects of culture have embedded within them an inner dialectic of *inauthenticity*. It is this *inauthenticity* that mediates between people while being linked to the question of cultural trauma. Trauma too has semiotic qualities that, just as it allows politics to engage its epistemological slippage, it also allows the urban historian to engage it in the realm of design. One can thus enter the domain of cultural trauma obliquely through a network of dislocations both local *and* universal. The resultant search-for-articulation is not the same as the creation of memorials.

An important element, often lost in today's world of serious solutions, is irony. For example, in front of the Transportation Museum/historical museum one could visualize a large plastic "socialist tractor" à la Oldenburg. Would it be monument or irony?

Suggestions:

- A large (plastic) "Socialist Tractor" in front of the Transportation Museum.
- A Wilsdruffer Shopping Mall to be installed alongside the former Kulturpalast. It would be themed in a "medieval" village style. The project would inhabit the gap between "German-ness" and tourism.
- The Bombardier's "line of containment" that circumscribes the area that the British pilots intended to bomb should become written into the physical ground of the city as, perhaps, a red stripe through the landscape.
- Memorial to 40,000 dead, centered on the Trümmer Frau (i.e. a radical expansion of the field of pain). It would be a field measuring 400 X 100 meters, building on the relationship of bodies to rubble. It is roughly the size of the Kulturmeile.
- Construction of a building with an empty core in which citizens are asked to contribute to installations that expand our knowledge of what is missing both real and figuratively in Dresden, i.e. the missing Jewish community, the still missing art works that were looted by Russians, the missing working class, missing ideals, missing loved ones ...etc.
- Façades to be built at various places in the city (and with various possible programs), as a type of reverse Potempkin Stadt. They would allow designers to "celebrate" and/or critique the paradox of invisibility in our postmodern culture.

- Light towers for night time illumination of Pirnaischer Platz buildings south of the Kulturmeile, as complement to the newly reconstructed Dresden Silhouette. The primitive ugliness of these buildings evokes the pain of the absented and defeated socialist utopia.
- A restored Lenin Statue as a lottery center placed in relationship to the statue of Luther that stands in front of the Frauenkirche.
- A bar-nightclub (probably best in the Pirnaischer area) named Ernst Thälmann Club, which shows continuously, the Socialist-era film Ernst Thälmann - Sohn seiner Klasse.
- A Hans Modrow Platz as a reminder of the euphoric events of 1989.
- A new Dresdener Bank Building on the opposite shore of the Elbe, with the words "Wir dürfen nicht vergessen" inscribed into its façade.
- Free Commerce Strip west of the train station but beneath the university. It would be conceived in opposition to the Prager Strasse Downtown, on the one hand, and the tourist Kulturmeile, on the other hand. Planned as a laissez-faire region, but with large corporations banned, it would be a cross between a college town, red-light district and bazaar. It would be a new "Dresden" with an urban plan that clearly marks it as different from the other more predictable parts of the city
- A monument dealing with Nazi racial Hygiene in the Grosser Garten. It will be a 100 square meter slab of polished granite that a citizen, chosen at random from a lottery, will be forced to polish everyday or incur a penalty.

These "projects" – along with others – would constitute an ironic *Verdichtung*. They would speak not of memory but of conscience. The two patterns of *Verdichtung* could be made to work together. But the truth is that "density" as understood by the urban designers is not linked to the historiographic realities of the living city. And so my point is, once again, that a city by definition must turn its back on the supposedly more noble attributes of a conventional *civitas*. True *civitas*, if I can tentatively evoke such a notion, can only come about as a picture of the impossible. It is never fulfilled, and yet, like a force of nature, it often manages to find expression in minor ways in the most unselfconscious of manifestations.

In other words, the post-traumatic world can be perceived as detached from both the present *and* the past, floating free from reality, continually restructures it according to its dictates. In floating free, it allows aggression and exploitation, common traits of mankind, to find their common ground. The designer can enter into this game as well, to flatten and transmute traditions into the broader spectrum of modern life. Professional urban design cannot accomplish this because it has the

obligation to promote design as a public relations success story. It fails to recognize the triangulated equation between the density of life, the density of the city, and the density of memory. In other words, it fails to elucidate the history of the city as an intersubjective practice.

Naturally, one could argue that an attempt to step out of a city's history and study its symbolic genealogy will end up as that self-same presentistic, relativistic illusory science that it does not want to be. It would be a valid point, for anyone dealing with the problems of politics and space in our culture is caught in the endless task of unraveling the loops of a Gordian Knot. It is a knot that beckons the sword of simplification, for "history," and even memory, as figured forth in our "post-traumatized" world, are not structured to reflect on the ambiguities of belonging. This forces aesthetics to define itself with a heavy dose of self-objectification. In other words, the most conventional urban design tools and the most avant-garde of "statements" are often nothing more than antinomic reflections of each other. Even our heightened expectations of autonomous art have long since been incorporated into a world saturated by bourgeois reflections. My projects, though drawing on avant-gardist notions of aesthetic resistance aim to enhance not so much the production-of-culture, and the "resolution" of trauma, as the circulation-of-culture, and the circulation through trauma.

