

On Reading, Anxiety and Water:
A Sanatorium on the Toronto Portlands

by

Shelton Foo

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Abstract:

The thesis is comprised of three essays and a design project of a fictional sanatorium and attached public park for the Toronto Portlands. The project basically pursues a sense of architectural place that is most clearly expressed in Literary Realism which seeks to convey a moment of clarity and understanding through a direct focus on arbitrary details. The site itself is located and balanced between two views alternately looking outwards, over the lake, towards an horizon of *otium* or reflecting back, across the harbour, to the skyline of Toronto and a complimentary horizon of *negotium* thereby defining a basic focus for the project. The fictional sanatorium accommodates the vast and subtle range of anxieties and stresses today, providing reading as a central means to recovery. The particular impulses and conflicts addressed therein are not solely self-referential conditions of illness but provide powerful amplifications of conditions that are not only common, but also intimate to almost every life in the placeless modern city. Each of the essays in this thesis focuses the world through a distinct relationship to reading ranging from contemporary fascination to an archaic anxiety to a clear release from reading. This thesis aims, overall, to identify a contemporary type of place that responds to modern life with all its contradiction and complexity and change, but finally both the focus and programme of the thesis are most simply condensed as a nice place for people to read.

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Table of Contents	Page Number
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Illustrations	vi
Introduction and A House on the Portlands	1
Part A - On Reading:	13
1) Reading and Place	14
2) Mimesis – <i>Reflections</i> - Walter Benjamin	16
3) The Pantheon and <i>The Odyssey</i> - Erich Auerbach	18
4) Historical Crisis – <i>Man and Crisis</i> - Jose Ortega y Gasset	22
5) Modern Place and Fascination - <i>The Magic Mountain</i> - Thomas Mann	26
6) Architecture, Place and contemporary reading	30
Part B - On Reading Anxiety:	33
1) Modern Anxiety - <i>I'm Not Stiller</i> - Max Frisch	34
2) Illness and Freud - <i>The Confessions of Zeno</i> – Italo Svevo	46
3) The Unconscious Body - <i>Migraine</i> - Oliver Sacks	52
4) Toothache and Phenomenology	58
5) (a)part: place and recovery by reading	60
Part C - On Water:	63
1) Modern Realism – moment, clarity and place	64
2) Ernest Hemingway – simplicity and landscape	68
3) Clean Place	72
Design Projects: A Sanatorium and Public Park	76
Public Park Description + Overall Site Plan	78
Public Reading Gallery Description + Site Plan Reading Gallery Drawings and Renderings	80
Sanatorium Residence Description + Site Plan Sanatorium #1 Drawings and Renderings	90
Concluding Note – return to the city.	103
End Notes	104
Bibliography	106

List of Illustrations:

0.1	Cherry Beach - Panorama from summer to winter	2
0.2	House on the Portlands - Site Photos, Plan and Chronology	4
0.3	House on the Portlands - Ground Floor Plan	6
0.4	House on the Portlands - Underground Floor Plan	8
0.5	House on the Portlands - Sections b + c	10
0.6	House on the Portlands - Section a	12
1.1	Pantheon Interior, Rome, Italy	13
1.2	On Reading - Chapter Visual Bibliography.	14
1.3	Pantheon Plan and Section.	18
1.4	Pantheon Interior View Collage, Rome, Italy.	20
1.5	Cherry Beach Shoreline Detail.	22
1.6	Water	31
2.1	On Anxiety - Chapter Visual Bibliography and Health Pamphlet	33
2.2	Cherry Beach - Winter Panorama	34
2.3	Advertisement for Toronto Harbour Commision (1911)	36
2.4	Water	40
2.5	Cherry Beach - Winter - View Towards Lake Ontario	42
2.6	Migraine Diagram	52
2.7	Diagram of Main Human Organs and Autonomic Pathways.	54
2.8	View from Cherry Beach back towards Toronto Skyline.	62

3.1	On Water - Chapter Visual Bibliography	63
3.2	View of Beach, Varadero, Cuba.	64
3.3	Water	66
3.4	Water - Photos Fountain Place, Dallas, Texas. Atomic Structure of Carbon in Diamond Simple Double Skin - Textile Project from M1	74
3.5	Water - Collage - Moment of All Waters	75
4.1	Site Photos and Historical Images Site Panorama Along Keating Channel.	76
4.2	Aerial Site Plan and Programme	77
4.3	Public Reading Gallery and Park - Aerial Site Plan and Programme	79
4.4	Public Reading Gallery - Site Photos and Plan Panoramic View of Toronto Skyline from North-West Corner of Site	81
4.5	Public Reading Gallery - Ground and Underground Floor Plans	82
4.6	Public Reading Gallery - Second to Fourth Floor Plans	83
4.7	Public Reading Gallery - Sections a + b	84
4.8	Public Reading Gallery - Sections c + d	85
4.9	Cargo Ship Docked at Western End of Site	87
4.10	Public Reading Gallery - Digital Renderings	88
4.11	Public Reading Gallery - Vignettes of Approach and View From Interior	89
4.12	Sanatorium 1 - Site Photos and Plan Panoramic View of Salt Storage Along Keating Channel	91

