

THE JEWISH WALL: THE EISENMAN EMPIRE

A B S T R A C T

In this article author is arguing that architecture, like all other aesthetic disciplines, has for long been pointing to the original problem: the sense of form. The form is seen as the multiplicity of expressive language that comes from particular kind of knowledge. Regarding this architecture is seen as work of realization; the cognition of knowledge and that the form is representation, the sense is the essence.

Author is also arguing that the greater variable, although not the only one, among the four factors concerns the right to knowledge. The greater or smaller its extension and profoundness, the greater or smaller our ability to slide along the essential line of the slope. Or, towards the “contents of the truth of one work”, if we wish to use the same words of Walter Benjamin. But the hypothesis, although it has to be demonstrated yet, imposes the logic of thoughts, which should be added to the aesthetics of thoughts: the gift of compilation, the image of the unity of the entirety. In several parts of this paper, through the questions of the theological, the scene of thought, interpretation on representation and contemplation, ideas, concepts and phenomenon, author will discuss on possible interpretations of work of Pieter Eisenman.

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KEY WORDS

TÊLOS

ICONOLOGY

EPISTEMOLOGICAL PREMISE

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INTERPRETATION

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THE GREEK-CHRISTIAN PARADIGM

PREMISE

THE QUESTION OF THE *THEO*-LOGICAL

Architecture, like all other aesthetic disciplines, has for long been pointing to the original problem: the sense of form. An epistemological binomial in connection with another couple of notions equally fundamental: knowledge and work. Hence the equation: the sense relates to form same as knowledge relates to work. The work is a given thing in the entirety of its completed and effective reality. Cognition is the amplitude or the latitude of our knowledge in respect to the work. The form is the multiplicity of expressive language that comes from that knowledge. The sense is the metaphysical-theological unity, the maximum *aesthetic* density,¹ the plastic-generative power of knowledge. In synthesis: the work is realization; the cognition is knowledge; the form is representation; the sense is the essence. Overall, that is: Architecture.

Naturally, the greater variable, although not the only one, among the four factors concerns the right to knowledge. The greater or smaller its extension and profoundness, the greater or smaller our ability to slide along the essential line of the slope. Or, towards the “contents of the truth of one work”, if we wish to use the same words of W. Benjamin².

From this viewpoint the work of Peter Eisenman is absolutely emblematic. The perfect cryptogram for decoding challenges of our mind, same as the magic cube challenges our ability: its infinite combinations do not depend that much on Cartesian mechanics as much as on hermetic and hermeneutic sophisticated topology. One, but not quite an accidental enigma of a cube. Elevation to the third potential indicates a vector of difficulties, however, also the degree of protection or the level of sense concealment. The first level, actually, the most extensive as per diffusion and affirmation, belongs to the contemporary criticism with its dominant interpretation model of analytical-descriptive type. The second level belongs to the *theoretical* device of the author. The third level belongs to the underground relationship and contribution of the Jewish culture.

The more it climbs up, or the more it drowns, the more it passes from the real towards the essential³. Prophecy? Prediction? Presumption? Maybe! But the hypothesis, although it has to be demonstrated yet, imposes the logic of thoughts, which should be added to the aesthetics of thoughts: the gift of compilation, the image of the unity of the entirety. The silent sphere of Eisenman’s work appears therefore suspended in front of the ridge of enigmas:

criticism, cognition, culture. The work and enigma, aesthetics and knowledge, as “metaphysical” personifications in Magritte⁴, are reflected immobile in order to carefully scrutinize their only invisible face: the mystery of sense.

Logics and analysis, aesthetics and contemplation, are therefore the tracks of thoughts which have opposite directions and diverse paths, however, thereafter converge towards a unique point where the “echo of the original can be awakened”⁵. That is the summit, which for Benjamin is just barely a touched connection between the authenticity of the work and the critical thought, where the fidelity of thought and the freedom of its interpretation coincide according to the unique law. It is a *magic* relationship as per the breadth, precision, sensitivity, which Berlin philosopher translated into efficient geometrical image of the tangent (the interpretation) and the circumference (the original)⁶. Between the monad of the work (the circumference) and the infinite orbit of the thought (the tangent line) only for a moment there sparks the scintilla of the thought. In the nebulous encounter the fatigue and the hope of interpretative engagement are condensed and burn out.

In summary, there are two basic principles that the thought lasts in the function of the sense: that logical-analytical (the freedom) and that *aesthetic*-contemplative (fidelity, if it is not the law). Neither is the other’s alternative, however, they complement each other reciprocally. Each of them should respond in an autonomous and coherent manner to three-phased Eisenman’s enigma (criticism-work-culture) while using also their own and specific instruments. The logics by means of *philosophy*; aesthetics by means of *symbol*.

Since *tèlos* of the work is the convergence of all goals in the *unity* of principles, if *archi* of the sense were to implode also the presupposition and the necessity of the initial demand would implode. Which is impossible since the logics itself cannot endanger the *aesthetics*. Therefore, to avoid the contradiction directly with logics it is necessary to separate a priori that previous ontological and epistemological condition capable of uniting together all other planes currently divided: philosophical, symbolic and formal ones. This common horizon constitutes that which we provisionally denominate as the *theological* plane.

The demonstration of the thesis on the *sense* of the form within the *theological*, however, as already mentioned in the first indication, uses the critical thought of Walter Benjamin. For at least two reasons. The first one, due to intellectual affinity: the common root of the Hebrew culture of the German philosopher and the American architect. The second one, due to *theoretical* affinity: the

undisputed innovative role by now acquired from their works in contemporary culture within two close and complementary disciplines of art criticism and the criticism of architecture.

But in order to pull taut the arc of Eisenman's work with the cord of Benjamin's thought, we have immediately to put aside, for better security, two short scripts of the exiled Jewish intellectual: *Theological-political fragments* from 1921⁷ and *Experience and Poverty* from 1933⁸. Two robust *theoretical* threads: one aesthetic, the other one ethical.

However, in order to proceed, first we have to clarify the list of principal configurations of the thought, then their correct disposition on the scene of knowledge and finally the interpretations of the sequence of thoughts:

The list of principal configurations of the thought.

The horizon: *theological* order of work.

The sight: the *sense* of the form of the work.

The means: the interpretation of the thought:

the arc: Eisenman's thought.

the cord: Benjamin's thought.

the sight: logical-contemplative thought.

the arrows: logical vector, *symbolical vector*.

THE SCENE OF THOUGHT

The particularity of the sight, first of all, lies in being positioned *between* the horizon and the aiming point. That is, the sense of the form in its essence is on the sight – and admired – from two extreme positions, from two opposed and diverse orders⁹: from the indomitable *theological* and from the evincible profane. From the order of profane the logic vector is started; from the order of *theological* - the *symbolic* vector. The vectors have natural specificities and opposite directions but they converge towards the same target. Only in their perfect contact the image of sense can be incited. Therefore, the sight does not have only one face – the one simply turned towards us and our knowledge, but also possesses that apparently hidden and invisible revolt towards revealing-contemplation. From two-dimensional towards three-dimensional, the horizon is just because of that *spherical*. The *sense*, thus, reveals the plasticity of the spiritual abstractness in the formality of the work. Their blending permits unfolding of the *contents*, the “internal form”¹⁰, actually the matrix of the *contents* of the external form. Namely, of the presupposition of that area.

The sequence of interpretation of the thought: prologue, dialogue, epilogue.

- A. Prologue was given to the critical-philosophical thought of Walter Benjamin; the language plot was set and the constellation of the *theological-metaphysical* profane area.
- B. Dialogue was conducted through operative figures of critical-*theoretical* thought of the architect Peter Eisenman.
- C. Epilogue was devoted to the sense of Eisenman's work resulting from overlapping and self-reflection between the dialogue and prologue.

A - PROLOGUE

BENJAMIN: ICONOLOGY OF LINKS

There is no other possible and plausible condition but to depart from the initial binominals: sense-form; knowledge-work, analyzing particularly the significance of *interpretation*, to frame attentively the primary standpoint of our view as regards the *work*.

INTERPRETATION-REPRESENTATION-CONTEMPLATION

In the postulate of Goethe's essay *Elective Affinities*, Benjamin clarifies from the very beginning the difference of the meaning contained in the notion *interpretations* by comparing two only seemingly close words: the critique and comment. The first word searches for "contents of the truth", it is contemplative; the second one searches for "its real contents"¹¹, it is descriptive. But between these two words "that fundamental law" has been instituted, so that, the greater "the contents of the truth of one work, the closer and more invisibly it is linked to its real contents"¹². Naturally, the real contents remain on the surface in respect to the profound stratification of the contents of the truth. For that reason the critic is like a "paleographer in front of the parchment whose text has faded¹³ and is covered with the signs of yet more powerful script"¹⁴, (the perfect predicament of Eisenman's work). But before the flare of the "burning story"¹⁵ the interpreter masks himself. The commentator wears the mask of the "chemist"; and the critic the mask of the "alchemist". "The chemist searches for the elements of the combustion. The alchemist, for the secret of the flame still burning"¹⁶. It is clear that the chemist has undermined the alchemist, the *meaning of the sense*, and the science the *theology*. And thus "not presence, but the *sense*¹⁷ of the real elements in the work, almost always remains concealed. But since the eternal nucleus of the work emerges from their frameworks, each contemporary critique, no matter at which high level it might be, gathers in

itself more moving truth than immobile one, as well as more temporary effect than the eternal being”¹⁸.

The critical interpretation should address within the frame of the *veritable*. It must know to progress in the profound layers of the *sense* fixed in the appearance of the *real* in order to at least find the moving truth of the eternal nucleus of the work, in that place where the indestructible presupposition of the form dwells, the reign of the “absolute sovereignty of the relations”¹⁹.

