CHANGES IN CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES IN CRITICAL ARCHITECTURE AND THE NOTION OF LATENESS

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present an inquiry into critical architecture by architect Peter Eisenman and various ways of reaching criticality in architecture; as well as a few examples presenting aspects of application of criticality in architecture. In particular, the paper presents the last stage of the evolving investigation of criticality that was introduced in the 2020 book called *Lateness,* which offers crystallization of Eisenman's attitude toward the topic. Criticality and critical architecture are defined in accordance with theoretician K. Hays as such an architecture or attitude that does not serve blindly to the mainstream power/dominant culture but on the other hand does not withdraw from the world to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time. Critical architecture remains between these two extremities. As next, the paper explains various ways into criticality. For a long period it was a diagram that ensured criticality. But recently, a new term and a new proposition have emerged. And this is lateness. Lateness, inspired by Adorno's study of late Beethoven's composition, is a term used by Eisenman to designate (pieces of) architecture in which form or fragments of form are problematically related to their time determination. Form of a building consists of fragments (parts) that could not be determined in terms of style or period of time. What is important in this context is that criticality does not "dwell" in the form itself (which was the case in various previous stages). Criticality involves now a relationship between form and time. Lateness is presented as a reaction to contemporary architecture.

Keywords: theory of architecture, criticality, critical architecture, Peter Eisenman, time, form

Architect and thinker Peter Eisenman is a long established figure in the world of architecture. He appeared on architectural scene in 1960s and since that time he has continued to overflow with not only built architecture and unbuilt projects but always with texts and books as well.[1] His theoretical work has undergone many stages and changes since the first appearance, has reached a very long way and is discussed

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1 S. Davidson, *Tracing Eisenman. Peter Eisenman Complete Works*, New York, 2006.

by many.[2] He has always adhered to a critical attitude towards architecture.[3] His critical architecture, including theoretical reflections, has also been deeply and extensively studied.[4]As mentioned, his position has constantly evolved and changed; rearranged in every decade or so anew. Jeffrey Kipnis speaks in an Introduction to Eisenman's book of selected writings from 2007 of acts as in the theatre – after the first act came the second one.[5] Texts approximately from period 1990–2004 are the second act. It may be called late Eisenman.

With the publication of a small book, called *Lateness*,[6] we witness the latest episode of Eisenman's thinking of architecture. In comparison to the whole previous path, full of meanders and turns, it is quite different, in many ways even dissimilar to the preceding stages. For instance, unlike his previous books and texts in which he almost always connected his thinking and ideas with his projects and built work, in this book there is not a single mention of his own architecture. Those who are at least a little bit familiar with Eisenman's thought could be hardly surprised – it is an intellectual who has been able to surprise the world of architecture for more than six decades. Nevertheless, some foundation stones remain. Probably the most essential one is criticality and critical architecture. It is a clearly stated goal in the *Lateness* as well. It may open a new, third act of Eisenman's drama. In this article I examine this new position with the above-mentioned late Eisenman. But before doing it I shall turn for a moment to a notion of critical architecture.

CRITICALITY

Criticality, usually in connection with the "critical theory" or "critical architecture" or "critical praxis", is a key notion for Eisenman. This term has been in architectural circulation since 1960s and it is important to understand how Peter Eisenman sees the term and how it differs from other uses – since there are many various authors working towards the critical in architecture.

An elemental definition, which helps us to orient ourselves, may be provided by above-mentioned K. M. Hays in his 1984 text on critical architecture: "In this essay I shall examine a critical architecture, one resistant to the self-confirming, conciliatory operations of a dominant culture and yet irreducible to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time",[7] after which he adds: "…a critical architecture that claims for itself a place between the efficient representation of preexisting cultural values and the wholly detached autonomy of an abstract formal system."[8] According to this citation critical architecture resists the mainstream of a particular culture; it is not a mere tool of an establishment, but on the other hand, it does not reach the position of a silenced abstract form. It will become clear when we specify what a "dominant culture" or a critical architecture

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2 K. M. Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, London, 1998. Or see J. Tourek, *Myslet architekturu. Pozdní myšlení Petera Eisenmana a jeho kritická teorie architektury*, Praha, 2018.

3 See for instance P. Eisenman, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 96ff.

4 See for instance the collection of critical texts and introductions: K. M. Hays, *Architecture Theory since 1968*, London, 1998.

5 J. Kipnis,"Introduction: Act Two", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, VII. The first act would be marked by the first volume; see P. Eisenman, Eisenman Inside out. Selected Writings 1963–1988, New Haven, London, 2004.