4.13	Sanatorium Residence - Raised Courtyard Level Plan	92
4.14	Sanatorium Residence - Underground Courtyard Level Plan	93
4.15	Typical Sanatorium Residence Unit - Plans and Sections	94
4.16	Sanatorium 1 - Front Elevation and Site Section	95
4.17	Sanatorium 1 - Approach from West to East up Earth Ramp	96-97
4.18	Sanatorium 1 - Digital Perspective Renderings and Materials	98-99
4.19	Sanatorium 1 - Digital Perspective Renderings and Materials	100-101
4.20	Return to The City - Author's Painting - Oil on Canvas.	102



**on reading, anxiety and water:
a sanatorium on the toronto portlands**

Introduction + A House on the Portlands

But, once again, let me hark back to Faulkner's concept of "seeing the world in a grain of sand." The job of a writer, it seems to me, is to focus very finely on a thing, a place, a person, act, phenomenon...and then, when the focus is right, to understand, and then render the subject of that focus in such a way that it appears suddenly in context – the reader's context, regardless of who the reader happens to be, or where.
Pg.264 Fear and Loathing in America. Hunter S. Thompson.

0.1 - cherry beach - panorama from summer to winter



All good books are alike in that they are truer than if they had really happened and after you are finished reading one you will feel that all that happened to you and afterwards it all belongs to you; the good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse and sorrow, the people and the places and how the weather was.
By-Line, Ernest Hemingway. 1952

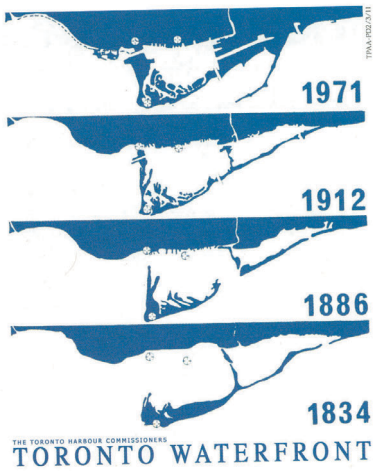
This thesis pursues a basic sense of architectural place that is most clearly expressed in Literary Realism. In order to convey a sense of direct, unedited and immediate reality, modern Realism pursues a clear focus on almost arbitrary details. The central aim of this radical focusing is to render a moment, a flash in both time and the individual, that conveys a sense of clarity, context and understanding. The pursued understanding is unarticulated but not less specific for it, and rather richer, more personal and more vital. These moments are most clearly conveyed by Hemingway, as feeling “truer than if they had really happened.” Accordingly, both the research and perspective of the thesis are pursued and identified by literary and architectural moments, as they offer the most real and potent means to explore place.

This thesis aims to identify a contemporary type of place that responds to life in the modern city with all its contradiction and complexity. Place is most fundamentally a physical experience, akin to an impulse or an emotion, that conveys a whole sense of understanding. Rather than a focus rendered through language, architecture provides a physical, and therefore more basic, means of focusing the body and landscape, each as “a grain of sand.” Architectural place describes an experience equivalent to the moment, conveying a sense of physical understanding, clarity, context or most simply: a sense of place in the world. It can be described explicitly as an experience that is open, clear, stark, rich, vital or any number of adjectives, but both the focus and programme of the thesis are most practically condensed as a nice place for people to read.

As an initial delineation, place is necessarily defined by the landscape and more specifically by the site of a project. As a result, this thesis, and the type of place that is pursued, is largely defined by the thesis site, located on the Toronto Portlands. One of the most significant factors has been the unusual unselfconscious sense of place found in the Portlands, that arises from a combination of its isolation, landscape and history. The post-industrial site is located and balanced between two views alternately looking outwards, over the lake, to the horizon or reflecting back, across the harbour, to the skyline of Toronto. Further influences and limits to this thesis are the particular range of novels and essays that have been encountered, by recommendation, by discussion and by chance. Finally, most undeniably and also most unidentifiably, individual impulses, ideas and fascinations have become mixed and confused with everything else. As with many things, this thesis is necessarily composed of uncertainties, intuitions and naiveties that are both recognized and unrecognized. Even fundamental modes of relating to the world become ultimately unclear as, for example, resignation, or a deliberate willed acceptance or an actual open acceptance offer simple relationships to name, but in any individual become inextricably mixed and redefined with the most crucial consequences. It is these difficult to define impulses and doubts that seem closest to the vital aspects of contemporary place, and in response, this project presents an attempt to clarify and accommodate them within a sanatorium/library and public park.