Critical interpretation can only be followed by the representation. Each one complements the other, like the elements of the ladder. The representation corresponds to the parallel supporting poles; and the interpretation to the ledges. In their assembling the vertical continuity of the supporting poles and horizontal discontinuity of the ledges form the steps, along which, and only in this way, the knowledge may stream guaranteeing proper reinstatement of thoughts. Also, by evoking the Biblical image in the Genesis 28,12, if the borders of the ladder, its points of support would be positioned within the reign of the truth and the empire of the real then we could also be able to imagine that the supporting poles descend from the paternal sky and that terrestrial mothers climb up these ledges. The metaphor of the ladder, besides visual representation of the overall principle of the continuity of the *aesthetics* and the discontinuity of the logical, shows the unity of relations and hierarchy of knowledge, or the medium and of that still incomplete which belongs to the part between the *theological* unity and the historical multiplicity.

In the *epistemological premise in the German baroque Drama*²⁰ the problem of representation, as a presumption of the philosophical doctrine of idea, recognizes this dual movement within the knowledge: of the truth and the things. The difference between the poles, between the veritable and the scientific knowledge, results just like enormous in the logics itself. The contemplative way presupposes the unity and can advance only in the perceptible, in the *aesthetic*. The analytical way presupposes the multiplicity and may advance only according to the sum of concepts. It is derived from it that the truth may be expressed only by the way of representation; whereas knowledge may be expressed only by presentation²¹. The particularity of the representational method, therefore, is to be in an “indirect way” neither linear nor sequential, but always original. Each time it “resumes continuously from the beginning, returns with full attention to the same thing. This methodical and rhythmical movement of the respiration is to be a special way of contemplation”²². Just like that undemonstrative-inviolable-invisible even though it appears in percentage

partial and reduced to the perceptible semblance. As a consequence at the end of the representation we find an idea; and at the end of the concept, we have phenomenon. However, beyond any logics of discourse the “representation should find its *own* redemption”²³ in the image of the work (the sense of form), in full expressive maturity between the *theological* form and profane.

IDEA - CONCEPT - PHENOMENON

One should not, however, forget the initial question in respect to the dual binominal: sense-knowledge, form-work. For Benjamin the only offered possibility of plausible research coincides with maximum aperture of the view (thought) of «all range of the theme». For at least two reasons.

- A. in order to magnify the spectrum of knowledge.
- B. in order to “first let the hypothesis guide: which appears diffuse and heterogeneously may offer, in the light of corresponding concepts, the elements for synthesis”²⁴.

In this lies previously announced philosophical doctrine of Benjamin’s ideas. The idea-concept-phenomenon triad already reveals the elements, limitations and syntax between the extremes. The unity of the idea, on one part, and the multiplicity of the phenomenon, on the other part. The concept thus has a “mediating function”²⁵ in realization of the connection between the idea and the phenomenon. Its task is to extrapolate the value of the elements put in light of the empirical facts with maximum precision. To remind: it works in an analytical manner. Therefore, the phenomena “determine, for existence, commonalities and differences, the scope and contents of the concepts which adopt them”²⁶. Or, all together, belongs to the variety and transience of the world of facts. On the extreme opposite side, however, there lies the universal idea²⁷. Enlightening only in the contemplative way, and by that free from all analytical and “intuitive”²⁸ types, “the idea can be defined by configuration of the link that the unique and extreme possess that which is similar to them”²⁹. There, thus, exists an intimate and unbreakable similarity between the idea and the phenomenon which passes through the filter of the concept. The phenomena, therefore, are saved from the collapse of transience just by virtue of the representation of the idea. They, the ideas, are “the eternal constellations”³⁰. In fact, “the ideas relate to the things same like the constellations relate to the stars”³¹.

But that which should be emphasized most evidently and which is sensed as the rumble of the underground wave actually concerns the syntax of the present

limitations in the triad. For Benjamin the knowledge which *forms* the work of art reaches you in two completely diverse and opposed ways, although amalgamated and convergent. That logical-analytical which relates to the scientific knowledge reaches through the cumulative progress of the concept, and that epistemological-contemplative which relates to philosophy, reaches through the representation of the ideas “in the medium of the empirical”³². Therefore, the unity of knowledge expands as far as the search of the most remote and the most secluded fringes of extremes. And that is exactly the factor of the amplitude of knowledge which should pass through the coefficient of unity-density-brightness of the thought. With an unexpected reversal, first of all because of our contemporary culture: only that aesthetically *theologically* oriented can legitimize the logical, and not the contrary.

Therefore, let us provisionally try to summarize some considerations.

- A. the metaphysical is consubstantial to the physical, the very essence of the *real*.
- B. the *aesthetic* is the indispensable ontological plane for each thing, each work.
- C. the formal and *theoretical* elaboration has submerged any “rigorous thought”³³.

However, we still have to remain within the idea of *divine* (the infinite and immaterial) and continue with Benjamin’s logical-*theoretical* perspective.

TRUTH-ORIGIN-CREATION

In view of the ideas being non-cognizable by logical-analytical way but perceivable by the aesthetical way, by nature of things they belong to the domain of truth, being itself non-cognizable in itself. In fact:

- A. “The truth never enters into relationship, and even less in the intentional relationship”.
- B. “The object of knowledge, which is determined in conceptual intention, is not the truth. The truth is the unintentional being formed from the idea”.
- C. “The structure of the truth, therefore requires one being, which, by its strange intention, resembles that pure and simple in things, but consistently surpasses it”.
- D. “The truth does not consist of the intention which it would find in its empirical determination, but it is the potency which shapes the essence of the empirical”³⁴.

So, if within the truth, the way it appears in Benjamin's sequence, there is the culmination of the sense, even if for a moment the sense remains blurred in the vague and indefinite aura, that which needs to be comprehended relates to the expressive modality of ideas in their relations within the truth. For Benjamin this modality is "the name": the only "being protected against any phenomenality, the only being to which such power belongs. It determines the expression of ideas. But they are not expressed as much in the original language, as in the original perception, in which the words would not lose their denotative aura in favor of cognitive significance"³⁵. So, the words (but already before the first letters of the alphabet, as we will see, and we are already in the temple of the Jewish culture) are the original matrices of the combinatorial expression of ideas. That means that it makes the passage of the unintentional *power of the truth* possible as far as the *aesthetical*. In fact, "idea is something linguistic, more precise: something which in the essence of the work coincides with that moment for which the word is a *symbol*"³⁶. Let us repeat that in order to make a concept: the word is actually the first original link of the predicament derived from the magic contact between the power-and-*aesthetical*. And just "by means of the representation the words symbolic character adds the idea of self-transparency"³⁷, namely the exhibition to our intellect. Therefrom and further on, the iconological chain of connections traverses from idea of the image to the form restituting the totality to the intellectual and phenomenal world. Something analogous to the idea of "platonic salvation"³⁸.

But what must be understood now regards first of all the scope and structure of the *symbol* in Benjamin. First, it is about the "theological competence" and "allows it to penetrate all forms of art in depth"³⁹. It possesses four principal requirements: "the momentary, the total, the inscrutable, the necessary", to which "clarity and brevity"⁴⁰ must be added. In other words, the symbol is:

- A. *anticipation* or pre-vision;
- B. *concentration*, the capacity to comprehend from the glimmer the whole from the beginning;
- C. *condition*, the background of the origin of the images and their meaning ;
- D. *action* of the meaning;
- E. *representation* of the meaning
- F. *attribution* of the meaning.

Therefore, *symbol has nothing* static or sclerotic, not even sentimental or romantic, being first of all an active principle which renews the original Biblical *fiat* into the infinite aesthetic *fiat*. Precisely because of its "magic affinity" between the incommensurables, between the "infinite" real and "immediacy"⁴¹

of the perceptible, just because of its inner capacity to “be the momentary totality”⁴² it is attributed to the *theological* frame. The notion which, however, requires immediate, although not the provisional clarification. In fact, the *theological* should not be considered here in the historiographical sense of revealing the tradition. Instead, it indicates to the supreme and sovereign level to which an indivisible and inviolable plane of the *aesthetic* corresponds, the unconditional appearance, the reign of the connections and all relationships (purely perceptible). For that reason since the very beginning we have used the formula “*theological*” – the way it appears – in order to recall in the word the evocative meaning preserved in the Greek root (*theòs-theoi*) indicating to all those inherent meanings contained in *perception and seeing the original*.

There is no other alternative for understanding the world. For Benjamin the course of the actual history cannot be separated from the authentic reflection on the idea of truth, hence the consequence is the analogous and parallel theme of the *origin*. The dialectics of the opposites between the actual history and the actuality of the origin in order to be deployed in its full efficiency must traverse through all stages constituting the real – the spiritual: unity-multiplicity; idea-phenomenon; contemplation-domination, etc. The plurality of things can be preserved only in recognizing the constellations of ideas through contribution form the description of reality, and the existence of ideas, through symbolic characters of the words, finds the possibility of its own transparency. Since “philosophy cannot pretend to talk in the tone of revelation” but rather “through reminiscence which goes back first of all to the original perception”⁴³, only like that “in philosophical contemplation the idea is liberated like the word from the most intimate nucleus of reality (...) to claim back its right to nominate”⁴⁴. We find ourselves precisely in front of “Adam’s” dimension, in the first Book of Genesis, the Jewish *Bereshit*, in which it was stated “the state of Paradise is still unengaged to struggle with the informative significance of words”. “Thus philosophy (...) is rightfully, throughout history, the struggle for representation of certain words, always the same ones: ideas⁴⁵”. Thus “the philosophical history as the science of *origin* is the form, which from the remotes extremes (...) finds the configuration of the idea as a marked totality of coexistence of those opposites”⁴⁶.