6 P. Eisenman with E. Iturbe, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020.

7 K. M. Hays, "Critical Architecture between Culture and Form", *Perspecta* 21, 1984, 15.

8 Ibidem.

resists according to K. M. Hays. It is a world capitalist system, the neoliberalist ideology that has dominated the world since the second half of 20th century. Critical architecture ought neither to serve to this kind of "culture" nor "withdraw from this world" – this would be the second extremity of Hays's distinction. Such an architecture should distance itself from both extremes in an in-between position from which it comments, i.e., criticizes mostly the mainstream position. This is at least a general view of the notion. It certainly differs from one author to another. And capitalism is only one among many civilisational and cultural varieties that a critical architect could be interested in. Eisenman's interest, i.e., critique, has turned always toward a more general level of human culture, namely the western metaphysical tradition. Against this tradition he builds his critical theory and praxis.[9]

There are also other critical projects. Among others, by K. M. Hays or by Kenneth Frampton, who is known for the notion of "critical regionalism" and whose famous book *Modern Architecture* bears the subtitle "a critical history".[10] There were also critical projects of different origin than the east coast of United States. The most influential was probably by Italian Manfredo Tafuri.

Although criticality is fundamental for Eisenman during all his creative life, it does not remain unchanged, it has constantly evolved from being defined by a formalistic approach, through a linguistic interest, up to a diagram architecture.[11] In a 2001 text, Eisenman presents criticality in architecture as follows:

> "To understand this idea of a unique criticality within architecture, it is necessary to turn to the question of signs and their meaning. While signs play a role in all of the arts – music, literature, painting, and sculpture – they do not contain an immanence in these various disciplines as they do within architecture. A figurative or abstract piece of sculpture is not the sign of sculpture; it is the thing itself, because it is self-evidently so. A column in architecture, on the other hand, is *both* a structural element and the sign of that structure; that is a unique condition, because unlike the other arts, such conditions as abstraction and figuration in architecture are both the sign and the form of the sign."[12]

Criticality in architecture is here somehow related to relation of a sign and what is signed. This relation is, as noted in the citation, fixed in architecture. Criticality starts, according to Eisenman's thoughs in 1990s and early 2000s (what could be called a late Eisenman), with the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign,[13] i.e., with the reduction of sedimented meanings of a (architectural) sign, thus, in Eisenman's rhetoric: a message becomes "blurred"; or else a building (its signs) does not bring a mainstream message, it does not say "what is said" (*man sagt*). This sort of "blurring" as a message paves, according to Eisenman, a way towards a necessary critical pro-

9 See, for instance, P. Eisenman, Introduction, in: *Eisenman Inside Out. Selected Writings 1963–1988*, New Haven, London, 2004, VII.

10 K. Frampton, *Modern architecture. A critical history*, London, 2007.

11 See, for instance, P. Eisenman, op. cit, or P. Eisenman, "Diagram: An Original Scene of Writing", in: *Written into the void. Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven and London, 2007, 87.

12 P. Eisenman, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 97.

13 P. Eisenman, "Diagram and the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign", in: Diagram Diaries, Eisenman, New York, 210–215.

ject in architecture.[14] In other words, critical is related with a change (of character) of a relation between the architectural sign and signed.

How to, *in concreto*, achieve criticality in architecture, differs in various stages even more than its theoretical definition. The way in the followed time span, in 1990s and 2000s, was mostly a diagram. Diagram is not the only or the necessary way to a criticality in architecture. It is nevertheless a way that Eisenman was considering in a period I marked as late Eisenman. There are several essays to this topic. Some of them in a book on diagrams, called Diagram Diaries from 1999.[15] The book may be described as a notebook of diagrams. Eisenman tried to understand the diagram in connection with text and textuality. In Eisenman's words:

> "Generically, a diagram is a graphic shorthand. Though it is an ideogram, it is not necessarily an abstraction. It is a representation of something in that it is not the thing itself. In this sense, it cannot help but be embodied. It can never be free of value or meaning, even when it attempts to express relationships of formation and their processes. At the same time, a diagram is neither a structure nor an abstraction of structure. While it explains relationships in an architectural object, it is not isomorphic with it."[16]

And another citation on how the diagram is understood:

> "In architecture the diagram is historically understood in two ways: as an explanatory or analytical device and as a generative device. Although it is often argued that the diagram is a postrepresentational form, in instances of explanation and analysis the diagram is a form of representation. In an analytical role, the diagram represents in a different way than a sketch or a plan of a building. For example, a diagram attempts to uncover latent structures of organization, like the nine-square, even though it is not a conventional structure itself. As a generative device in a process of design, the diagram is also a form of representation. But unlike traditional forms of representation, the diagram as a generator is a meditation between a palpable object, a real building, and what can be called architecture's interiority."[17]

In these citations Eisenman described the diagram as a graphical means in which a logical structure of architecture is revealed; it shows form-giving relations. It is neither a ground plan or section, nor a sketch or drawing. Diagram may destabilize such conditions as place, program/function and meaning. With such a destabilization there is a negative condition entering architecture. This represents the diagram's strategy as a negative, resisting agent. In this context the diagram starts to disassociate form from function, form from content, and an architect from designing architecture. Diagram is acting as a blurring element that blurs the relation between the subject and object.[18] Due to the fact that even under this condition

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14 P. Eisenman, "Autonomy and the Will to the Critical", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 96.

15 P. Eisenman, *Diagram Diaries*, London, 1999.

16 P. Eisenman, "Diagram: An Original Scene of Writing", in: *Written into the void. Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven and London, 2007, 88.

17 Ibidem.

18 P. Eisenman, "Diagram and the Becoming Unmotivated of the Sign", in: *Diagram Diaries*, Eisenman, New York, 210–215.

architecture remains a productive discourse, it fulfils and must fulfil the necessary needs, full state of negativity is impossible.

As mentioned before, the diagram has never been the first or the only way to reach criticality in architecture. Eisenman tried many other ways. It was preceded by a self-reflexing sign and later by an index sign (both notions from 1970s and 1980s).[19] All arguably blind alleys. And it became clear that in the texts since early 2010s the diagram and diagram architecture have been abandoned for other options.

It is clear, as already mentioned above, that Eisenman constantly works and reworks his positions. It would be very interesting to study reasons for that. Nevertheless, as Jeffrey Kipnis stated in his introduction to Eisenman's second volume of selected writings: "One thing is clear: no outside agent, no colleague, critic, or client forces this change."[20] All this is in any case a part of act two, late Eisenman, and seems to be moved to the past. It looks like there emerged a new, third act of Eisenman's drama, very late Eisenman.

TOWARDS A LATENESS, ITS THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Lateness is yet another step on Eisenman's way toward criticality. Critical architecture in his view is architecture that was able to relieve itself of established power. Such an architecture was able to create an alternative (maybe only partial) and open a gap for some alternative meaning, for something new and unexpectable. By doing this it pushes discipline of architecture beyond status quo and ultimately contributes to helping in changing culture. This is something that in Eisenman's view architects should not do openly, only through their architecture – architects are not activists. What does it mean in particular – it depends on the particular author and in the case of Peter Eisenman also on the period of time. For him, it long used to be a metaphysical tradition of the West as it developed since the end of the Middle Ages. The architect has described it in about last thirty years as an obsessive inclination to understand all and every actual state of architecture as necessary and permanent. The metaphysical tradition (metaphysics of the present)[21] petrified all state of architecture, in principle unstable and ever-changing, and turned it into something seemingly unavoidable and inevitable. A task of critical architecture is demasking this illusion and offering a way out of this condition. But in *Lateness* there are hardly any mentions of the notion of criticality *per se*. The topic is – as quite often – present only in a few remarks that can be easily overlooked. All the attention is paid to the way how to achieve the criticality – and this is a typical Eisenman.

And the way is lateness. Eisenman derived this word from Theodor Adorno's specific usage of late style (*Spätstil*), used in Adorno's study of late Beethoven's works.[22] Unlike common usage – closing period of a style, as late baroque, or closing period of an artist's life, as late Michelangelo – Adorno, and after him Eisenman as well, wanted to redefine what the term "late" or "late style" means in arts. And it can be

19 See, for instance, H. F. Mallgrave, D. Goodman, *An Introduction to Architectural Theory*. 1968 to the present, Oxford, 2011, 131ff. Or by Eisenman himself the first volume of his writings; see P. Eisenman, *Eisenman Inside out*. Selected Writings 1963–1988, New Haven, London, 2004.

20 J. Kipnis, "Introduction: Act Two", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, VII.

21 See, for instance, P. Eisenman, L'ora che é stata, in: *op cit*., P. Eisenman, New Haen, London, 2007, 114ff. or else P. Eisenman, A Matrix in the Jungle, in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Heaven, London, 2007, 121ff.

22 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 11ff.

immediately said that it is mainly about a relation of a form of a piece of architecture (art) towards time.