What I am trying to evoke, therefore, is not the uniqueness of the "memory needs" of one or the other group (nor to suggest that those interests should not be met), but the needs of a more complex whole with multiple layers of historiographic repression at work. The issue of trauma and "healing" is not only an issue of (re)locating trauma at the site of so-called "memorials," but of dispersing the problematics of trauma into the broader aspects of the city's churning life. Only then can one truly speak of the irresolubility of modernity.

CONCLUSION

In thinking of the city, one has to stand between the mechanisms of manipulation and diversion, on the one hand, and construction and meaning, on the other hand for they are more similar than different. One must see the city as a transformational work operating out of, and on behalf of, forces that have various forms of effective, and defective, presences. These social pressures, political anxieties, ideological antinomies, and real or imaginary torts require a compensatory structure that is far different from the all-to-heavy and all-too permanent elements that usually define the architectural needs of a city. Buildings, streets, and parks, the dominant motives of its discourse are insufficient in dealing with the complex needs of urban epistemology. Permanence – as understood in the conventional regimes of urban design – has to be postulated as a necessary illusion, as our modernity has shown us again and again. Instead, one has to treat design as tactical schemes along which narrations of trauma can surface and be “lived out.”

What I have tried to outline is a condition of negative pragmatics in which the limited – and limiting – spatial and temporal conditions of architecture are just another element in the history of similitude. Starting with this premise, one can expose the illusions on which our urban epistemologies are constructed even though those illusions, given the strength of their operations, often appear to leave nothing outside their realm.⁸² Urban epistemology (and urban design) begins with *and ends with* this problem and thus with the city's ambiguous and one might even say postmodernist location in time.⁸³ To use a phrase from Adorno, but changing his word “art” to my words “the city,” one can say that the city desires what has not yet been, even though everything that the city is has already been. Playing one end of this scenario off against the other to expose the paradox of design is no doubt difficult (and it is ultimately little more than a “theoretical” project), but in its dialectical incompleteness it is a form of action in its own right. As a humanistic construct the contemporary city may not be all that we hoped for, but as an intellectual construct reflecting the incomplete geographies of History, it is more than one could ever have imagined.

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- Fig. 25. *Sächsische Zeitung* 8/41 (February 18, 1953)
- Fig. 29. *Jahrbuch 1974 zur Geschichte Dresden* (1974), plate 4.
- Fig. 35. Hildegard Adermann, *Kunst im öffentlichen Raum* (Dresden: Landeshauptstadt Dresden, 1996), p. 99.
- Fig. 36, 37. Detail is from the Pharus-Plan as published in the brochure about the new synagogue, "My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all Peoples."
- Fig. 38-39. *The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting*, (Ibid, p. 70).
- Fig. 40. Henning Prinz, Ed. *Das Taschenbergpalais* (Dresden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1998), p. 22.
- Fig. 43. Dresden: NSDAP, Amt für Volkswohlfahrt, (Dresden: n.d.) p. 12.
- Fig. 44. *Der Freiheitskampf* (Feb. 9 1936), p. 23.
- Fig. 45. Hildegard Adermann, *Kunst im öffentlichen Raum* (Dresden: Landeshauptstadt Dresden, 1996), p. 20.

- Fig. 46, 48. Hans Stephan, Wilhelm Kreis (Oldenburg: G. Stalling, 1944) p. 60.
- Fig. 52. *Verbrannt bis zur Unkennlichkeit* (Dresden: DZA, Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1994), figure 71.
- Fig. 53. *Jahrbuch 1976 zur Geschichte Dresden*, (1976) plate 24.
- Fig. 55. *Dresdener Neuste Nachrichten* (Wed. Jan 20, 1999) p. 1.
- Fig. 59. *Sächsische Immobilien* 5/5 (May/June 1998).

FOOTNOTES

¹ Walter Benjamin, "Über den Begriff der Geschichte," *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols. Ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), Vol. 1, pp. 697-698. (my translation). I use this quote because it evokes the drama of history in the paradoxes of the present, but I do not agree with Benjamin's classically modernist notions of the present as "eternal recurrence" or the "present as new." In our hyper-capitalist world the ambiguity between present and past requires a different — and more cynical/philosophical — form of historical strategizing.

² For an excellent discussion of the situation in Munich, See: Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory, Architecture, Monuments, and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000)

³ William A. Davis, "Dresden Builds a Future," *Boston Sunday Globe*, Travel Section (March 5, 2000): M13.

⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Rigorous Study of Art," in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, Volume 2, 1927-1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 669.