To insist on the origin is equal to subtracting the notion from the beginning of each initial static concept and thereby also the thought reflected from the superficial and hasty conclusions. Therefore, let us return to the sequence of Benjamin’s points of this semantic scale.

A. “origin is an entirely historical category”;

- B. “it has nothing in common with the origin (genesis)”;
- C. “in origin it is not intended to become that which flows, but that which becomes from flowing and passing”;
- D. “origin lies in the transience of being as the vortex and drags in its rhythm the material of its own origin (birth)”;
- E. “in the factual original it never allows to be recognized and its rhythm only opens up with dual vision: between restoration-renovation and imperfect-incomplete”;
- F. “in each original phenomenon the form is determined in which idea continues to confront the historical world, as long as there, it has been completed, in all of its history”;
- G. “origin does not emerge from the facts although it concerns their prehistory and the successive history”;
- H. “in each essential process of the unity and repetition condition each other”;
- I. “authentic is the property of the origin of phenomenon, and it is the subject of the finding which coincides with the act of recognition”.

While the historical category is confirmed the origin oscillates between the *theological* dimension of the ideas and the profane dimensions of phenomenon, between the revelation and redemption, so that it is the ontological content. Then subtracted from each illusory fixity the origin permeates constantly *saeculum*, the Jewish *l’ôLaM*: that longest time although assigned to elaboration and realization of the *Project* of the Semitic *Elohim*⁴⁷. The concept of origin, however, cannot remain isolated and autonomous as if it were an ontological category in its own right, but must be placed in the visual cone of another condition, anterior or posterior at the same time, between the presupposition and the end, which knows how to contain it, support it, perpetuate and illuminate it.

We cannot forget, right now, the general configuration of Benjamin’s thoughts. The *real*, that which we consider the concrete-factual world, is the set of all infinite gradations between “the spiritual being and the linguistic being”⁴⁸. Namely, the *real* is the set of all expressive planes of the *aesthetic*, the entire range of links that connect the ends: the scope of *theological*, the scope of phenomenal. “The language reality (...) extends (...) to all (...) without an exception. There is no event or thing in animate or inanimate nature (...) which does not (...) communicate its own spiritual contents”⁴⁹. *Expression* and *expressive* are also valid, and mainly, for all man’s work, when they are exactly such. However, “equalization” between the spiritual being and the

linguistic being is “metaphysically so important” to conduct “spontaneously” the “concert of revelation”⁵⁰. The concert which we learn about only through *linguist creation*. But in the *revelation-linguistic creation* binominal *there* is a triple law:

- A. the *revelation* «does not know the inexpressible»⁵¹;
- B. the *linguistic creation* lives in the “contrast between the expressed and expressible, between unexpressed and inexpressible”⁵²;
- C. the *language* is “the creative medium”, the “creative force”⁵³.

“Language is that which *creates* (...) that which *achieves*”⁵⁴. For those reasons the Bible, particularly in the Book of Genesis (*Bereshit*), becomes practically “irreplaceable”⁵⁵ for Benjamin, not as a paradigm of the truth revealed, but as its intimate and profound relationship with the *word* “in its inexplicable and mysterious denouement”⁵⁶. In fact, when language loses “its divine actuality (...) it becomes knowledge”⁵⁷, when it loses the “immediacy of the name, it falls down into abyss of mediation, empty word”⁵⁸.

The *creation*, as the projected act of the *divine* precedes and includes all original conditions and evolution with an aim to act as cosmic heartbeat: in the denouement of the origination of the language and in fatigued preservation and renovation of the pure, magical nucleus, the word itself, the letter revealed. That is, the *creation* (in TaNaK) works *theologically* through dual register: between the evidence of the “communicable” and the non-evidence of the “non-communicable”; between that which “symbolizes and the symbolized”⁵⁹.

Let us make a summary for further clarification of the sequence of Benjamin’s points⁶⁰:

- A. “spiritual being of man and things is the language”;
- B. “in the language there happened the creation”;
- C. “the creation took place in the verb”;
- D. “the verb is the linguistic essence of God” (YHWH - *Elohim*);
- E. “each human language is only reflected in the name of the verb”;
- F. “the name is reduction of the verb same as knowledge is the reduction of creation”.

Now, if our thought would be allowed only for a moment, in a hypothetical flash of mind to be able to follow the movement of the principle of *creation of the theological order* towards the *aesthetical order*, or if it would really be possible for our *nous* to grasp the point of passage “from the true to the apparent”⁶¹, we could see or recognize in the principle of creation four plastic

properties at minimum which innervate the work:

1. The work as “given shape”,
2. The work as “expressionless”,
3. The work as “the relief form”,
4. The work as “morality”.

“Maybe (...) all works of art have in themselves some way of creation as their contents”⁶². In fact, in the appendix to Goethe’s *Elective Affinity*, Benjamin repeats with care that “creation is one of the most powerful themes in art”⁶³, although the work of art cannot be “created” actually as “something given shape to” and, although the relationship between these two cannot follow trivially the “model of cause and effect”. In *creation* it is implied “a priori metaphysical of salvation” whereas in the “shaped” linguistic forms the work of art appears mostly as the representation of that salvation. However, “an entire class of forms could be indicated (...) which deals with *creation* and in which the theme of creation emerges to light after having been subjected to the variation of intuition. Maybe these will differentiate due to the presence of a particular dimension of *expressionless* in them (...). The form (of these) works, whose theme is *creation*, can be defined as *relief form*. It concerns the forms that apparently contain a lot of shade and lots of disarray, like the interior of cable, embossed and hammered with certain relief metal works”⁶⁴. This extraordinary description of Benjamin’s which pushes us towards recognition of the ultimate property of work: when the relationship between creation and modification, between the essence and the perception of essence, between the life and existence, indicates to that “point of detachment” which is a pure “moral act”⁶⁵. And it is just “the morality (*theological*) of creation which gives the work the mark of *expressionless*”⁶⁶. Thus the principle (the project) in *creation* (in Genesis) incorporates in it the role of moral ontology of the aesthetic. But the *expressionless* must not mislead us. It is not dull, matt, neutral language which ensues from profane frame of the work. Exactly the opposite: it is prime, vigorous, rigorous, precise, bright language which belongs to the *theological* frame of the work. “In expressionless is shown the sublime power of the truthful (of the unintentional truth), same as it is determined, in accordance with the laws of the moral world (of the *theological* relation) the symbolism of the existing world. (...) Expressionless, actually, (...) leads towards completion of the work, reducing it to one piece, in a downwards totality of appearance, which is a gross fragment of the real world, the fragment of a symbol”⁶⁷. Anew and surprisingly there surfaces again the *symbolic*, the vital link of the work which flows incessantly between the “inhibition” of the truth and “tremor”⁶⁸ of the beauty, between self-denial of the subjectivity and self-transparency of the image in the work.

The sketch of the constellation of Benjamin's thought delineates the new background of the knowledge on which now Eisenman's work will be projected. The importance of such epistemological background should not be underestimated: it meets not only the primary epistemological needs but maybe, the simplest one, the need for clarity. It could not exist, in fact, either a thought or the knowledge *tout court*, implicit in absoluteness and shared in universality. To distinguish and relate critical-interpretative *thought* to referential and appertaining *knowledge* is the equivalent for subtracting two notions, not the synonyms, from their general indetermination. It signifies recognition of movement of the thoughts own freedom in respect to the universe of knowledge in the mass of its own law. That which does not happen within the *aesthetic*. In Architecture, the determining plane of which is the *aesthetic*, we are immersed in the midst of epistemological paradox: a part of the phenomenal exceeds the entire metaphysics. In fact, technical-socio-scientific knowledge is a dominant *paradigm* (in the discipline like contemporary critique) even if it is a derivative (a part of all that) *theo-onto-metaphysical* knowledge.

No matter how much analogy still resounds suddenly between the *theological* language of the Berlin philosopher and the *formal* language of the New York architect, notwithstanding this statement there precedes a little demonstration. And since language corresponds to the *unity* of the impassable bottom, the so-called original Benjamin's – theoretical and aesthetic – preoccupation bounces in it: to value the *unity* of the work of art in the *unity* of knowledge. Namely, that is measuring the maximum density of work in maximum extension and depth of knowledge⁶⁹. The same preoccupation is now valid for Eisenman's work. The work, therefore, is no longer isolated in the indefinable abstract and autonomous entity, but reflects epistemological–*theological* in the horizon. It is just from the progressive overlap and pressure between the force of Eisenman's work and the power of Benjamin's horizon that it emerges in progressively more sharp stratified and changeable profile of the sense: the figurative flow of *idea*. But, if the results of our *critical interpretation* can be appreciated or judged, as already mentioned, only in the end, also the beginning feels the impact of this same beneficial effect owing to the rays of the anticipated perception which attracts our mind and gradually cleanses the protective obscurity of the sense showing the tracks to be explored.

Critical interpretative thinking has thus been moved from the dynamic principle, the unity-relation binominal applied at diverse hierarchical levels: from *theological* to phenomenal, from representative to conceptual, from symbolic to abstract, towards the iconography of Benjamin's links.

B - DIALOGUE

EISENMAN: ICONOLOGY OF WORDS

The walled-up word: I° interpretative level

*The end of the Classical*⁷⁰, Eisenman's essay published in 1984, can be taken as a *theoretical* emblem of his entire work. Written, intended and proposed as the minimal linguistic unity in respect to the maximum semantics unity, condenses in its pages the overall projection of Eisenman's work to expand it further with metaphysical backstroke in the orbit of epistemological-*theological* horizon. The *particular* force of the essay lies precisely in the modality of construction of the text by using two absolutely distinct linguistic registers: the first evident one, logical-abstract; the other non-evident, *theo*-logical-hieroglyphic. The first one, the historical-analytical, works on the plane of the reinforced chronological temporality with the exceptional sensibility of logical-abstract. The other one, the profound hieroglyphic (see epilogue) operates instead in the substrate of that same plane, through *symbolic* temporality and latent *theological* sensibility.