In the study on Beethoven's late *ouvre*, Adorno is not focused on what was composed toward the end of the composer's life, it is not about "late Beethoven" – personal self-expression of an ageing composer.[23] There is a purely formalistic approach in the game of maintaining classic forms but changing compositional processes which unite particular parts into the classic whole. So, between parts sounding classically there are ruptures and breaks that make from a classic piece a non-classic collection of fragments. In a composition labelled by Adorno as "late" we do not encounter a refusal of classicism, nor a return to classicism or a will to create a new style; instead, we encounter composition that without belonging to the past or to forthcoming future nevertheless relates somehow to these two categories. Eisenman took this musical-critical idea over and adapted it for use in the discipline of architecture. In contrast to Adorno, the main difference is that from a purely analytical device it becomes a proactive tool. Lateness defines such a form (of architecture) where particular construction stones, taken from common repertoire of the time and place, are put together in a way that is completely out of a period usage. And precisely the fact that normal parts of a period are put together in a way that is *not* in accordance with the period style or usage frees the particular work from linear time and gives it a critical charge. Lateness presents according to Eisenman an alternative attitude towards form in time, while "the integrity of form is preserved at the scale of specific conventions, while at the same time, inherited notions of *how* one convention might relate to another are challenged or reinvented."[24]

With lateness Eisenman demarcates himself from either a modern or modernistic approach to history, which celebrated a break with history, or postmodern, which turned to history and made citations. In Eisenman's words: "Operating outside a strict dichotomy between transgression and regression, and remaining instead in the realm of the untimely, lateness is neither an explicit break with history nor an overt return to the past."[25] In the whole book Eisenman takes great care not to go any near to postmodernism with its citation of historical styles. This is in fact in accordance with permanent Eisenman's interest in the discipline's precedents, like his decades long interest in Giuseppe Terragni – quintessence of criticality for Eisenman,[26] which goes beyond questions of style.

Probably the most surprising detail about these new workings is the fact that they are completely built without all previous instruments. Gone is interiority and anteriority, unmotivated sign, weak form, diagram, as well as Pierce's triad of signs and even the metaphysics of presence. Derrida and Deleuzze, two authors so significant for Eisenman, are more absent than present, they are both there in just a single formal mention. It seems to be clear that this act does not need them. But even this should not surprise. A new act needs a new stage. We may speak of very late Eisenman.

It is never unproblematically easy with Eisenman. The thing is that this new position was influenced by a will to respond to the development of the world of

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23 T. W. Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven", in: *Essays on Music*, T. W. Adorno, Berkeley, 2002, 564.

24 Ibid, 20.

25 Ibidem.

26 P. Eisenman, Terragni and the Idea of a Critical Text, in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haen, London, 2007, 127ff.

computer and computer aided design (CAD) whose influence, or even storm, changes the world of architecture. This is not completely new, either.[27] As early as in 1980s, Eisenman was among the first architects trying to implement and to explore computer possibilities in the design process and in architecture in general. In the new book we find his attempt to think of the consequences of such "present-based avant-garde"[28], as called in the book, and an endeavour to offer some alternative. In the words "present-based" there is an echo of previous terminology (of late Eisenman), namely "metaphysics of the presence" – a tendency to petrify the ever-changing and ever-evolving state of architecture and turn it into something seemingly unavoidable and permanent. But now, it is no longer an unexpressed notion hidden "in the background" but a belief in present possibilities given by computers and technology. He puts in: "As scripts easily generate endless iterations of varied forms, the difference between one form and another is no longer a critical integer but instead the output of a totalizing mathematical process."[29]

The development of computer designing no longer allows, according to Eisenman, criticality in the way that things used to be created so far, up to circa 1990s, because processes leading to criticality in architectural form (diagram etc.) are now, due to computers, immediately available in countless variants and forms. Here Eisenman touches in historians of architecture, e.g. Mario Carpo, whose 2017 book *The Second Digital Turn*[30] follows these changes in CAD and the influence of computers on the world of architecture in general – from the first digital turn, which brought tools for designing to architects, to the second digital turn, i.e., tools "for thinking" – "… outlining how technologies that have the capacity to work with an abundance of data have made formal complexity increasingly possible…".[31] As a result, criticality is no longer (could no longer) be only a question of form – of creating a "new", "other" form of a piece of architecture, which would differ from an "uncritical" one. There is for sure an echo of radical "Technical Reproducibility" of Walter Benjamin, but this trail does not seem to be what Eisenman is interested in at the moment. Instant availability of virtually every form, limited only by the very limits of technology, is connected with the idealization of technology itself ("the techno-zeitgeist of today"[32]), and Eisenman marks that as a return to techno optimism at the beginning of 20th century and connects it with idealization of presence. This idealization was manifested in modernism as a "characteristic faith in the possibility of a new progressive paradigm"[33] and today is manifested as an adoration of an immediate disponibility; de facto freed from time.