⁵ Eberhard Hempel, "Ruinen Schönheit," *Zeitschrift für die Kunst* 2 Leipzig (1948): 91. Eberhard Hempel authored several books, including: *Francesco Borromini* (Vienna: A. Schroll & Co, 1924); *Geschichte der deutschen Baukunst* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1949); *Die katholische Hofkirche zu Dresden* (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1955); *Das christliche Denkmal*, Vol. 32; *Material und Strukturechtheit in der Architektur*. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956), and *Der Zwinger zu Dresden: Grundzüge und Schicksal seiner künstlerischen Gestaltung* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1961)

⁶ Pierre Bourdieu defined the term "symbolic capital" to call attention to the power dimension of cultural dispositions. Symbols, like money, are wrapped up in energies that work precisely because of the self-consciousness that is invested in their value. These systems, therefore, are controlled by codes both visible and invisible that link them to conceptual systems of power and domination. My argument will, however, link this structuralist assumption to the orientation that comes to cultural systems from trauma (which Bourdieu does not deal with) but which makes the idea of symbolic capital more charged, because there is more at stake. The resultant indeterminacy yields an "aesthetics" — and here I will at the end of the paper move toward Adorno's notion of negative dialectics — that, because it claims it is up for negotiation (even though it is not!), enables one to defend the position of the intellectual in the tactical critique of cultural production. Like Foucault's notion of a discursive formation or Jameson's idea of a structurally articulatable political unconscious, Bourdieu proposes structures that allow the political analysis of language, but often, so it seems, without

necessary reference to the beliefs or awareness of realities that are caught up in "unspeakable" relations to the past. In my view the problematic of trauma helps re-ground the problem of culture more precisely in the reductivist ambivalence of presence and absence.

⁷ The following quote was posted in the web site of an organization called the "Friends of Dresden." Based in New York city, it was founded by Günter Blobel, Professor of Cell Biology at Rockefeller University to help promote the city. Blobel donated a good portion of his Nobel Prize to the organization. The "Friends of Dresden" has also made an effort to support the construction of the synagogue. See their web site www.friends.dresdener.com

⁸ There were some attempts at providing alternative designs. Helmut Jahn, a member of "The Friends of Dresden" Honorary Board, opened an exhibition about the *Frauenkirche* at Christie's new office in the Hancock Tower, Chicago. Jahn challenged the audience to participate in the building of a cathedral much in the way communities did in the Middle Ages.

⁹ As was recently announced by Dresden's Bishop Joachim Reinelt, the Dresden-Meissen Diocese has raised \$50,000 for the construction of a new Jewish synagogue. The Catholic News reports that, in Dresden, "Today, we have a chance to do things differently and can dare to attempt to make amends."

¹⁰ The current statue erected in 1968 replaced the earlier version from 1952.

¹¹ Peter H. Feist, "Denkmalplastik in der DDR von 1945 bis 1990," *Denkmale und kulturelles Gedächtnis nach dem Ende der Ost-West-Konfrontation*, Akademie der Künste: Berlin, 1999, p. 194.

¹² *Trauender Man* is next to the *Albertinum* just below the *Bruhlsche Terrasse*. The *Trümmerfrau* is in front of the Town Hall on *Rathausplatz*. The *Bauleiter und Lehrling* is one block north from *Strassburger Platz*, which is about 500 yards east from *Pirnaischer Platz* along *Grunaer Strasse*. It is next to the *Berufsschule*. Don't forget to visit the important monument against fascism at the intersection of *Pillnitzer Strasse* and *Gerichstrasse*.

¹³ Charles S. Maier, "A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial," *History and Memory* (Fall/Winter 1993): 143.

¹⁴ John Soane, "The Renaissance of Dresden after 1985" in *Dresden, a City Reborn* Edited by Anthony Clayton and Alan Russell (Oxford: Berg 2000), p. 110; John Soane, "Dresden: its Destruction and Rebuilding, 1945-85," *Ibid*, pp. 80, 83. Much of Soane's work, rooted in solid scholarship, constitutes an important contribution to our understanding of the history of the city. But Soane's obvious disdain for the socialist period, though understandable, makes it difficult to accept the book as a way to "read" the current situation in Dresden. The book has a foreword by the Duke of Kent. Soane, teaches at South Bank University in London, where a Technical Committee has been established for the purpose of managing the manufacture of the great

Golden Orb and Cross. According to the web site, "The Technical Committee will be tendering to the finest craftsmen in the country to ensure that the symbol of reconciliation between Britain and Germany is of highest quality." [(http://piscis.sbu.ac.uk/BE/CECM/german/dresden.html) March 22, 2000]

¹⁵ Heinz Quinger, *Dresden und Umgebung* (Cologne: DuMont, 1993). Quinger (b. 1930) studied in Dresden and Berlin. He spent most of his career as professor of art history at the University of Dresden. Despite having lived in Dresden and his complete familiarity with its culture, one wonders why, for example, the very first image of the socialist contribution to the city is the bleak housing project of Prohlis.

¹⁶ Ibid p. 152.

¹⁷ Manfred Bachmann, "Statement," *The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978) p. 7. Bachmann was the Director General of the State Art Collections in Dresden.

¹⁸ Joachim Menzhausen, "Five Centuries of Art Collecting in Dresden," *Ibid.* p. 24. Menzhausen was the director of the renowned Green Vault in Dresden.

¹⁹ Carl-Ludwig Paeschke and Dieter Zimmer, *Dresden, Geschichten einer Stadt* (Berlin: Brandenburgisches Verlagshaus, 1994) p. 39.

²⁰ *The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978) p. 70.

²¹ In the days of February 13 and 14, 1945, the city center was destroyed in partial retaliation to the Nazi bombing of Coventry. For one of several accountings of the bombing campaign, see Alan W. Cooper, *Target Dresden* (Keston: London, 1995).