The thesis is comprised of three essays and a design project of a fictional sanatorium and attached public park for the Toronto Portlands. The essays loosely describe three simultaneous and superimposed worlds in an attempt to articulate and convey a contemporary type of place for reading. The design projects frame and test this type of place at different scales, ranging from a small private house, to a complex community of individuals and families in an international sanatorium. The specific sense of place is also amplified and clarified at a monumental scale, in a public reading gallery and drinking water reservoir. The project operates through a focus and amplification of arbitrary details, in particular of reading, anxiety and water, attempting to render them engaging and clear, and hopefully allowing individual moments of place or at least some respite from everyday anxiety. The basic relationship of the project to the city and the landscape is established by a small salt-water ecosystem that is a found condition in the center of the site. A city dump for snow collected from streets and highways has left a high concentration of salt that subsequently allows the growth of salt-water ecosystem of plants and bugs. The spontaneous and awkward relationship between city and nature breaks several habitual narratives and describes instead an interdependent and hopeful possibility. The largest design gesture of the project is a monumental water-filtering system carved into the western end of the site that directly articulates this condition and simultaneously creates 150,000m² of literally unstable ground for the park. The main sources of pollutants are the salt and garbage dumps that operate year round on the site, as well as a fictitious centralized dump for snow cleared off city streets. The filtration is achieved generally through whatever types and mixtures of plants manage to survive and more specifically at several inhabitable points of mechanical treatment. The water filtering is made engaging by devices such as a simple system of organization and shifting floating wooden platforms, but furthermore by various uses including the creation of a swimming pool, and an ultimate concentration as clean drinking water.

0.2 - a house on the portlands (initial design project) - a residence for 2 people and 2000 books - site photo and plan