The above-mentioned possibility of an alternative to digital avant-garde is given by the said thematization and problematization of a work of architecture's temporality. Eisenman tries to argument that unlike the digital building, idealizing the moment here and now, a work manifesting lateness is critical by being a composition of fragments in a way that could not be placed to a particular time (or timespan). This

27 For newer text see for instance P. Eisenman, „A Matrix in the Jungle", in: *op cit.*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 121.

28 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 7.

29 Ibid, 6.

30 M. Carpo, *The Second Digital Turn Design Beyond Intelligence*, Cambridge and London, 2017.

31 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 6.

32 Ibid, 7.

33 Ibid, 3.

kind of building becomes an undecidable condition, it manifests ambivalence toward time, it looks both forward and backward. It makes our here and now problematic. Criticality is not in the form (of piece of architecture) itself, but in the tensed relations of fragments of form to its time definition. The fragments themselves are not critical. Lateness could be understood as a form of indirect attack on the digital realm.

LATENESS IN THE WORKS OF ARCHITECTURE

As usual, Eisenman presents the position with a detailed discussion of particular works of some architects. This time, these include Adolf Loos, Aldo Rossi and John Hejduk. Eisenman, as a formalist, carefully reads the form of the selected buildings and shows where he has found a form "out of joints". The different architects cover the course of a whole century and particular examples are chosen so as to present lateness in the early stage, or at least not in the late stage, of an architect – i.e., examples are taken from the work of the early or middle Loos not only from the "late Loos" in terms of his lifespan. The selection of an architect also reveals the change in a stage in the new act. Although none of these architects is new for Eisenman[34] – all are present in his writing from the beginning – they took the place of the already mentioned G. Terragni or Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe or from the classical tradition of Brunelleschi, Alberti and Palladio – who usually played the role of critical instances.

Eisenman's analysis of Loos centres on *raumplan* and its relation to the vertical plane and windows. I think there should be little doubt that such architecture relates to its time in a highly ambivalent way. "If the modern aspired to be an idealization of time and technology, then the *raumplan* and its incongruous expression on the vertical surface must necessarily embody a temporal, as well as a formal, contradiction."[35] Because in part the house borrows from the past, for instance from the spatial sequences of 19th century houses, while in smooth abstract facades it relates more to that time modernity. "The conflict between past and present prevents each project form being stylistically categorized, creating formal contradictions that might be read as instances of lateness."[36] The important point is that in the case of Adolf Loos it is not a joint between the eras but a nonlinear break in time, in the course of architecture. While previously Eisenman thematized, for example, space and pictoriality: "The difference … between a space of Le Corbusier and a space of Adolf Loos would be in the different tropes used by each architect."[37]

While analyzing A. Rossi, Eisenman challenges the connection of Gallaratese housing complex in Milano and San Cataldo cemetery in Modena to modernistic and/or postmodernist typology and morphology. "…a close reading suggests a much greater dissonance between Rossi and his historical context, coupled with Rossi's desire to situate his theory of the city within a notion of time, the work could be

34 Take for example the name of the second volume of his writings: *Written into the Void* is an allusion on Adolf Loos's book *Ins Leere gesprochen* or "Spoken into the Void" (a modification from speaking to writing is characteristic of Eisenman's long interest of architecture as a way of producing texts i.e., writing. And ultimately it is based on the Derrida – Plato philosophical trope of difference between "life" speech and "death" text). See, for instance, P. Eisenman, "Written into the Void", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 80.

35 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 45.