²² "Was fanden wir?" *Kultureller Neuaufbau Dresdens*, 7 (Dresden: Stadt Dresden, n.d.) p. 3.

²³ "Wir fangen an! *Sächsische Zeitung* 7/283 (Dec 6, 1952).

²⁴ Work on the new city-center began in the 1960s with several competitions being held to determine its final form. The *Kulturpalast* was inaugurated in 1969. For a good overview see Ingolf Rosenberg, "Die Frauenkirche in der Dresdner Innenstadtplanung," *Dresdener Hefte* 23 10/4 (1992): 63-70. For the contemporary socialist perspectives see: G. Funk, "Wettbewerb für die Städtebauliche und architektonische Gestaltung der Ost-West Magistrale in Dresden," *Deutsche Architektur* 7 (1954): 240-24; O. Hempel, "Vorschlag für die Rekonstruktion des historischen Viertels um die Frauenkirche in Dresden," *Deutsche Architektur* 8 (1955): 107-171; G. Thümmel, "Die Stadt Dresden, ein grosser Bauplatz," *Sächsische Heimatblätter* (1959): 49-84; Gerhard Schill, "Eine sozialistische Grosstadt der DDR – Höhepunkt der geschichtlichen Entwicklung Dresdens," *Jahrbuch 1974 zur Geschichte Dresdens* (1974): 3-9; Gunnar Hartmann and Johannes Hunger, "Unser erfolgreiches Aufbauwerk; Zur Entwicklung des Wohnungsbaues in der Stadt Dresden seit der Gründung der DDR," *Jahrbuch 1979 zur Geschichte Dresdens* (1979): 25-42; Dieter Möbius and Gunner Hartmann, "Die städtebauliche und architektonische Gestaltung des Dresdener

Altmarktes – ein bleibendes Beispiel der Architekturentwicklung in der DDR," *Dresdner Hefte* 4/10 (1986): 48-57; G. Schuster, "Der Aufbau Dresden schreitet voran!" *Deutsche Architektur* 3 (1989): 121-126.

²⁵ Thälmann was idolized in party propaganda because of his loyalty to Moscow. His personality, however, was less than charismatic. He has been described as coarse and unimaginative. Furthermore, his brand of radical Marxism had the effect of heightening tensions with the right wing and turning away moderates. The history of the leftist movement during the 1920s and early 1930s is a complex one, driven not only by the differences between the more moderate socialists and the more strident communists, but also by the sometimes ambivalent politics of both. For a good discussion see: Istvan Deak, *Weimar Germany's Left-Wing Intellectuals, A Political History of the Weltbühne and its Circle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

²⁶ Guenther Simon played the lead role.

²⁷ "Gegen den Formalismus in der Kunst" *Sächsische Zeitung* (March 29, 1951).

²⁸ Paul, "Dresden: Suche nach der verlorenen Mitte," p. 328.

²⁹ It was designed by the firm Wolfgang Hänsch, Herbert Löschau, Heinz Zimmermann.

³⁰ There were several such monuments. See Friedhelm Grundmann, "Kirchen und Kirchenruinen," *Der Architekt* 11 (1989): 551-54; Johannes Werner "Kirchenbau mit Kriegsrüinen," *Das Münster* 3 (1987): 199-201; Mathias Wegner, "Das Feuer war ihr Schicksal," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, (May 9, 1992).

³¹ The museum got the name in the 19th century when König Johann, who ruled from 1854 to 1873, made it into a historical museum.

³² See: Hans Nadler, "Beitrag zur Denkmalpflege in Dresden 1946-1952," *Dresdener Hefte* 28 9/4 (1991): 8-22.

³³ The restoration of the Zwinger was begun immediately after the war. Despite the difficulty of undertaking such a project at that time, money was found already in 1945. Work was completed in 1964. The fate of Semper's Opera was less clear. Money was found for its restoration starting in 1953, however. After undergoing several phases, work was complete in 1985. The full ideological explanation of the Zwinger was articulated by Hubert Mohr in *Der Dresdener Zwinger* (Berlin, Deutsche Bauakademie, 1956). For Mohr, the Zwinger helps visualize an important time in German history when the bourgeoisie was attempting to liberate itself from the strictures of absolutism. Though the building is indeed the architecture of the aristocracy, we should see it not simply as a masterpiece of the doomed feudal mindset, but rather as a site where the newly emerging spirit of an industrially-oriented bourgeoisie managed to play itself out. Daniel Poppelmann represents, according to Mohr, all that which is "immortal" in the German people (p. 13). And it was for this reason, that the German Democratic Republic invested so much money in the Zwinger's reconstitution.

³⁴ The East Germans, however, also promoted Dresden as a city of culture by using it

to host the various *Deutsche Kunst Ausstellungen*.

³⁵ For a not inaccurate but clearly pro-socialist spin on the socialist and Russian contributions see: Max Seydewitz, *Die unbesiegbare Stadt* (Berlin: Kongress Verlag 1956).

³⁶ See Jürgen Paul, "Dresden: Suche nach der verlorenen Mitte," *Neue Städte aus Ruinen* (Munich: Prestel, 1992), p. 333.