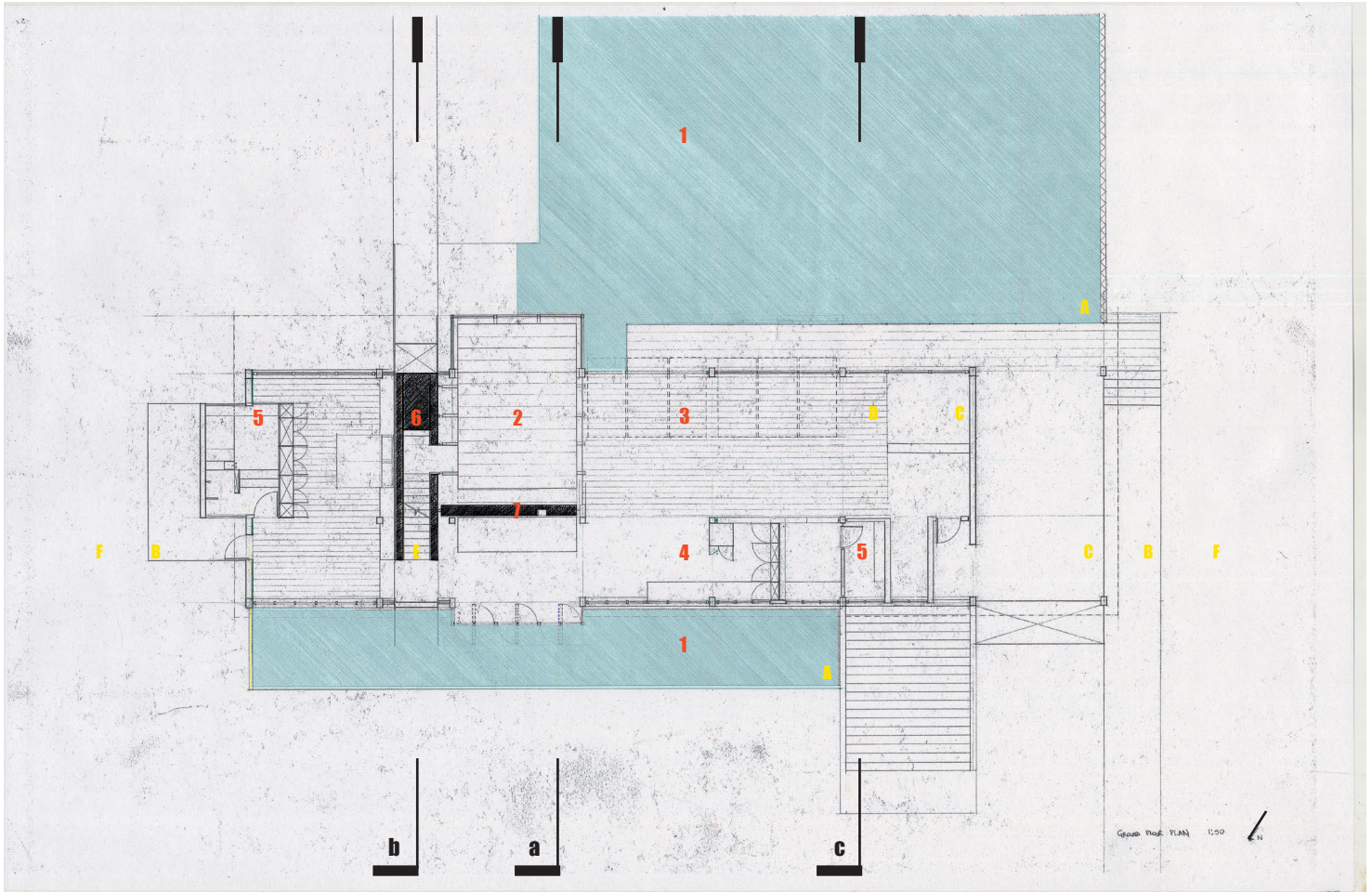


The first world that is framed and focused in the thesis, is the everyday modern experience of the city. It is the usual world of comfortable experience and social activity where the explicit contemporary values are defined by cultural abstractions ranging from *speed, fashion, image and multiplicity* to faith, tradition, art or politics. The opening essay, *On Reading*, explores reading as a means to approach a sense of understanding or meaning within this world of overwhelming pace, plenitude and change that makes stable understanding no longer practically possible or even necessary. Each of the essays in this thesis focuses the modern city through a distinct relationship to reading. This first world is distinguished by a general absence of reading and understanding. Most simply, convenience and consumption present two contemporary values that render reading and understanding as a lapse in product design. The modern city has progressed well beyond any question of material survival and instead is able to produce and support a society of individuals that are freed to operate with only abstract and specialized understandings, if that. Furthermore, the continually spectacular advances in knowledge and material developments outpace and over-extend any hope for comprehensive understanding and a culturally defined sense of place. However, this world cannot be crudely dismissed as hollow or mundane, but instead is easily recognized as providing possibilities, joys, and utilities of the first rank, even by the fantastical range of products available today.

This first world is most clearly read in the functional programme of the public park which describes a list of features and attractions, utilities and functions. Cherry Beach is the most compelling component of the Portlands site and remains largely untouched, conveying already a pebbly hollow edge to the land and a seemingly stark sunlight. However, a wide range of amenities is provided to complement the beach, ranging from a news-stand and washrooms to a small public market, a soon to be existing ferry terminal, and a large public swimming pool that is carved into the ground and embedded adjacent to the beach. The main building is a public reading gallery, framing views across the site and providing a place for people to read or just sit, similar to the programme of a beach. Amenity encapsulates many aspects of the modern relationship to the world through consumption and convenience. The design project, arbitrarily draws out of the site several of these modern values and narratives as amenities, and frames them in a strange or unusually direct manner. The expansive public swimming pool awkwardly allows swimming only adjacent to the lake, which is too polluted in general, but the pool is furthermore placed explicitly within the water filtration system as merely a contingent stage in the process of hopelessly pouring clean water into the lake.

Ultimately, this first world presents the modern cultural world focused upon abstractions and products, without the need and, subsequently, desire to read or understand. New modes of reading and mimesis still allow engagement to the many new modes of production largely operating on and with an ungrounded cultural surface and its narratives (like fashion). Although this reading or experience of the world provides many comforts and also amazing fascinations, making it possibly the greatest, this somewhat superficial relationship to the world is ultimately rendered uncertain and hollow, not only by reading and reflection, but far more primarily and effectively by a disconcerting layer of direct individual experience. A common experience today originates from an occasional sense, even a bodily impulse, of phoniness or nausea with the cultural world in general or much more reasonably and responsibly, outrage at social, economic or political conditions found today. These impulses, or moments, convey an experience that is both conscious and unconscious, but containing an inherent, although obscure, sense of understanding and offering a window onto place. Still, these impulses, whether major or minor, are easily ignored or pacified, rendering reading or understanding unnecessary. The problems are typically precipitated only by a crisis that somehow makes these impulses overwhelming and unavoidable, rendering the typical rationalizations, including various types of faith, both insufficient and unsatisfactory. Naturally, these conditions may also be confronted out of a perverse choice.

0.3 - a house on the portlands - ground floor plan - approximate scale 1:250 - original scale 1:50



Programme :

- 1** - reflecting pools
- 2** - living area (suspended)
- 3** - dining room
- 4** - kitchen
- 5** - washroom
- 6** - water reservoir
- 7** - book storage

Materials :