36 Ibid, 25.

37 P. Eisenman, "Processes of the Interstitial", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 67.

reconceived not as postmodern, but rather late."[38] Rossi was for a long time part of Eisenman's thoughts as a critical project "relied on the reintroduction of history" and in particular: "Rossi's project concerned the development of archetypal elements that iterate in the course of history – domes, pediments, cylinders, and the like…"[39] Instead of archetypal elements Eisenman now stresses "a different sense of temporality" that "time [in his work] is neither linear nor evolutionary." And Eisenman continues: "Instead, each building is left to stand as an embodiment of its own time while also participating in the formation of the city in the present and future."[40]

The chapter on Hejduk seems to be crucial as only here comes the question "… whether a study of lateness can serve to reevaluate the nature of the critical in architecture."[41] In the case of John Hejduk Eisenman focuses on critical challenging of miesian precedents in the unrealized Texas Houses and corbusian precedents in the unrealized Wall Houses. Criticality is in the way Hejduk comes in his projects from Mies and Le Corbusier's projects and critically changes them. For example, Mies made by the house for Mrs. Farnsworth in Plano, Illinois a certain model of a construction with exposed structure (I-beams) in which the floor and ceiling planes are inserted. Hejduk was trying to see in his "reworkings" how far it is possible to go in such a construction; however, it was not in the interest of the engineer or statics, there are limits of cultural validity that is in the play. "…it would not be difficult to argue that the Texas Houses challenge the modernist assumptions of Cartesian space by making contradictions possible within its logic."[42] A similar way is taken in the case of Le Corbusier, where Hejduk was using the morphology of Villa Savoye at Poissy, the Carpenter Centre at Cambridge, the Massachusetts and Mill Owners' Association Building in Ahmadabad in India. Eisenman sees lateness in the way Hejduk rewrote disciplinary precedents – as for example the relation of a figure on the ground of a wall or a raster field, *in concreto*, a figure of an undulating wall on the background of a flat wall of a field of piers, as is the case of Villa Savoye. "It is apparent that every element of the Wall House comes from the formal repertoire of Le Corbusier … and yet our encounter with the Wall House is an experience unassimilable with Corbusian codes."[43] Hejduk did not build any of these projects, but they anyway represent challenging of a relation a particular author (Hejduk in this case) has to his time and the architecture of the period. Ultimately, these kinds of formal movements and dislocations are most significant since architecture has for Eisenman, even in the third act, a formal basis.

CRITICAL IN ARCHITECTURE, A FEW CASES FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

As already mentioned, criticality is always presented with particular examples and so it concerns architectural practice. The notion of criticality offers a possibility for architectural criticism. But it remained mainly unutilized and unexploited in the architectural discourse of the central Europe region (but it is mostly true of the architectural criticism itself too). However, there may be some cases in the course of

38 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 61.

39 See for instance P. Eisenman, „Autonomy and the Will to the Critical", in: *Written into the Void: Selected Writings*, P. Eisenman, New Haven, London, 2007, 98.

40 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 55.

41 Ibid, 63.

42 Ibid, 71.

43 M. K. Hays, *Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-garde*, Cambridege, 2009, 95.

20th Century that could be suitable for such an attitude. The way is shown in the case of Slovak architect Vladimír Dědeček (1929–2020) by a team consisting of, among others, Monika Mitášová and Marian Zervan.[44] The authors present deep and wide interpretations and architectural critique of Dědeček's built *ouvre* on more than 800 pages. Other architects of the region active in the second half of 20th century may include Karel Prager (1923–2001),[45] known for constant search for alternatives. From recent production, I believe, there are the buildings of architect Zdeněk Fránek that deserve critical attention.

In connection with the discussion of lateness and problematized temporality of the form of an architecture, I would like to briefly discuss two other works, both by prominent contemporary Czech architects. Both could mainly be characterized as neo-modern; partially minimalist in one case and contextualist in the other one.

Since the first feature of lateness is the lack of a correlation between the work and the personal chronologies of an architect, it could be a work from any period of an architect – it could be argued that in the reconstruction and enlargement of Palace Langhans in Prague[46] we can encounter characteristics of lateness. This large city house was reconstructed from 1997 to 2002 and completed with new parts (roof and other additions) by architect Ladislav Lábus. The criticality may be seen in the particular way the new elements (the additions) are inserted to the context of the building, and in the way the reconstruction of the original house itself was carried out in the context of the period (end of 1990s). Lábus's additions prove to be not a hinge of time and style from one period to another, following one – it would belie the temporal complexity of the resultant complex house; rather, it is an aporia in itself. First of all, the whole denies the unity of a style (it contains undecidable stylistic elements) and of a stylistic periodisation (it is neither modern nor postmodern, nor any other defined style). It looks neither forward nor backward; it makes its own time destination. It is valid from the ground part of the house, in its detailing (for instance: horizontal concrete fluting) up to the green louvred roof additions – the most independent entry of the architect. The result may seem a Venturi's difficult whole but is neither in postmodern style nor is it composed of citation of historical architecture. There is no direct citation or historical architectural morphology. In the key time of the Czech nation transformation during 1990s, the reconstruction and enlargement of the Palace Langhans in Prague city centre managed to capture the local discipline ideal of interwar (Czech) modernism without fully fulfilling its requirements (and in this it went both with and against the grain of the time) and at the same time managed to formulate others' wishes for compact congested city of corridor streets in accordance with the historical tissue of the city (and again it goes with and against the grain). Despite its popularity in local architectural discourse, it seems to be an alternative that has not had many descendants yet.