³⁷ The team was headed up by Professor Zech from Munich where he was the head of the City Building Department and emeritus professor at the Technische Universität of Munich. *Projektgruppe Stadtentwicklung Dresden*, as it was known, is answerable to a body of experts, the *Lenkungsausschuss*, which has representatives in it from both the city and the state, as well as of the Dresden Building Department. This body instructed the *Projektgruppe* with the duties on what to work on. Most often, these were tasks in the interest of the state, but within the area of the city of Dresden. The *Projektgruppe*, formed in the early 1990s, was always planned as a short-term institution. It ceased to function at the end of 1999 so that now it will work on a data-base-development for building- and traffic-management. Prof. Zech will continue to represent the group for 3 more years.

³⁸ The German government reports that approximately two million claims were filed with claims offices (*Vermögensämter*) in eastern Germany. In Berlin, approximately 310,000 property claims have been filed. Of these, approximately 150,000 claims were filed for the return of approximately 100,000 real properties. From these, approximately two thirds, have been decided. 30% to 50% are given back, the remainder obtain damages or are rejected. See David Rowland, "Entschädigung im neuem Gewand," *Aufbau* (Nov. 22, 1996); "East German Claims Revisited," German American Chamber of Commerce (November 4, 1996).

³⁹ See for example, R.W. Apple Jr. "Gourmet Holidays, Dresden and Weimar," *Gourmet* (November 1998), 160.

⁴⁰ Henning Prinz, Ed., *Das Taschenbergpalais zu Dresden: Geschichte und Wiederaufbau der Sächsischen Thronfolgerresidenz* (Dresden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1998).

⁴¹ Henry Landsberger, who was born in Dresden, and whose grandfather was the rabbi, has been instrumental in organizing the campaign for the new synagogue. Parallel projects are also underway in cities like Darmstadt, Ulm, and, of course, Berlin.

⁴² Kurt Biedenkopf, "Construction of the Dresden Synagogue," in a speech delivered in 1997 at the first meeting of the Association of Sponsors. Here quoted from a 1996 brochure advertising the new synagogue, "My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all Peoples."

⁴³ The patrons were Kurt Biedenkopf, Volker Kress, Bishop of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Saxony, Joachim Reinelt, Bishop of the Diocese Dresden-Meissen and Herbert Wagner, Lord Mayor of Dresden. The seeds for the construction of the new Dresden Synagogue had been laid in 1988 with an exhibition "Life and Suffering of the Jews

in Saxony" and with a plaque mounted on the front of the Church of the Cross (Kreuzkirche), Dresden's principal Protestant Church. In 1995, Pastor Siegfried Reimann, Honorary President of the "Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation," first proposed the idea of a new synagogue at a time when the *Frauenkirche* reconstruction was well under way.

⁴⁴ The film, which has since been recovered, was shown as part of the kick-off campaign for the rebuilding of the synagogue. Of the deported Jews, few survived Theresienstadt where most were sent.

⁴⁵ Leo Schlageter was an artillery officer during WWI. He had joined the Nazi Party, which was founded in 1920, at an early stage. His membership card bore the number 61. When the French occupied the Ruhr in 1923, Schlageter helped to organize resistance on the German side. He and his companions blew up a railway bridge for the purpose of making the transport of coal to France more difficult. For his part in the action, Schlageter, who was captured by the French, was condemned to death, but he refused to disclose the identity of those who issued the order to blow up the bridge. He was shot by a French firing-squad on May 26th, 1923. The renaming of *Rathenau Platz* as *Schlageterplatz* was of course a calculated one. His bombing of the bridge was linked with the destruction of the synagogue.

⁴⁶ For a discussion of how Germans deal with the Nazi past, see "Zum Umgang der Deutschen mit ihrer NS-Vergangenheit (1945-1949)," in Ulrike C. Wasmuth, ed. *Konfliktverwaltung ein Zerrbild unserer Demokratie?* Berlin, 1992, pp. 227-239; and Elizabeth Domanski, "Kristallnacht, the Holocaust and German Unity: The Meaning of November 9 as an Anniversary in Germany," *History and Memory* 4 (1992): 60-94; and Ash "becoming Normal, Modern and German (Again?)," Paper presented at Johns Hopkins University, September 1992, forthcoming in Michael Geyer, ed. *The Power of Intellectuals in Germany* (Chicago, 1998). See also Gerd Gemünden, "Nostalgia for the Nation: Intellectuals and National Identity in Unified Germany," *Acts of Memory* Edited by Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (Hanover NH: Dartmouth College, 1999), pp. 120-133.