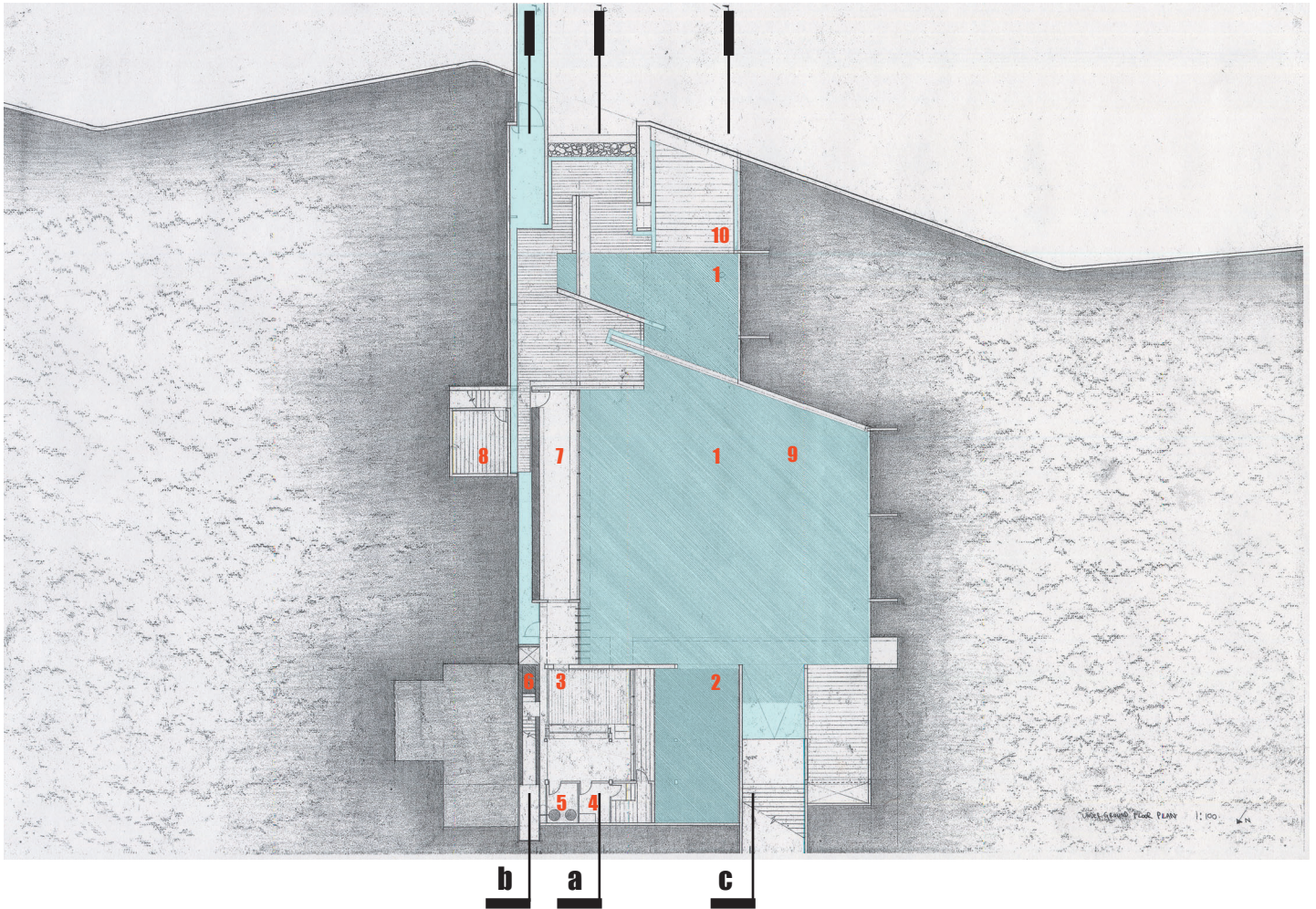
- A** - water
- B** - loose gravel
- C** - concrete
- D** - wood
- E** - steel
- F** - grass, scrub and bushes

The second world of the essay is defined by anxiety and doubt that is essentially modern in origin. It is a world in which the individual having stepped away from the cultural world, feels lost and disoriented, standing on unstable ground, and in search for some sort of understanding or meaning or, again more simply and architecturally: place. The loss of social datums to doubt, encompasses almost all of the historical and modern possibilities for individual place including religion and tradition, as well as, science and technology. In a complex intertwining, uncertainty and social proprieties act to amplify each other and the anxieties that they each cause within the individual. The second essay focuses on these modern anxieties and their potent translation into physical illness and thereby tracing indirectly the relationships between mind and body, between conscious and unconscious, the basic relationships that remain central to architecture and place. Reading, in this essay, plays dual roles acting both as a central cause of the crisis, as well as, the most vital means to recovery and cure.

Reading in part entails a questioning that easily slides into doubt and anxiety in a search for understanding or place in the modern city. This is enabled, in part, by the abstract basis of modern cities and modern life, ranging comprehensively from capitalism and science to the politics of liberal-democracy. These cultural conditions cannot be posited as a cause of any illness, but are likely to underlie or frame the more intimate, immediate and intense causes of individual anxieties. To be clear, individuals live in cities and are thereby in part defined by the reigning values, narratives and social conditions or lack thereof. Anxiety is necessarily intimate but ultimately, by its very intimacy, common to everyone in vital aspects that are engaged by place. In each of the novels explored in the essay, individual reading and a moment of recognition act as a means to a paradoxical cure and recovery from various specifically modern anxieties.