The other example goes a similar but at the same time a very different way. The common journal criticism holds the new building of Faculty of Architecture (2004–2010)[47] at Czech Technical University in Prague, a work of a team of Alena Šrámková, as neofunctionalism or neo-modernism. To a large extent it is so. It is seemingly very far from all criticality. But it could be argued it is an instance of

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44 M. Mitášová, *Vladimír Dedeček. Interpretácie architektonického diela*, Bratislava, 2017.

45 R. Sedláková, *Karel Prager. Lidé di na nové věci teprve musí zvyknout*, Prague, 2013.

46 R. Sedláková, *Architekt Ladislav Lábus*, Prague, 2004, 96ff.

47 R. Švácha, *Alena Šrámková architektura*, Praha, 2020.

lateness as well. It fulfils all criteria of Eisenman's "possible definition of lateness."[48] From the point of view of its inhabitants, the whole does not fulfill its duty smoothly and seamlessly, it demands the user's attention. It is demanding. From the point of view of the author, she neither has rejected the rules of history, nor invented now forms. Rather, she returned in the building to the dominant conventions of the time (i.e., modernistic conventions) in order to interrogate their formal and internal relations. These relationships bring us to the idea of lateness. Namely, how the kahnian, minimalistic and possibly also postmodern tropes are inserted, and thus influenced the neofunctional or corbusean body of the building itself (as grafts). But what is important, it is not a personal caprice or self-expression and on the other hand it is not a refusal of convention in the name of novelty. The "strange" parts (like kahnian stars in the form of a concrete cylinder in one atrium or three auditoriums "added" from the side to the building like three strange unequal growths) could be fully described in terms of lateness as: "the decontextualized conventions that characterize lateness, destabilize ideological, stylistic, or historical narratives, which generates the untimely character of these works, now understood as a contingent and temporal displacement."[49] Unlike Palace Langhans where criticality concerns a town house and its context, here the criticality turns "inwards" towards the users of the building who are forced to struggle with it, with its very form. Ultimately, I see the criticality of the building in the fact that in the Czech architectural world that permanently idealizes interwar Czech modernism and functionalism the building problematizes this heritage (without refusing it or destroying it). It does not "establish a new temporal horizon in the present that projects into the future; in its temporal ambiguity, it looks both forward and backward in time."[50]

Both buildings I have decided to present as instances of lateness are in the Czech architectural world, in the Czech architectural discourse in a different – one may say incompatible – context than criticality. Usually, they are presented with the notion of authenticity, the true and long-term inheritance of Czech austerity and purity. On the other hand, I am quite aware of the fact that both show a stubborn temporal irresolution, an undeniable untimeliness but at the same time only a modest and unpretentious criticality. Both buildings also show that criticality (and lateness as its manifestation) is something that does not dwell in the building in itself and easily but must be "discovered", carefully read in a "close reading". But both mentioned buildings clearly demand such a reading. Nevertheless, a critical approach based on lateness would be able to demonstrate that both these building could be reread as part of different trajectories that cut them off the mainstream narrative and imagination of Czech architecture. That is – I believe – one of the goals of lateness..

CONCLUSION

Eisenman has not written as an historian and his last act is in line with it. What we encounter in all three acts is a pondering of architect who thinks of (his own as well as others') architecture with the view (a goal) of creating new, other architecture that is culturally valid. Such an inquiry or endeavour demands "…that the only reason for architecture, as opposed to building or utilitarian function is to – as painting, as literature, as music – demand attention to other than the functional, the narrative,

48 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 93.
49 Ibid, 98.
50 Ibid, 100.

the actual being of things…"[51] In a nutshell, as he is capable when speaking "live", Eisenman made a short summation of critical architecture, of architecture that demands attention (a close reading from architect, another encounter from a layman); because the very thoughts provoking the form of architecture is precisely what is needed and what differentiates architecture from mere building. In other words, when reading (encountering) such an architecture (as is the case with literature) "…you are not reading just a narrative; you are forced to pay attention to the writing."[52]

In this context, it seems to be clear that three case studies of Loos, Rossi and Hejduk are examples illuminating the way to create late architecture at the moment. Examples of architecture that expose "…other dimension, the demand for attention."[53] Unlike previous propositions, like diagram architecture or architecture based on various types of signs, in lateness the criticality does not "dwell" in the form itself – it is not the form and its parts that is critical *per se*. Criticality comes in undecidable relations of parts of form (fragments of form) to their temporal condition. Analysis showed that in all three case-studies fragments of form relate problematically to their time. And this may be understood as a proposition for others to come with consciously critical architecture, with late architecture.