We are therefore obliged to proceed in two stages never forgetting Eisenman's distinct appearance: his dual and innate ability of simulation and dissimulation by means of language. To blind from a flash in respect to how much it must remain secret and walled-up in the original *word*.

The word halved: II° interpretative level

For Eisenman the three big *fictions*⁷¹ which characterize the overall development of the *classical and modern* architecture are:

- *Representation* as an idea of *Meaning*,
- *Reason* as the idea of *Truth*,
- *History* as the idea of the *Eternal*.

They cannot be considered to be valid any longer given that in the meantime they have modified so radically the foundations of the contemporary knowledge. Accordingly for that reason any epistemological presupposition was lacking, and thereby the *absolute* ones, out of which those same words were derived.

In response to this *classical* model, ineffective and outdated but still prevailing and universal, Eisenman proposes in fact⁷² one alternative *non-classical* model. The idea about *presence* is substituted with the idea of *absence*; the

architecture of the *image* he opposes to the architecture of *writing*⁷³, of *text*⁷⁴. One *post-scriptum* definitely closes the essay *The End of the Classical* same as the large tombstone bars the tomb. In the letters of epigraphs it is reflected only that which must or should still survive in the discipline:

- The architecture *without time*, without origin and purpose;
- *non-representative* architecture, without object;
- *artificial-arbitrary* architecture, deprived of reason.

Eisenman's text although presented superficially in its apparent and finite clarity sinks into the impenetrable obscurity as soon as one starts examining it with more attention. The difficulties in interpretation then multiply to the point where they are transformed in the real inextricable barrier if the text is placed in relation to his entire critical/projected work.

Which meaning should we then attribute to architecture invoked as *artificial*, *arbitrary* or *non-representative* if already the contemporary knowledge (and thereby also architecture) suffocates and gasps in the dissolve and insignificant magma of our time? Are we not in the West for many years in the middle of nihilistic fractioning and dissolution due to its ontological a-aesthetic, a-metaphysical, a-temporal categories? And even if that were not so for what reason would instead Eisenman keep on writing and re-writing hundreds and hundreds of pages (which is an exception in the history of architecture if canonic tracts are excluded) to explain (and fold) in a *judicial* manner such detailed and minutely detailed each of his gestures or projected action enough to wish to remove (his) architecture from any possible *arbitrary* interpretation? Paradoxically, then sealing the arbitrariness in the cage of iron rationality? Are we then faced with the blatant contradiction, with a logical paradox, with semantic confusion, or simply with auto-referential style? Or maybe we still do not have a slightest interpretation code?

Among the many causes that contribute to determining these difficulties in interpretation, for now, we can single out at least two. The first one relates to the language of *words*. The second relates to the language of *form*, being architecture, just because of the expressed Eisenman's wish, *writing*. Both in the first and the second case, meaning, the contents of *words* and the *form*, the two typologies of writing or two grammars of the same language, join us halved by rational wish. In fact, as the words and the forms both alike come, for a moment, from the unique and identical field: profane-phenomenal, experimental-cumulative analytical knowledge of the concepts.

We are exactly in the center of gravity of Benjamin's *concept*. Although we have understood, right from the Berlin philosopher, that the contents of the *concept* cannot reach in any way the veritable knowledge of the work of art, since the *concept* as per its nature is only part of that knowledge. Concept is a *medium*: one "tra" (or *between* in English or *zwischen* in German) of the phenomenal world and the *theological* world. The *word*, thus, be it imagined, pronounced, written or drawn, does not enable us to comprehend and does not reveal its veritable nucleus if it joins halved. The absence of that presence (missing of that half), or the absence of the *theological* field in profane deprives the *word* of its own authentic contents – *the sense* – forcing it to wander silent, lonely, confused, in the infinite number of meanings and interpretations.

Therefore if the synecdoche of *The End of Classical*, and the more so the entire work of Eisenman, is read in its isolation, separated from epistemological field, it cannot do anything else but simulate and conceal at the same time. To pretend to be saying that I would conceal and not to stun the *sense* into silence. We can be repelled or attracted by this phenomenal construction (*fiction*) of Eisenman's architecture, same as the grandiose wall of his thought repels or attracts us: impressive and fascinating, terrifying and seductive. One archaic challenge: like between the angel and the demon; between shame-*theological* and prejudice-logical.

The word hieroglyphic. III^o interpretative level

Not only are the *words* walled-up and halved, but they are also sealed. Probably to protect "the principle of knowledge. It is worth mentioning, from the beginning to reduce the prejudices automatically linked to the names"⁷⁵. Even more than Kafka, Eisenman will never be able to directly write the word "Jewish" in his *theoretical* and critical essays, nor will he ever use it in his contents. Like the tree of knowledge planted in the center of the garden of Eden, it is analogously a forbidden word, likewise as it was forbidden to mention the sacred Tetragrammatons' of God: YHWH. However, God is always "Jewish". But even in this intimate preoccupation of "realism"⁷⁶ there may be resonates the ineradicable *theological* precaution. And it is precisely Eisenman, despite his tacit and unconditional prohibition, who entrusts only one single time the sound of the spoken word, the oral *word* and not the letter or the sign of the written *word*, with the opportunity to prefigure some points of the *theological* map. In any case a brief and subdued invitation, to lead us unexpectedly beyond, namely, as far as the top of its defensive *theoretical* wall. In February 1985, just shortly before finishing writing the essay *The End of*

the Classical, the British magazine *Blueprint* published the interview of Janet Abrams with Peter Eisenman: *(MIS)reading between the Lines*. Confession seems more important than dialogue, and History seems to speak more than Author. In the short space of six columns the grand questions of Jewish *metaphysics* are disseminated and, and although they are inserted in their dialectical context they mark, however, the aspect of doctrinal norms. From that interview, the following essential themes are presented:

- *Image*: “not a Jewish idea” (although Greek - Christian)⁷⁷;
- *Word*: “comes first from the Nature and from God since in Judaism there is no figure of Christ or Resurrection; and if the Word comes first, then it is more important to play with Word than with Nature or Reincarnation or with any other symbol coming from the Greek-Christian tradition”;
- *Text and Misunderstanding*: “appertain to Jewish heritage, particularly to the interpretation structure which is manifested precisely in the relationship between interpretation of Torah (Text, the written law), Talmud (the collection of oral laws, interpretation of written law) and in the end Kabbalah (interpretation of interpretation, hermeneutic reading which insinuate itself among the lines of Torah)”;
- *Absence*: the verb *to be* in present tense does not exist in Hebrew; “was” and “will be” exist. Therefore, there is no presence, but only “absence”.
- *Breaking of Greek-Christian axis*: “for Architecture which strives to stand outside Greek-Christian tradition”.
- *Dislocation of Classical space*: “hierarchical, symmetrical, closed, Euclidean; the principles on which the tradition of Greek-Christian thought in Architecture has always been based”. “Architecture that is not interested in Origin or metaphysics (classical), but in Theology, since it speaks about Diaspora, of wandering. Without the necessity to return to Origin because of this”.

Three considerations emerge immediately. The first is that architecture was removed from the neutral and ambiguous background of technical-scientific secularization. The second is that architecture was presented on the grand scene of Jewish tradition. The third is that Jewish *aesthetics* openly challenges the dominant tradition of Greek-Christian *aesthetics*.

In other words: a real clash, the highest, between the Jewish *theology* and Greek-Christian *theology* (philosophical) fought in the ambiguous scientific field of Nihilism.

C - EPILOGUE

THE WORK: ICONOLOGY OF FORM

Linguistic exodus

Eisenman's language is not, does not wish to and cannot be directed. Instead, it should be protected against the triple clamp of the *word*: oral (sealed), written (halved), formal (hieroglyphic). But the levels of protection assigned to the *word*, and thereby to *writing* (architecture like writing, like text!), maybe do not indicate, per symmetrical reflection, the hierarchical access to the sense? And is this not an initial presumption so that paradoxically it is not lost the intangible reservation of the sense and its irradiated power in improper language? And which semantic key it would be able to open the closed word if not the codes of Jewish *theo*-logical culture?

If we would imagine now that we can superimpose the essay *The End of the Classical* to the interview (*MIS*)*reading between the Lines* as if they were two hypothetically acetate sheets sprinkled with indecipherable signs, we would be affected by the same surprise effect which is obtained by putting binocular on fire: we remain amazed or at least fascinated by the sudden sharpness of the image resulting from an *unexpected* landscape. We will finally be able to comprehend that Eisenman's *writing* can reveal a large richness of its own contents only if it is attentively observed in its transparency. Namely: only if his *writing* is illuminated from the back (by that which is in front of us), the light source from the background of the Jewish thought. In particular, from the non-exhaustive, even though erroneously considered extinct, *theological* horizon.

The End of the Classical, therefore, is no way the death sentence for Architecture in general. One chapter closed, another one opens. Rather, that is the first act of *theoretical* proclamation of the Jewish *authentic* Architecture, free from the burden and abundance of the authority impressed in the Greek-Christian thoughts of the entire history of the West. Under the apparent and generic category of *classical* (both noun and the adjective) thus the vaguely absolute principle does not stagnate which should be replaced with the equally vague absolute principle of *non-classical*. Under the word *classical* shines instead the mature conscience of the *Jewish paradigm* in the open antagonism of the *Greek-Christian paradigm*. In other words, two diverse powerful sensibilities or *theoretical-aesthetic* visions, one facing the other, in the decisive struggle waged at the highest possible level: *theological-philosophical*, which, not to be

forgotten, is pure epistemological plane of the *aesthetic*. The non-deferrable plane in Architecture.