⁴⁷ The judges, under the chairmanship of Professor Karljoseph Schattner, originally awarded Wandel, Hoefer and Lorch the third prize with Livio Vacchini of Locarno and Heinz Tesar of Vienna, coming in first and second. Discussions with the Jewish Congregation changed the order.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the over-all problematic of monumentality in Germany see James E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory, the End of the Monument in Germany," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999): 4-13. Though Young describes some examples of "counter-monuments," I feel that he leaves the larger question of "Germany" unexplored. My paper tries to broaden the discussion by seeing beyond the all-too-narrow equation of the question of monument-in-Germany and the question of the Holocaust. As I have tried to show, even socialist-era streets and even restorations

were important aspects of the history of the German "monument," which means that one has to approach the monument by deconstructing the larger historical package in which the Holocaust rests. I thus detect a fallacy in drawing too much attention to the avant-garde treatment of the Holocaust (as important as it is) as the sole intelligence behind our new critical understanding of the monument. I argue that the artistic avant-garde has to be connected to the broader trauma of modernity, for which it shares responsibility. Avant-gardism can only function as an interrogation of authenticity. I do agree with Young that the irresolution of the debate is essential to the new understanding of the monument, but I believe that the lack of resolution that he sees as characteristic of the contemporary monument has to be posited with a framework that envisions the possibility that the monument resolves itself, precisely, as something ambiguous. In other words, the concept of ambiguity can create a false opposition. Though this keeps the intellectual project going – and it is something that must indeed be preserved – one can never forget that this structure of "irresolution" is to spawn unpredictable political responses. One should accept the problem of ambiguity, if one is willing to accept the consequences.

⁴⁹ When the original synagogue was built, the very fact that the Jewish community was able to hire Semper to design the building was celebrated by Jews and non-Jews alike as an example of the integration of the Jews in the cultural life of Saxony. See Helmut Eschwege, *Die Synagoge in der deutschen Geschichte* (Wiesbaden: Fourier Verlag, 1980), p. 40; Heidrun Laudel, "Die Synagoge in Dresden – ein früher jüdischer Kultbau des 19. Jahrhunderts erbaut von Gottfried Semper," *Dresdner Hefte* 45 14/1 (1996).

⁵⁰ The synagogue is not the only modern building on the Elbe. Just to the north of the Semper's Opera House lies the new wing of the Sächsische Landtag (1991-4), by Peter Kulka. It is a black steel annex to an older building. In my opinion, given its program – and the fact that it is not well linked to the old core – this building does not belong to what one understands as the *Kulturmeile*.

⁵¹ By *Zerstörung*, Heidegger did not mean destruction as a negative force, but as a dismantling that would lay out the ground for the positive possibilities of tradition. The philosophy of negation that I am alluding to rejects even this supposedly positive formulation of *Zerstörung*.

⁵² The billboard is thus an excellent example of a heterotopia, namely as a place where, to use the words of Foucault, I can "discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there." Michel Foucault, "The Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16/1 (Spring 1986): 22-28.

⁵³ There is nothing about the building that today would draw attention to this fact. It is a luxury hotel.

⁵⁴ Henning Prinz, Ed., *Das Taschenbergpalais zu Dresden: Geschichte und Wiederaufbau der Sächsischen Thronfolgerresidenz* (Dresden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1998) p. 41.

⁵⁵ The panorama was designed by Hans Nadler (1879-1958). He studied art at the Königliche Kunstakademie Dresden. He specialized in sgraffito applied to facades of buildings.

⁵⁶ Anthony Clayton, "Dresden, 1919-1945," *Dresden, a City Reborn*, Edited by Anthony Clayton and Alan Russell, (Oxford: Berg 2000).

⁵⁷ *Dresden, a City Reborn*, p. 33. Clayton is a Senior Research Fellow at the Department for Historical and International Studies of De Montfort University (Bedford Campus). He has written extensively on British World War II military history.

⁵⁸ Kreis took over the role in 1908. In 1901 Kreis redesigned the famous Augustus Bridge that connects Dresden to the Neustadt

⁵⁹ Albert Speer, Preface to Hans Stephan, *Wilhelm Kreis* (Oldenburg: G. Stalling, 1944) p. 5.

⁶⁰ For an excellent study see Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). pp. 413-415. See also Günter Heidel, "Die Stadt der Hygiene. Historische Wurzeln und Hauptereignisse einer bedeutenden Dresdener Tradition," *Dresdener Hefte* 20/1 (1989): 21-27; "Die Dresdener Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung 1930-31 *Dresdener Hefte* 25 9/1 (1991): 35-44; Caris-Petra Heidel, "Zwischen Naturheilkunde und Rassenhygiene – Dresdner Medizin im Nationalsozialismus," *Dresdener Hefte* 35 11/3 (1993): 39-54. The building and institution were partially restored under the socialists. With reunification and a more complete revival of the institution, a competition was held for an addition. In July 1992, the jury, led by Karljosef Schattner, voted for the design by Coop Himmelblau. Lack of funding put the project on hold.

⁶¹ www.dhmd.de/ (April 20, 2000)

⁶² Hans Meyer, *Wilhelm Kreis. Architekt in dieser Zeit* (Essen: W. Classen, 1953) p. 31-32. For the list of works with missing Nazi-era projects see page 35.

⁶³ Heinz Quinger, *Dresden und Umgebung* (Cologne: DuMont, 1993), p. 101.