My present paper started, however, with a brief summation of the previous position, called late Eisenman, and explaining what could be understood under the heading of criticality. I used K. M. Hays and his texts on critical architecture as I believe it is a suitable introduction. Then I continued to explain a previous way towards criticality, namely the diagram architecture and what a diagram in architecture means. One of the difficulties everyone has to bear in mind is the evolving of a changing terminology of Peter Eisenman. And this is the role of critics and theoreticians to guide us through the jungle and (try to) find a matrix there – as one of the architect's texts is named, in a different context. As a next step comes the new position with the above-mentioned studies of the 20th century examples. For architects it may be the crucial part, because it could lead them in their own creating process. But in any case, lateness is both an analytical and proactive notion.

The three instances of Loos, Rossi and Hejduk reveal, according to Eisenman, four characteristics of lateness. First, lateness should not be confused with the late style of either a period (late modernism) or an architect's *ouvre*, As a second, lateness does not have any single formal configuration or aesthetic preference. Eisenman only stresses that lateness tends to express itself in disjunction and fragmentation. Lateness, thirdly, does not support any style, it is an oppositional strategy – creating cultural significance, criticality with the position in-between (as defined by K. M. Hays above). And the last characteristic of lateness is that it expresses untimeliness. It could not be easily related to a particular time. In academic terms, it would be interesting to debate these characteristics with either Eisenman's own previous terms or with other critical attitudes. Of much greater significance for the discipline of architecture as well as culture in general would be to follow these options for the newly emerging architectural works.

At the end, I can conclude that we see clear crystallization of his position toward critical theory and critical architecture as well as toward timeliness. It is worth mentioning that Peter Eisenman, with Elisa Iturbe, was able to connect his critical thinking

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51 V. Djokic and P. Bojanic, Peter Eisenman in Dialogue with Architects and Philosophers, Belgrade, 2017, 32.

52 Ibid, 32.

53 Ibid, 32.

and propositions with the recent developments in the world of architecture, namely the digital realm of computers, etc. At the very end, let us take Eisenman's word about what lateness may bring: "…a different critical mode might emerge in questions about the relationship between form and time, proposed in the term *lateness*."[54]

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54 P. Eisenman, *Lateness*, Princeton and Oxford, 2020, 102.

Јиржи ТУРЕК
ПРОМЕНЕ САВРЕМЕНИХ СТАВОВА У КРИТИЧКОЈ АРХИТЕКТУРИ И ПОЈАМ ОКАСНЕЛОСТИ

Циљ овог рада је да представи истраживање критичке архитектуре архитекте Питера Ајзенмана и различите начине достизања критичности у архитектури. Рад посебно представља последњу фазу еволуирајућег истраживања критичности која је представљена у књизи под називом *Окаснелост* (2020) која нуди кристализацију Ајзенмановог става према овој теми. Критичност и критичка архитектура дефинисани су у складу са теоретичаром К. Хејсом као архитектура или став који не служи слепо главној струји моћи/доминантној култури, али се с друге стране, не повлачи из света у чисто формалну структуру одвојену од непредвиђених околности места и времена. Критичка архитектура остаје између ова два екстремитета. Овај прилог потом објашњава различите начине критичности. Дуго је то био дијаграм који је осигуравао критичност. Али у последњем периоду појавио се нови термин и нови предлог. А то је окаснелост. Окаснелост, инспирисана проучавањем Адорнове композиције касног Бетовена, израз је који је Ајзенман употребио за означавање (делова) архитектуре у којој су облик или фрагменти форме проблематично повезани са њиховим одређивањем времена. Облик зграде састоји се од фрагмената (делова) који се не могу одредити у смислу стила или временског периода. Оно што је важно у овом контексту је да критичност не „обитава" у самој форми. Критичност сада укључује однос између форме и времена. Касност је представљена као реакција на савремену архитектуру. Као и са архитектонском критиком.
Кључне речи: теорија архитектуре, критичност, критичка архитектура, Питер Ајзенман, време, форма