Eisenman's declaration that architecture is *without the end and without the origin, deprived of object and the reason*, summarizes in fact in the extreme triad of the secret map of Hebrew thought, its pilgrim universal history. That statement, in fact, preludes if not already aspires to the new exodus: certainly not the people but the language. Not from *Egypt* but from the abundance (unbearable as the desert) of the *Greek-Christian paradigm*. But where to go, towards where? Towards the promised *form*. Towards the presence of the absence, the *expression of the suppressed and unexpressed sensibility*. In fact, the use – on the part of Eisenman – of negation and placing the suffixes in front of the names does not indicate in the symmetrical reflection the use of opposite meaning. Instead, he wished to express an intimate appeal of an absence, inner necessity of the form which gives the own mind the necessary power of the first act in order to break away and escape from the domain of the intellectual and linguistic that is improper, and to reconstruct the coherent language by its own intimacy. Three Eisenman's assumptions could be then completed in the following way:

- for an architecture *without origin and without purpose*, like refusing Greek-Christian metaphysics,
- for an architecture *non-representative, deprived of the object*, like refusing Greek-Christian iconological tradition.
- for an architecture *artificial-arbitrary, deprived of reason*, like refusing Greek-Christian episteme.

With these integrated additions we could rewrite the initial three propositions in a brief form without altering the meaning, however, with a warning that for each of them the use of the adjective *Jewish* is implicit:

- for an architecture like *theology*
- for an architecture like *writing*
- for an architecture like *creation*

Eisenman's works now occupy in full Benjamin's scene like a sphere between two horizons: the *theological* horizon of the Jewish thought; the nihilistic horizon of the scientific thought. Two ways to reach the sense of the work were therefore ready some time ago, wide open before our eyes as an imposing cosmic scenography. But if until now we have walked the path of the analytical-conceptual way of the scientific-profane field (in particular with a written *word*), now we have to confront decisively the *aesthetic-contemplative* way

of the *theological*-metaphysical field (with hieroglyphic *writing*). That is the unique way that is able to lead us near to the mysterious point of Eisenman's sense, but also to the painful and removed place of our contemporary thought.

The real, authentic works possess as per their nature the incorporated essential unity that is expressed through certain properties. They are: identity, authenticity and recognizability. The unity of their style (of the work and not of the author) is therefore linguistic-expressive principle in the function and guarantee of the representative requests. For that reason the *style* should save the variability of the case and the changing needs in invariability of principles. For that same reason the *style*, the original appearance of the language, must inevitably possess the inner *nucleus* that dense as to be able to retain, like in nuclear physics, the whirling orbits of the elementary particles of that language. In fact the nucleus *theoretical* of Eisenman's language is formed at the beginning of his design activity, in sufficiently long time span if it refers to his personal biography (between approximately 1967-87), or it is reduced to a flash if referred to the universal Jewish history. In any case that is a golden and privileged period of Eisenman's *creation*. The most profound and most complex in figurative invention can be synthesized in three extraordinary aesthetic⁷⁸ pearls or in formal principles:

- The principle of *abstraction*, (from *House I* to *House X*);
- The principle of “*El*” *Shape*, (from *House XI*, to *Fin d’Ou T Hou S*);
- The principle of *Scaling*, (from *Moving Arrows* to *La Villette*).

More than principles they seem unknown⁷⁹, at least for now, those pearls wrapped with the opaque envelope of logical-analytical word. In fact, when observed from the scientific-nihilistic side, they appear as abstract signs, auto-referential (the “sign of the sign”⁸⁰). If they are projected on the *theological*-Jewish background, they inevitably remove, as if by magic, the amazing and fraught world of the *symbolic*.

But before reaching the *symbolic* we should comprehend the background of the *aesthetic* dispositive, starting however from its secret “magic”⁸¹. First of all the miracle of *aesthetic*, its unalterable essence is precisely to bring the links from abstraction to figuration, from auto-referentiality to the symbol overcoming contradictions, fractures, typical lacerations inherent in the object-profane-phenomenal world. Indeed, extending in accordance with the law of extreme – the thing and the *theological* – their indissoluble unity. In fact, if it is impossible to reconstruct this unit in a scientific logical rationale (as already demonstrated in Benjamin's prologue) then it is possible in the *aesthetic*,

whose principal and command stretch between the original “immediateness” and historical “mediation”⁸². The *aesthetic* plane is composed then of the infinite contemplative levels which by synthesis we reduce to three:

- *phenomenal*: the profane the scope of sensible;
- *enunciate*: the word the scope of intelligible;
- *spiritual*: the *theological* the scope of noetic.

This means that in each of the three formal principles identified above (*purity*, “*El*” *Shape, Scaling*) we find the presence of all *aesthetic* levels in the hierarchy of their gradations. Therefore, if the first level of phenomenal is an eyesore for evident formal differences in three phases of Eisenman’s project⁸³, we will focus now on the quality of the second level, the enunciate level.

But we must not fall into deception of the *word* (abstract or conceptual) while being immersed with our mind in the scope of the *aesthetic*, not having any other possibility then for our reflection except to use the only instrument at disposal: precisely the *word*. To avoid the pitfalls of its arcane magic, the ambiguity of its wear and the weaknesses of our language, we have to maintain firmly, before our eyes, the *theological* contemplative background of the Jewish *paradigm* as refusal and substitution of the *Greek-Christian classical paradigm*. The *word* in Torah is “creation”; in Benjamin it is the “matrix of original perception”; in Eisenman it is “first of all». But the primitive *word* became detached, from the *divine* it becomes a “simple sign”, “the bondage of confusion”, “Babel of the language”⁸⁴. And as if it were enough “the origin of abstraction”, referring anew to Benjamin, it should be searched in “the original sin”. The *word*, therefore, as the bearer and wrapped in the *aesthetic*, extends its domination to all. It occupies the space and time compressed between the revelation and apocalypse, between the prophecy and completion. With one particularity: uttering of the *word* however directs the movement of the *aesthetic* towards its own goal (be it authentic or non-authentic). Then there appear the emblems of its obscurity and the titles of Eisenman’s projects denominated as per common sense. *House I, II, III...X, Fin d’Ou T Hou S, Moving Arrows* and many more, allude to the remote *figurative* origins of their birth: the spiritual *theological*. The third level of the *aesthetic*.

In Eisenman the conflict between the *Jewish paradigm and the Greek-Christian paradigm* presupposes, even according to his own statement, the kaleidoscopic dualism between *theology* and philosophy. An antagonism with original certain metaphysical consequences, however, first of all the *aesthetic* ones. In fact the question is paradoxically *figurative*. Paradoxical due to complexity although

we have to reduce it to the extreme simplicity. In fact, the Greek philosophy *abstracts* the truth developing then the anthropocentric iconological language. The Jewish *theology*, instead, *figures* the truth developing then the logocentric iconological⁸⁵ language. These statements have their roots not only in the grand Jewish mystical tradition but also in the thought of the modern philosophy. For example, in the principal work of Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1926), *The Star of Redemption*. “Creation is now the portal through which philosophy enters the house of theology”⁸⁶. “The concept of revelation of theology destroys the bridge between the extremely subjective and extremely objective”⁸⁷. The Bible *theology* (of the Torah) and particularly the Book of Genesis (*Bereshit*) prepares then the universe of the *aesthetic* in its *spiritual* dimension: the maximum *figurative* density, where the highest peaks and the deepest abysses of the creative *word* dwell in their invisibility, in awaiting their elaboration. In the *spiritual theological* “the linguistic miracle of revelation becomes the sign of the Divine creation”⁸⁸, conferring to the *aesthetic* the plastic tonality, three-dimensionality immaterial. Wishing to force the gaze of thought by the optical metaphor we observe that: if the *theological* is the pure plane of the *aesthetic*, the *spiritual* is the maximum focused distance available (namely, the predisposition) of the *theological* in order to place in focus the set of *figurative* codes of belonging.

From these evaluations emerges another consideration. The sum of three levels of *aesthetic* - phenomenal, enunciate, spiritual - express clearly the unity, tone and gradation of the Jewish *figurative logocentric* iconology, radically different from the Greek-Christian anthropocentric *figurative* iconology. Ontology of the *aesthetic* does not change: the *aesthetics* changes, given the different referential codes of the significant.

Following reconfiguration of the links between Eisenman’s formal principles and the levels of the *aesthetics*, we face the question of the *symbolic*.

The power of the creator

The *unity* of work is the object of the initial question about the *meaning* of the form.

The *unity* of work is the sovereign *relation* with the multiplicity of *phenomenal*.

The *theological* is the scope of the *aesthetics of the unity*.

The *phenomenal* is the scope of the *aesthetics* of multiplicity.

The *aesthetic* is the indivisible plane between the *theological* and the *phenomenal*.

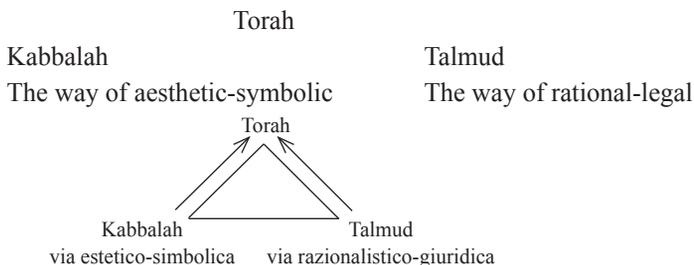
The *symbol* is the figurative medium between *theological* and the *phenomenal*.
The *symbol* is the *aesthetic* complement of the logic concept.
The *symbol* is emanation of the *theological*.