The second world is addressed most directly by the main programme of a sanatorium for anxiety and the many wide ranging related conditions. Reading provides one of the most powerful means to recovery and the project is accordingly programmed as a large library and a reading gallery that also serves the public of Toronto. The reading gallery provides a place to be (a)part allowing individuals to be distanced from and, at the same time, or, more accurately, as a result, engaged with the city, society and ourselves. This is generated primarily by the location of the site, but also articulated through programming, tectonics, and various features set into the architecture and landscape. The balancing sense of being (a)part brings into focus the unfamiliar framing of the body, views and amenities and they begin to seem more apt and, rather than appearing excusably odd, allow an individual refocusing and hopefully begin to describe a sense of place across the site.

0.4 - a house on the portlands - underground floor plan - approximate scale 1:500 - original 1:100



- Programme :**
- 1 - water filtration pools**
 - 2 - semi-exterior swimming pool**
 - 3 - guest room**
 - 4 - washroom**
 - 5 - services**
 - 6 - water reservoir**
 - 7 - book storage**
 - 8 - sauna**
 - 9 - seasonal dining**
 - 10 - exterior study**

- Filtration System :**
- A - heavy metals**
 - B - phosphorous**
 - C - nitrogen**
 - D - swimming**

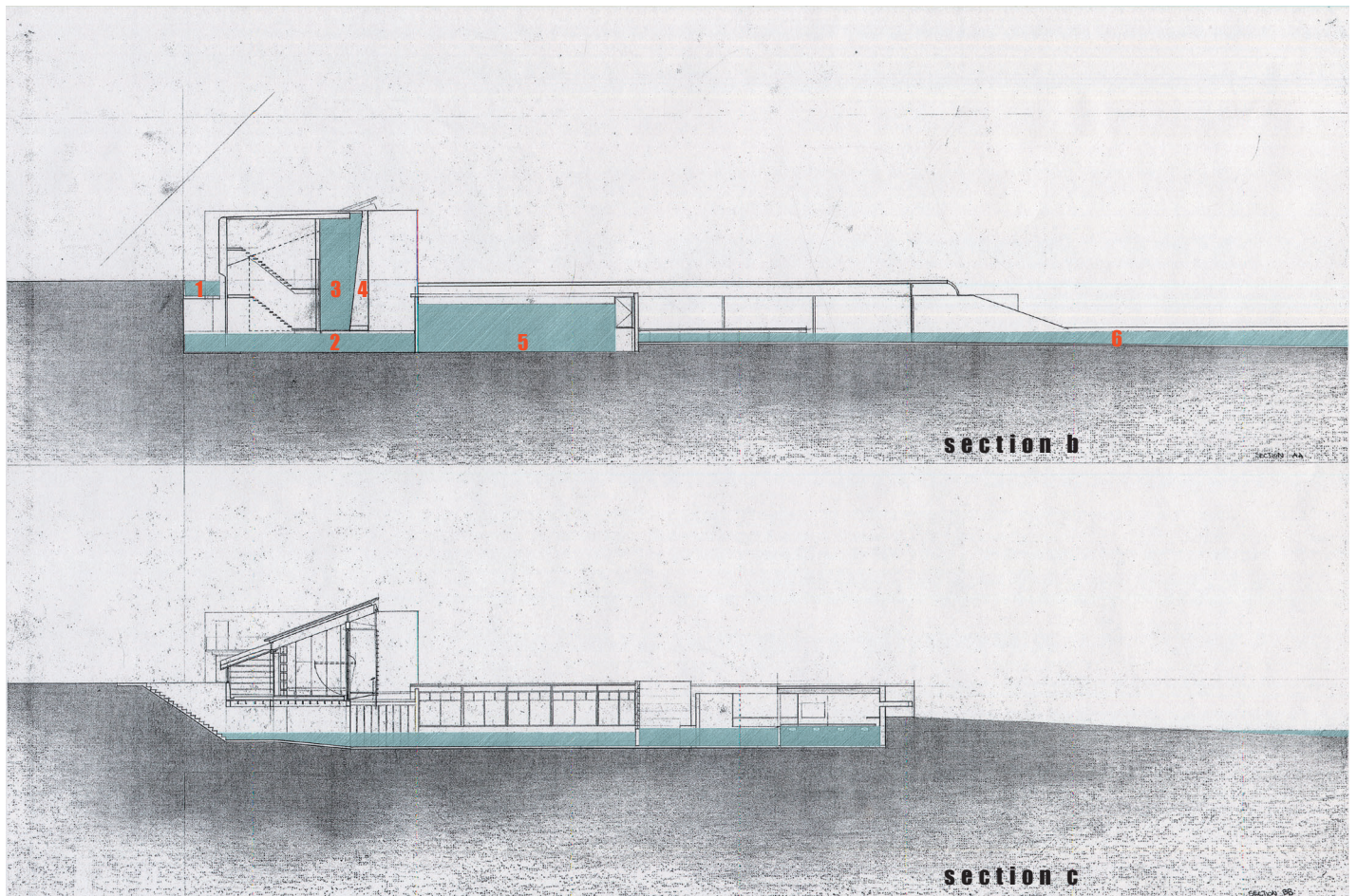
The third world in the thesis lasts only for a moment, but conveys an open and clear relationship to the world. This world moves past conscious reading and willed effort to an unselfconscious and open experience of place in the world. Not only is this moment ideally free of explicit values and narratives but, most vitally, for a second there is no longer a searching need, neither introverted nor extroverted, for meaning and understanding. The essay, *On Water*, explores Modern Realism through the work of Ernest Hemingway and other modern novelists. Through rendering a focus on seemingly arbitrary details as clearly as possible, Hemingway pursues a moment in his stories which somehow floats free and thereby illuminates many other moments, actions and ideas throughout the novel, both in what has already passed and pages yet to be read, and so defining a particular modern sense of place.