⁶⁴ *Verbrannt bis zur Unkennlichkeit* (Dresden: DZA, Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1994), pp. 153-159. For current rhetoric about this see for example, "Das Menschheitsverbrechen (abbc.com/nj/dresden.htm) April 20, 2000. This web-site is organized by the so-called *Kampfgemeinschaft gegen antideutsche Politik und für die Wiederherstellung der Menschenrechte in Deutschland!* (The fighting community against anti-German politics and for the restoration of human rights in Germany) which it explains is "in memory of the unatoned genocide of 15 million Germans: 1939-1946." It is part of a web site that specializes in anti-Jewish literature.

⁶⁵ Johann distinguished himself as a recognized Dante scholar. He was passionate about law. Even after Johann died, the Italian Renaissance remained the intellectual background of almost all artistic activity up till about 1880. Johann supported Austria against Prussia in the 7 Weeks War (1866). After Austria's defeat Johann then supported Bismarks' North Germany Confederation under the King of Prussia. This spelled the

political decline of Dresden. But economically, Dresden was in excellent shape.

⁶⁶ There are discussions of the role of communist resistance to the Nazi's, but there is only one paragraph dedicated to the whole of the communist movement in Dresden as compared to three that are dedicated to Olbricht. See pp 32-33. Thälmann is not mentioned anywhere in the book.

⁶⁷ See for example: *Beginn eines neuen Lebens; eine Auswahl von Erinnerungen an den Beginn des Neuaufbaus in Dresden im Mai 1945*. (publication Beiträge zur Geschichte der Dresdener Arbeiterbewegung Heft 7, 1960). The publications began in 1958.

⁶⁸ For more on this see: Mark Jarzombek, *The Psychologizing of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁶⁹ The rally was part of the neo-Nazi protest against the exhibition "War of Annihilation: Crimes of the Wehrmacht," which had already toured Hamburg, Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt to angry and often violent protests by neo-Nazis and extreme right-wingers. On Jan 22, 1998, a Dresden court surprised the nation by lifting the ban on a far-right rally that was being planned in Dresden. The Neo-Nazi party, (the NPD), the court claimed, was a political party as permitted under the constitution. The court, however, upheld a ban on a counter-demonstration that was also planned for the city center, but added that it could not prevent anti-rightist demonstrators rallying elsewhere in the city. On January 24, violence erupted between rival groups especially when the far-rightists boarded a train carrying left-wing sympathizers, with several people being slightly injured. The rally itself, however, under the guard of a massive police presence, passed off relatively peacefully. Police said there were around 1,000 NPD supporters, outnumbered both by police and the estimated 1,200 anti-right-wing demonstrators which were made up of groups from across the left-wing political scene. See "Die schlagen schneller zu," *Der Spiegel* (May 27, 1991) 78-85 for a general description of the growth of right-wing extremism; also Bernd Siegler, "Dresden - Hauptstadt der rechten Bewegung," *Tageszeitung* (Berlin: May 14, 1991): 12-13 for a thorough discussion of the situation in Dresden.

⁷⁰ I would like to affirm the relevance of the work of Linda Hutcheon. She argues that in the Postmodern, truth and reference have not been relativized out of existence, but have been problematized in such a way that the postmodern self-consciously foregrounds the idea of process. As opposed to the more Marxist perspective of Jean-François Lyotard, for example, she sees an inherently contradictory force in aesthetic production, one that has its own purpose and agenda. It discloses a contradictory dependence on and independence from that which temporarily preceded it and which literally made it possible. See Linda Hutcheon. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 18.

⁷¹ David D'Arcy, "Back to Dresden Exhibition" *The Art Newspaper* 86 (November 1998): 19. The USSR seized a great deal of work from the Soviet occupation zone of Germany;

some of the loot was returned to East German museums in the late 1950s, but much of it is still in Russia. There is an ongoing debate on the question of repatriation. For a sampling of the discussions see, for example: Akinsha, Konstantin. "Russia: Whose Art Is It?" *Art News* 91/5 (May 1992): 100+105; Akinsha, Konstantin and Grigori Kozlov, "Spoils of war: the Soviet Union's hidden art treasures," *Art News* 90/4 (April 1991): 130-141; H. Ganslmayr, "Study on the Principles, Conditions and Means for the Restitution of Cultural Property in View of Reconstituting Dispersed Heritages," *Museum (UNESCO Quarterly Review)*. Nr. 1 (1979).

⁷² "Wir dürfen nicht vergessen," *Der Spiegel* 24 (1998): 117.

⁷³ On July 30, 1977 Jurgen Ponto was shot and killed. Ponto served on the boards of 30 banks and companies in Germany and was the president of Germany's second largest bank, the Dresdner Bank. Ponto was seen as one of the five most important German businessmen at that time. He played a key role in representing Germany both at NATO and elsewhere in the international arena. It is possible that the Red Army Faction (RAF) intended to kidnap Ponto in the hope of releasing him in exchange for prisoners. The Red Army Faction, as it was known in English, became known on May 14, 1970, when Ulrike Meinhof led an armed unit to free Andreas Baader, then serving a prison sentence in connection with 2 firebombings carried out in April 1968. In its first manifesto, "The Concept Of The Urban Guerilla," a document steeped in the Marxism-Leninism of the day, the RAF stated that "We affirm that the organization of armed resistance groups in West Germany and West Berlin is correct, possible, and justified." In memory of Ponto, Frankfurt am Main named the square in front of the Dresdener Bank the Jurgen-Ponto-Platz.