The *theological* though, and we cannot certainly forget it now, projected on the horizon of the *Jewish paradigm* has as its substrate the ineffable “fabric” of the Torah (TaNaK). The Holy Book of Creation, the Book of the Revealed Word, considered as “the symbol of the symbol”, “the infinite symbol”, “the symbol of the cosmic law”. But Eisenman is not directly interested, as per his own admission, in either the written law, actually Torah, or the oral law, the Talmudic interpretation. But in the interpretation of the interpretation. That is: the Kabbalah. *Corpus Symbolicum* for excellence of “the myth of the divine unity” which is at the center.

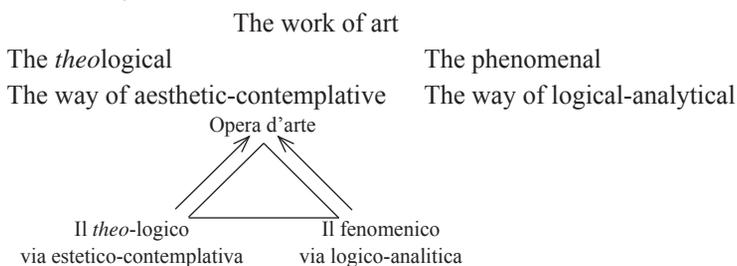
Torah-Talmud-Kabbalah forms the inseparable triad of the Jewish critique. We could simply draw the image of the equilateral triangle. Torah is at the vertical top, Talmud and Kabbalah are at opposite angles. At the bottom side there is profane world, *Shekhinah*, the “presence”; at the kathetes two forms of interpretation of the divine: the way of rational-legal in Talmud; the way of aesthetic-symbolic of the Kabbalah.

This scheme just outlined might it not invoke the other analogous scheme if not identical as per its structure which is at the base of our writing: the Benjamin’s interpretative scheme? Do not we see the surprising concordance of their reflecting images even though they are separated by temporal sidereal distance? Let us try to superimpose them:

The Jewish scheme



The Benjamin’s scheme



It seems evident that the immediate relation between Kabbalah and *theological* presented on the plane of the aesthetic; the mediated relation of the *figures* of the three Eisenman's principles first identified,

purity
"El" Shape
Scaling

and which conserve in the *signs* of their languages the *spiritual* sources of their noetic sources (the third level of the *aesthetic*).

Kabbalah has always been inscribed in this incessant movement between the immediacy of the *theological* and the mediation of the phenomenal. It has always had to reinterpret the history of people of Israel in relation to the principle of *creation* of the divine *unity*. A fever of life, the indomitable ontological fervor: having continuously to adjust the tragic events of the Jewish history in an ever new and coherent *theological* symbology. In fact the symbol was assigned a task to guarantee the contact between the original prefiguration and the origin of the world by registering the epochal events. The symbols of Kabbalah thus originate from the Bible perspective, between the revelation-catastrophe-redemption, intensified and awakened by Benjamin's *theological* thought.

In the rich repertoire of the mystical tradition the "visibility"⁸⁹ of the symbols together with the theme of "creation" of the world, the original divine act, therefore assumes the importance and fundamental role. From this context there emerge, however, also three grand symbols:

Sefiroth
Tzimtzum
*Shevirat ha-kelim*⁹⁰

which with the triad of formal Eisenman's principles already establish the dual relationship: the immediacy of the *aesthetic* ; the mediation of the language.

Each symbol represents a process of cosmic generation declined in respect to the temporal or historical evolution. The symbols therefore follow the precise chronology and elaborate each time a diverse iconology.

<i>Sefiroth</i>	the divine emanation, the time of innocence
<i>Tzimtzum</i>	the divine contraction, the time of exodus
<i>Shevirat ha-kelim</i>	the divine dispersion, the time of diaspora

In the first symbol, the process of creation, due to successive emanations and reflections comes through ten levels or elements of the divine wisdom. An

“immaterial writing” which yet “impact and carve” the “primordial cosmos”, the spiritual space between the unattainable God and the material world.

In the second symbol, the process of creation underwent a radical change to respond in an adequate manner to increasingly great sufferings and evil. The primordial creative act cannot reflect any longer that from the donor and that is why progressive expansion. The presence of evil implies now the profound revision of the *theological*: God, the unattainable wisdom, Jewish *En-Sof*, retreats “from himself for himself”. The painful contraction of evil must make space for the good before expanding. The previous linear and wavy motion transforms forcibly into the oscillating movement, binary, cardiac.

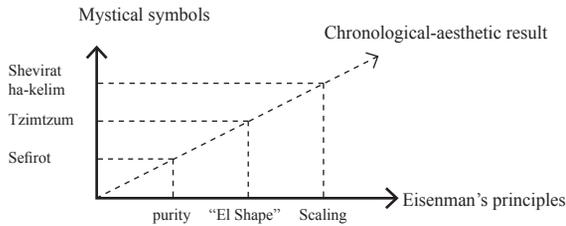
In the third symbol, literally “breaking the vessels”, dramatic escalation of the story now leads to a negative and irreversible apocalyptic vision. The preceding symbolic models of the process of creation collapse: the structure of the *sefirotic planes*, however, present in all three symbols, undergoes the definite destruction losing irremediably also the shadow of the original innocence.

The variations of the symbols must guarantee timely the link between the absolute divine unity and their everyday life. Between to be and being. Or, in the symbol there is an incessant repetition of the origin manifested according to Benjamin’s categories momentary, total, the inscrutable, necessary, clarity, brevity, since the *origin*, taking up all that has been mentioned, “a fully historical category” is found in the incessant flow between *theological* dimension of the ideas and profane dimension of phenomena.

The relation, therefore, between the symbol of Jewish mysticism and linguistic principles of Eisenman’s architecture *is actualized in the work dragging through the swirling vortex of origination the material of its birth and sucking from the future of the history the material of its own redemption*. The relation, the completed work, can be reduced yet on another three levels: *aesthetic*, linguistic, historical. *Aesthetic*, as the ontological-*theological* plane; linguistic, as the plane of expression; historical, as the plane of chronological actuality.

So we can see the ternary relations between the mystical symbols, Eisenman’s principles and phenomenal reality how they use in parallel also the canonic Cartesian system: horizontally, the apices of principles; vertically, the ordinate of symbols, obtaining a double vector of chronological and *aesthetic* result.

THE SYMBOLS OF MYSTICAL	EISENMAN’S PRINCIPLES	PHENOMENAL REALITY
<i>Sefiroth</i> (emanation)	<i>purity</i>	absence of place
<i>Tzimtzum</i> (contraction)	“ <i>El</i> ” <i>Shape</i>	presence of place
<i>Shevirat ha-kelim</i> (dispersion)	<i>Scaling</i>	fragmentation of place



What is surprising and amazing is that Eisenman's formal principals undoubtedly originate from the innate logical-descriptive ability of the "real" but their expression, the linguistic stamp of *signs*, the essence (and not the appearance) of their visibility, depend exclusively and anew on being included in the projective cone of the cosmic symbolic power. From the horizon of the *theological*, and not the logical, comes the bundle of plastic forces to imprint on the surface of the things the "relief form" of the expression: the three-dimensionality of the *aesthetic*. The linguistic mark is an indelible imprint of symbols, the authenticity of form, the object of the "recognition" and of the "discovery". And it is precisely between these extremes, at the most remote margins between the revelation and redemption that the autonomy of the *aesthetic* plane discovers the reductionism of conceptual logics, revealing together the precise iconological parallelism and the perfect chronological sequence between the *theological* symbols and Eisenman's principles. The dual bond of origin.

The importance of Eisenman's work, its grandeur, lies, therefore, in the fact that it has stolen the *reality* from the improper domain of rational science and psychological expressionism and because it has brought to architecture the connection between the logical and *theological* in the *unity* of form through absoluteness of the refined *representative* method and, at the same time, surprising.

Self-transparency of the unexpressed

The eruption of the *theological* into logical demonstrates how the power of the *aesthetic* reacts indifferently in respect to our logical intentions, conscious or unconscious, when the work is actually *work*.

The eruption of the *theological* into nihilism demonstrates how the power of the *aesthetic* redeems the exhausted *word* and fades in the conceptual impotence.

The eruption of the *theological* into architecture demonstrates how the power of the *aesthetic* subverts the iconological categories (iconic-aiconic) from their atavistic governing contraposition.

Each *cultural paradigm* is in and of itself iconological, Jewish or Greek-Christian. Different and yet the meaning of that iconology. The *theology* (Jewish and Greek-Christian or otherwise) is the meaning that gives the mark, tone and intonation to that iconological language and, not to some other. The meaning, namely the *theological*, is non-transferable and irreducible essence. Non-transferable, since it cannot be confused with that belonging to diverse *paradigm*. Irreducible, since it cannot elude that same paradigm.

Therefore, the introduction of the *theological* in architecture inevitably undermines many false opinions, in particular the dominant ones (and unfortunately also the unconscious ones) of the nihilist-technical-scientific nature. In the first place it literary omits the distinction, eliminating the artificial separation between the spoken-written-formal word. The *theological* denounces the inner contradiction of Eisenman's language; it unmasks the logic armor of the written word in opposition to the formal (of the language) word (the architectural work); dissolves the spell of the analytical-rational written word bringing it back to the unity of the *aesthetic*, the original power. In our case in fact,

the word	spoken	<i>limits</i> ,
the word	written	<i>de-limits</i> ,
the word	formal	<i>non-limits</i> .

The limitation of the spoken word, the verbal announcement, retains the extremes origin-intention-possibility, although still undefined, in connection between each other, between revelation and elaboration.

The delimiting of the written word isolates the multiple within the profane, separated from the original unity.

Non-limitation of the formal word liberates finally the multiple of the original unity, renewing in the historical becoming the connection between the *theological*-profane, between revealed and realized.