The moment does not capture an articulated understanding, but something read across the story and precipitated or released by another arbitrary occurrence. Although these mimetic moments, as well as the experience of place, dissipate or obscure quickly, when they are remembered they provide a contemporary type of datum to allow an individual sense of orientation or clarity. Architecture uses the full scale and immediate medium of the body, buildings and landscape rather than written language, but both are able to provide means to clarify reality for a moment. A number of specific architectural devices are used to focus the landscape and articulate the pursued sense of place including generally parti, tectonics, scale, and materials, each allowing mimetic articulations or also by various dialectical means such as programming. In defining place, the landscape comes into focus as a real and vital datum, and especially so in relation to architecture.

The type of place is generated primarily by the landscape itself as the site sits on the edge of the city and is nicely isolated by history, zoning, and development thus far, but also by a shipping channel with a raisable bridge, and a faint sense of a peculiarly clean light unique to the Toronto Portlands and other post-industrial sites. The clear focus of engaging distance can also be inherent to architecture itself. The design projects, in part, seek to magnify some modern architectural impulses and the ability to create empty space, but re-employed to clearly emphasize a distancing solitude and its compliment (whatever the personal case). Tectonics provide another device for articulation wherein ancient forms like barrel or groin vaults can be used for a sense of physical compression, rather than an image of classical style, allowing a series of arches to effectively generate a massive ground on a site composed loosely of backfill, sand and silt. The buildings attempt to frame the landscape in a basic and direct manner in order to spur a re-vision out of habitual modes and ultimately a re-placement within the city and modern world. This semi-subversive focus attempts to frame the overall experience of the site as an (a)partness.

The main gesture of the reading gallery is a generation of a sense of location through sheer mass, both physical and psychological. The spine of the reading gallery is an opaque steel drinking water reservoir that culminates the water filtration system. The basic sense of location conveyed by the mass of water is emphasized by its various functions as a material marker of an edge of the landscape, a thermal store, a divider of views, a threshold, *and etc.* all of which is drinkable and, hopefully, clean tasting. The most vital feature, however, remains latent and is only revealed in those dangerous yet serene moments of seasonal flooding that release the whole massive wall to rise and float, displaying a careful and vital balance, while simultaneously reorienting the floor levels, views and circulation of the reading gallery. The reservoir is connected to the series of bearing walls by hydraulic shocks to facilitate the ideal moment balancing the weight of the steel reservoir with the buoyancy of the compartmentalized air in its base, allowing an individual to raise the whole place by their own hands.

0.5 - a house on the portlands - section b+c - approximate scale 1:500 - original 1:100



- Thermal Water Reservoir:**
- 1 - rainwater collection**
 - 2 - water storage (steady temperature)**
 - 3 - water**
 - 4 - fireplace**
 - 5 - secondary storage**
 - 6 - return to lake**