⁷⁴ As Jean Baudrillard has stated, this melancholia of systems must become our fundamental passion. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor MI: 1994), p. 162

⁷⁵ If one sees melancholia as "arrested mourning" and potentially ascribes to it a hardening against the liberalizing tendencies of the process of "working through," one reconstructs polarities that leave violence always in the hands of "others." And while this is perhaps an inevitable consequence of the process of cultural reform, what I have been trying to argue is that in Dresden the location of the victimizers is not clearly established and that thus the process of working through *in historical time* is skewed because the events of the Holocaust must be addressed by definition of the State, whereas the "loss" of socialism is left to the raw world of politics itself. In other words, there is a space in which the Holocaust can be worked through, but no space for traumas which have not been given an "official" sanction by society. For example, it is easier to deal with the issues around AIDS today than fifteen years ago. Working through, in some sense, is a public event. All other "working throughs" are left to the private sphere that exists, for example, between you and your psychoanalyst.

⁷⁶ As Dominick LaCapra explains, "If a special status were to be claimed for melancholy

as a mode of subjectivity, this claim would be sociocultural and would have to be investigated and substantiated not in seemingly universalistic but in differentiated historical terms." See: Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss" *Critical Inquiry*, 25/2 (Summer, 1999): 719. I hope that I have begun to give an example of just such a case.

⁷⁷ Maier also prefers to see melancholy not as a psychoanalytical problem, but as a philosophical and quasi-poetic existential attitude. See: Charles S. Maier, "A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial," *History and Memory* (Fall/Winter 1993): 143.

⁷⁸ As quoted in Rudolphe Gashé, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986) p. 88. See Werner Flach, *Negation und Andersheit: Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der Letztimplikation*. (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 1959).

⁷⁹ A work of note in regard to the Russian attempt to reestablish contact with the contested notion of everyday is Svetlana Boym, *Common Places, Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁸⁰ Using Debord in this respect raises a number of problems for which there is not enough room in the text. I take from the Situationists the need for confrontation and even tactics of revenge, but I do not believe that this attitude either requires or even yields the necessary "authenticity" required for a true revision of society. Thus my more pessimistic Baudrillardian montage. Unlike Debord, and later neo-Situationists (and I would include Rem Koolhaas), I do not see the city as an a priori absence of meaning. The city as it exists is a dialectic proposition and thus remains the locus of philosophical speculation. It is both empty of meaning and yet completely filled with it. This implies that any proposition that sees the city as an absolute negative falls into the false consciousness of Ego and authenticity. If one sees the city as also filled with a type of meaning that obliterates Ego – thus obliterating intentionality – one can come to the city with a greater respect for its accomplishments and for the traumas that constitute its cognitive base. But by accomplishments I mean then not the positive, but the devious. In other words, one has to create an inside-outside relationship to the city.

The Situationists fought against totalitarianism, real and imagined, of rational modern society and its pseudo-neutrality. They would have abhorred Postmodernism. But today, a Situationist-styled argument has to admit that power at the national and international level exploits postmodernism to its advantage, and this changes the very premise of authenticity by finally making it obsolete. This does not mean that art or architecture is impoverished. Both can be pursued at a critical level without the presence of the synthesizing Ego.

⁸¹ In opposition to the Hegelian concept of integration of the social totality, Marx and Freud take up the notion of historical unity in order to find in it the superficial union of opposing forces. The socio-political criticism of the idea of unity has as its

privileged literary form, the historical novel.

⁸² History, as presumed in the bourgeois world, does not think that it needs much in the way of this (from its perspective, "cynical") reflection and it thus forces aesthetic practices to require of themselves a heavy dose of self-objectification. Once identified "as art," – something that can be bought and placed – architecture ceases to be urban.

⁸³ By the word "postmodernism," once again, I do not refer to the lamentable "failure" of semantic clarity. Nor do I refer to the cynically open-ended scheme of our Western ideology of "tolerance." Rather I want to highlight the system of exchanges and mis-exchanges of semantic clarity between politics and architecture. Postmodernism is, in that sense, a positive. It obliterates the hard division of power and resistance. In that sense postmodernism has the ethical obligation to problematize the much valued narratives of the Marxists and of the avant-gardists. Both politics and art fall under the basic rules of this game. This does not mean that the historian has to give up the principle of objectivity, or the premise of critical action. But it does mean that just as objectivity has to remain both grounded and ungrounded, the historian has to accept a degree of ambiguity between what he or she does as "an historian" and the multiple locations of "history" in contemporary politics. The synagogue project in Dresden, trapped in a similar in-between space, becomes the perfect metaphor for this problem. A final figure of importance in this respect is Hans Gadamer, who in studying Plato in *Wahrheit und Methode* elaborates on the priorities of the question over the answer. In this he critiques Hegel's notion of the dialectic that suppress the open-endedness of thinking. I end with Adorno, however, because I feel that the idea of a negative dialectic, more accurately frames the paradox of on the one hand wanting to express something without being able to and, on the other hand, of being able to express something without wanting to. His work reconstitutes the fragility of philosophical speculation, and by extension the fragility of historical speculation.