The immediacy of the *aesthetic* therefore bypasses the preemptory defensive line of the written word; elevates our minds from the foot to the summit of the wall. That which was previously denied to the eye now is offered to the

availability of the vision, in the enchantment of contemplation. And only on that appertaining plane of the work Eisenman's language renews the original perception of the linguistic unity (spoken-written-formal)

For the third time, then, Eisenman's thought presents itself inexorably as emblematic. For that same reason we have to start again from the text the *End of the Classical*. There are three initial assumptions:

- for a *timeless* architecture, without the origin and without purpose, (as a response to the *fiction* of the History: the simulation of the eternal),
- for a *non-representative* architecture, deprived of an object, (as a response to the *fiction* of the Representation: the simulation of the meaning),
- for an *artificial and arbitrary* architecture, deprived of reason, (as a response to the *fiction* of Reason: the simulation of the truth),
- in fact suffer the impetuous twist under the (reviving) rooting impulse of the Jewish *theological*.

The *timeless* architecture expresses the rejection of the idea of cyclic and linear time of the *Greek-Christian paradigm* to turn instead to the idea of historical temporality in the *Jewish paradigm*. Neither the Greek *Aion*, nor the Latin *Saeculum*. But the *oLaM*: the *duration* of doing, the assigned and defined temporal dimension that oscillates in the interval between revelation (origin) and redemption (end). The historization of the Event (the work), and not the Form, that will only be achieved in the perfect fulfillment of the *oLaM*, records therefore the relevance of its own presence like a fragment or the frame of the time sequence contained and compressed between the extremes: between “their prehistory and the successive history”. That is, the work is inserted in the “*original* movement of becoming and passing away”, in the apocalyptic course between the *divine creation and Adam's realization*, that are actually a priori extreme conditions which provide the work with its own visuality.

Non-representative architecture expresses the rejection of the *figurative* tradition (from the metaphysical idea of space) of the *Greek-Christian paradigm*, in favor of the idea of *creation of the Jewish paradigm*. And then because that which it *creates* through the medium of the name or the word, logocentrism assumes the fundamental importance, indispensable and irreplaceable in setting the language and expressive sensibility. Language becomes “the most perfect archive of immaterial similarities”⁹¹. And *Logos* designs “the primordial carving”⁹² from which extends the “divine handwriting”⁹³ of the cosmos as the soul and mind. The word in the *theological* field is then the medium, the *symbol* between creation and elaboration. *Non-representative* architecture in

the *Jewish paradigm* is a *non-sense*, since it is *absolutely* representative. And it cannot be otherwise because of the *symbolic* of the principle of *creation* that takes place by means of *Logos* in which converge in them the beginning and the end, revelation and redemption, “tragic time and Messianic time”⁹⁴. In fact:

- the *creation* is entrusted to the *original* project (the *theological* form);
- the revelation is entrusted to the *symbolic word* (the internal form);
- the redemption is entrusted to *daimon* of the work (the external form).

Artificial and arbitrary architecture expresses, in the end, the rejection of any hierarchical and transcendental system implicit in the *Greek-Christian paradigm* in favor of the *self-transparency of the non-expressed in the Jewish paradigm*. *Self-transparency of the non-expressed* is the theological sum (equal to the thermal sum in nature⁹⁵) of the principle of *creation* (the iconological background) with the temporal principle of *oLaM* (the historical background). *Arbitrary and artificial* are then two fictitious and provisional terms indicating to the fatigued and complex *critical step of the Greek-Christian paradigm* towards the *Jewish paradigm*. Attained, however, in the Jewish theological filed the subjective *self-referentiality* (prevailing in the divine scope and in the contemporary culture) transforms itself into auto-negation of the subjective. Personal individuality changes the coefficient in the impersonal universality of the work when it is precisely in the scope of the *theological*. Only in this dimension and only with this condition the work of the “fragment of the symbol” is finally free to appear authentically: to enable transparency in the perception of the idea-word-symbol-form of “non-expression of unintentional truth”. *Self-transparency of the non-expressed* offers then to the work the maximum guarantee of its plastic and expressive freedom only through *auto-negation* of the *self*. So that the *auto-negation* does not at all mean annulment of the *self*. Simply it corresponds to the largest and maximum expansion of the individual *Self* in the universal *Self* and finds its fulfillment and its correspondence always new and always unique precisely in the realization of the work. *Self-transparency of the non-expressed, impersonality* of the work, *auto-negation* of the self: the three essential requests of the *aesthetics of the theological* because of profane phenomenal.

Eisenman’s work therefore fully belongs to that unexpected and surprising onto-iconological constellation:

- the origin, the temporal medium,
- the word, the *aesthetic* medium,
- the symbol the expressive medium.

The primary factors of each semantic prefiguration in the *Jewish paradigm*, branch out into the immense cosmic embroidery: the unity of the *theological*. And on this ineffable evil it is deposited:

the unity of work,
the unity of knowledge,
the unity of language.

We can now make out the glimmer of the response to the initial question. It is precisely the *theological* that is the noblest category of the *aesthetic*, where the primitive contrast is between the expressible and inexpressible that should preserve and enhance the *episteme* of the sense. The Eisenman's wall, with its imposing logical-rational structure, ceases to be a looming confine or the inaccessible "watershed between the river of the language and the river of the revelation"⁹⁶. From its summit, divided and separated, the *theological* and profane, the *created* and the realized, the unmanifest and the manifest, idea and form, blur their powerful distinction to culminate in "intensive totality" of the metaphysical circle. But that from where one can observe and understand does not depend on the occult or mysterious spell. It rather depends on to be and to exist on the wall. It is the same work with the mass of own construction, with the weight of own presence, with the unmistakable visibility of one own appearance to ensure and perpetuate the renewal of the *original* silence of the *theological*. Where it is repeated only owing to the work the miracle for the metaphysical knowledge: "the concrete totality of the experience that is the *existence*"⁹⁷.

And it is precisely *existence* that jolts in the *theological*: to make the thrill of life vibrant in immaterial diaphragm interposed between the unfathomable obscurity of creation and the original clarity of perception. The *theological* announces therefore the impact of each minimal birth imprinting the indelible aspect. For that reason in transition from creation to realization there happens the donation of *aesthetic*: the divine "moral act"⁹⁸.

The *theological*: not only the pure *aesthetics*, but above all the pure *logics*. The undifferentiated unity of the differentiated phenomenal.

Eisenman's work belongs rather de facto then legally to the Jewish *theological*. If the critics wished to see it only from one side, the analytical-nihilistic, is not the flaw of the work, rather it is the want if not the obstinacy of the contemporary culture. However, the work is here, in front of us, unchanged

and unchangeable, the witness of its own existence. But the testimony of the work coincides with its muteness: we can only scrutinize the silence, and thereby also the *aesthetics*, the first presupposition of each meaning.

Much has been said here and elsewhere about the Eisenman's work. But something more should be added.

From the *theological* viewpoint his work appears as a grandiose temporal form of the universal Jewish history. Much distant from the Tafurian⁹⁹ suspicion and too close to Derrida's question¹⁰⁰, the language of his architecture represents the most complete and the most powerful form of tragic and Messianic¹⁰¹ temporality. A figurative *narration* extraordinary as per its logical rigor, the *aesthetic* density, ethical profoundness. Something unique and disturbing on the actual scene although it inverts all of a sudden (and in silence) the sources of the language: from profane to the *theological*, from functional to the *epistemic*, from chronological to *historical*, without rescinding the links. For that reason Eisenman's work is authentically Jewish: historically and originally was placed between the greatest *theological* extremes: between the revelation (the words) and redemption (the form). And it is no coincidence that Sanford Kwinters¹⁰² defined it as *Kaddish*: a solemn prayer, a hymn of praise, a Messianic promise (because of the form). The invocation of time to save from historical annihilation the unexpressed (and the repressed) of the Jewish language.

A second essential aspect of his work concerns the shift in blocks of iconological axis of the *Greek-Christian paradigm* around the *Jewish one*. This necessity does not find more satisfaction in simple expressionism of the psychological nature but has to be based on diverse conscious, on new rationality, on new metaphysical logics. A commitment to this, or maybe obsession, which develops in two precise directions: analytical and representative. The two Benjamin's ways to «seek the contents of truth» of the work. In fact, the analytical way was entrusted to writing, and the representative way to the design process. The written word must put on fire the dispositive of the abstract concepts; the representative method the contemplation of the formal procedure. The sum of the two, however, has to find the perfect collimation with the symbolic constellation of the ideas in the *Jewish paradigm* in an architectural field (for the Jewish culture) as from the beginning. With the emergence of the new iconology Eisenman inaugurated in architecture the first phase of the Jewish *classicism*.

But there is another aspect of observation: the historical relevance of his architecture in relation to contemporary nihilism. The appearance on the world scene of Eisenman's work has provoked the most dramatic interpretative misunderstanding which is still ongoing. From the *appearance* only the *semblance* was caught, the external envelope, and not the *essence*, the internal nucleus. Only that the semblance fades on the surface, whereas the essence intensifies in the depth. We could also write: the appearance is the vaguest similarity; the essence is *densification of the theological image*. For that reason appearance without essence is a similarity without image. In fact a form without *image* is a work without *sense*. However, whenever impossible *arché* and *tèlos* of the *èrgon*, the principle and the end of the work, are preservation, protection, custody of that distance which makes that the *image* of the essence (self-transparency of the unexpressed, the *theological*) belongs to the figure of appearance. For that reason the *work*¹⁰³ oscillates and is between the extremes of the *theological image* and phenomenal *figure*. For that same reason the technical-scientific nihilism could not but dwell, with its own status, only in the semblance of the disconnected and distant similarity (of the secondary) of the *image* of the essence (primary¹⁰⁴). With the result of the reversed reading. But we would be beyond the time if we wished to ask from Eisenman's work the *anti-nihilism* declaration considering that nihilism has always celebrated it even if only by half.

The Eisenman's wall draws a thin line between the empire of meaning (the similarity) and the kingdom of the sense (the image). Whether we will by-pass or respect it depends only on us. Once beyond, however, nothing can be the same any longer.

NOTES

- N. B. This paper relies on three *theoretical* assumptions: the secret of the sense, the image, the pathos of the distance, the *fascination*; the transcendence of the real, the *work*.
- 1 *Aesthetics*: intensive like metaphysical-ontological unity.
- 2 Walter Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Le affinità elettive di Goethe* (Einaudi, 2008), 523.
- 3 The *real* is the maximum density, the pointed tip of the arrow of the' *essential*.
- 4 With metaphysical-surrealism relation in the art of René Magritte, it is referred to the book of Massimo Donà, *Il mistero dell'esistere* (Mimesis, 2006).
- 5 Benjamin, vol. I, *Il compito del traduttore*, 506.
- 6 Benjamin, vol. I, *Il compito del traduttore*, 510. « As the tangent touches the circumference on its way and only in one point, and same as this contact, but not the point, prescribes its law , because of which it continues to the infinity its right way, so that the translation (interpretation) touches the original only in passing and only in the infinitely small point of sense, to continue, in accordance with the law of fidelity, in the freedom of linguistic movement, its own life».
- 7 Benjamin, vol. I, *Il compito del traduttore*, 512-513.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 539 - 544.
- 9 Momentarily opposing and diverse and only if positioned on the horizon of technical-scientific

- nihilism.
- 10 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Due poesie di Hölderlin*, 217.
- 11 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Le affinità elettive* di Goethe, 523.
- 12 Ibid., 523.
- 13 Translated into Eisenman's language it becomes palimpsest: the theoretical concert which then
transforms into *scaling*, the principle of the «mystic» and regular composition
- 14 Ibid., 523.
- 15 Ibid., 524.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 In the original text it reads «meaning». As it was not yet introduced in our essay the difference
between the sense (the universal relation) and the meaning (individual relation) it was necessary
to substitute the term.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Due poesie di Hölderlin*, 235.
- 20 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.II, *Il dramma del barocco tedesco, Premessa gnoseologica*,
69-96.
- 21 Ibid., 71. «The truth, actualized in the crowd of the represented ideas, escapes any projection
within the knowledge. The knowledge is property. Its very object (...) has to be possessed, in a
transcendental way, in the conscience». «The conscience can be questioned, but not the truth».
- 22 Ibid., 70. «The value of the individual fragments of thought the more it is decisive the less their
relation is immediate with all together, and the brilliance of the performance depends on the
value of these fragments same as the splendor of the mosaic depends on the quality of forged
glass. The relation between micrological elaboration and the global form expresses the law
according to which the contents of truth of a theory may be discerned only in the most precise
penetration of the individual details of the concept. In its maximum blooming in the West, the
mosaic and the treaty belong to the Medieval Age,, that which permits their confrontation is an
authentic relationship».
- 23 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Il significato del linguaggio nel Trauerspiel e nella tragedia*,
279.
- 24 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.II, *Il dramma del barocco tedesco*. In, *Dramma e tragedia* (I),
97.
- 25 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.II, *Premessa gnoseologica*, 75.
- 26 Ibid., 75.
- 27 Ibid., 76.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid., 77. «To say that idea is a monad briefly signifies: each idea contains the image of the
world. Its task is the representation, nothing less than to draw in short that image of the world. P.
88. However, «the ideas constitute the irreducible multiplicity».
- 32 Ibid., 75.
- 33 Ibid., 80.
- 34 Ibid, 76-77.
- 35 Ibid., 77.
- 36 Ibid. «In the empirical perception, in which the words are decomposed, to the words inherent are,
besides its more or less symbolic meaning, added profane explicit meaning».
- 37 Ibid. «The task of the philosopher is to reconstitute its lead, through representation, to the symbolic
character of the word: that character in which the idea reaches as far as self-transparency, which
is contrary to communication addressed to the exterior».
- 38 Ibid., 87.
- 39 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Allegoria e dramma barocco*, 196.
- 40 Ibid., 200.

- 41 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Sulla lingua in generale e sulla lingua dell'uomo*, 283.
- 42 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.II, 201.
- 43 Ibid., 77.
- 44 Ibid., 78.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Ibid., 87.
- 47 Carlo Enzo, *Adamo, dove sei?* (Il Saggiatore, 2002). Biblical exegesis conducted by Carlo Enzo in the original text in Hebrew of Tanaka undermines the roots of the secular beliefs and prejudices, demonstrating unexpected and unsuspected constellations of links and relations. In particular the relation between *project-creation-revelation-elaboration-realization*, the Adam's task in the *laic time* so that the *work* really becomes the *image* through the process of *similarity*. Fundamental and very actual theme of our time.
- 48 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Sulla lingua in generale e sulla lingua dell'uomo*, 281-295.
- 49 Ibid., 281.
- 50 Ibid., 286.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid., 288.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid., 287.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid., 288.
- 58 Ibid., 292-293.
- 59 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, *Il compito del traduttore*, 509.
- 60 Ibid., 288-289.
- 61 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, 597.
- 62 Ibid., 594.
- 63 Ibid., 593.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Ibid. 595.
- 67 Ibid. 597.
- 68 Ibid. 597.
- 69 Extension is the relation with the epic; the depth with the lyric. Franz Rosenzweig, *La Stella della Redenzione* (Marietti, 1985), 263.
- 70 Pieter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical," *Perspecta* 21(1984). (Italian translation published in the volume by) Traduzione italiana nel volume edito da Cluva, Ve 1987: Pieter Eisenman, *La Fine del Classico*, pp. 145-169. A cura di R. Rizzi.
- 71 Ibid, 145.
- 72 Ibid, 157. Although Eisenman declares inutility of proposing the alternative model, in fact he proposes one.
- 73 Ibid, 162.
- 74 Ibid, 158.
- 75 Günther Anders, *Kafka, pro e contro* (Quodlibet, 2006), 30.
- 76 Ibid, 31.
- 77 For the text in the original language he refers to the magazine *Blueprint*, February 1985, and, partially, in concluding the essay *L'Eresia nascosta*.
- 78 Pieter Eisenman, *La Fine del Classico*, 204.
- 79 He refers to the essay *Mistico nulla* nel which deals with analytical progressive and comparative evaluation of the linguistic development of Eisenman's aesthetic-formal principles.
- 80 Pieter Eisenman, *La rappresentazione del dubbio: nel segno del segno*, 43-55.
- 81 Benjamin, Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, 292.

- 82 Ibid., 292.
- 83 Cfr. *Mistico Nulla*.
- 84 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, 292-293.
- 85 The difference between iconic and a-iconic absolutely has no sense, because iconic difference depends on the referencing paradigm. In our case on Greek-Christian or Jewish paradigm.
- 86 F. Rosenzweig, *La Stella della Redenzione* (Marietti, 1985), 110.
- 87 Ibid, 113.
- 88 Ibid, 204.
- 89 Giulio Busi, *Qabbalah visiva* (Einaudi, 2005)
- 90 Giulio. Busi, *Simboli del Pensiero Ebraico* (Einaudi, 1999). In particular, the interpretation of the Lurianic doctrine (XVI century) relative to the four cosmogony symbols: *Sefirot*, *Tzimtzum*, *Shevirat ha-kelim*, *Tiqqun*.
- 91 Benjamin, Vol.V, 524.
- 92 Giulio Busi, *Qabbalah visiva* (Einaudi, 2005), 5.
- 93 Ibid, p. 5.
- 94 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, 274. «The tragic time is the time spent by and individual, whereas the Messianic time is divinely spent time».
- 95 The *theological* summary can be compared to the thermal summary in nature: the quantity of energy which each plant or seed needs to accumulate in order to be born.
- 96 Benjamin, *Opere complete* - vol.I, 511.
- 97 Ibid., 340.
- 98 Ibid., 594.
- 99 “*Beyond this process, which can be stopped at any point (...), there is nothing else to show*”. “behind such process (refers to *House X*), which can be interrupted at any moment (...), there is nothing else to show”. The ideological-political suspicion of Manfredo Tafuri does not succeed in breaking the appearance of Eisenman’s work. Manfredo Tafuri, “*The Meditations of Icarus*,” in *Houses of Cards*, by Peter Eisenman (Oxford University Press, 1987).
- 100 “My question therefore relates not only to the absence or the presence, but to God”. “I would like, therefore, Peter, (...) to hear you talking about the passages of the relationship between architecture, today, and poverty, all forms of poverty, the one Benjamin talks about” (*Esperienza e povertà*, cfr. nota 8). The questions addressed by Jaques Derrida to Peter Eisenman on Man, God, Poverty, would find in the *theological-aesthetic* dimension (the original ethical dimension, de-teologization of the religious and political, classical de-ontologization!) a radically diverse response. Jaques Derrida, “*Letter to Peter Eisenman*,” in *Choral Works* (Monacelli, 1997); now in Italian for Scheiwiller, *Adesso l’architettura*, 2008, 203, 210.
- 101 See note 95.
- 102 Sanford Kwinter, “Kaddish (For an Architecture not Born),” *Bookforum* 10, n° 4 (2003).
- 103 Another epistemological question would open up in respect to the *work*. To emphasize only to the relation among *work-image-figure*. The *work* which pertains to creation,; the *image* which pertains to the *theological*; the *figure* which pertains to the phenomenal.
- 104 The dualism «primary-secondary» is referred to the work of George Steiner, *Vere Presenze* (Garzanti, 1992).

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