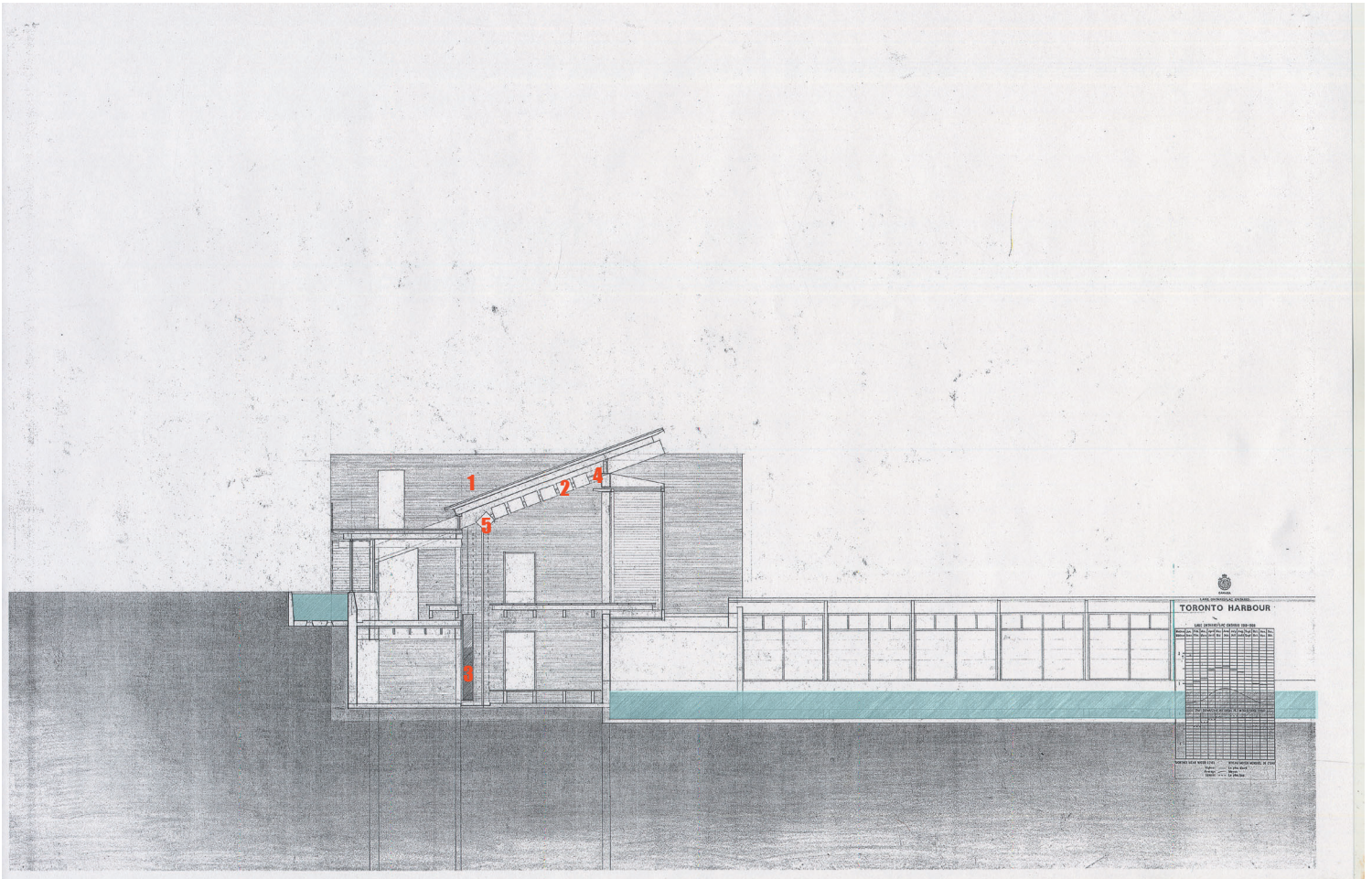
Water exemplifies many aspects of Realism and provides a central focus for the design projects. A diverse range of water types and conditions are found over the site with many specific focal points including variously season, temperature, rain and snow, or fluid surfaces, light, colours and pollutants or drought and flood. The overall gesture, however, aims towards release from these various details, differences and narratives, in a return to the beach which, after all and everything, is great because it is really about nothing. This third world, when considered practically and without elaboration, finally entails a simple, but vital, return to the first world of fascination, amenities and ultimately...the city.

In the end, these three worlds present only condensations of many other readings in an attempt to describe and convey a modern type of place for reading. However, even within the thesis narrative, these worlds are unstable and constantly flicker. First, the essays are ordered deceptively as three stages, but the worlds they describe are collapsed in reality, and emerge depending solely upon the focus and perspective, or mood, of the individual. Each of the worlds wax and wane upon the complexities of individual attention and unconscious, while the the thesis attempts to describe a framing and holding of all three experiences by an architecture. A second problem arises from the practical similarities between the first and third worlds that makes confusion and misunderstanding a constant possibility even in the surest of individuals. This is conveyed simply in the vital distinction between a promise and an empty promise, in which the outward appearances are so similar that they can easily replace each other during moments of weakness, fatigue or indifference despite every conscious effort and will to the contrary, and with crucial consequences for modern place. Finally, any sense of place is difficult to express as place is partially based in a bodily and unconscious type of understanding, that is inherently opposed to specific identification and definition. Articulation necessarily freezes the subject of its focus, while place, and life, are essentially vital, changing and intimate.

Returning to architecture and place, the activity of reading allows a distinct type of engagement (a)part that allows the possibility of place today. Reading requires a place to be (a)part. This term conveys the mode or spatiality of reading which is both engaged as “ a part” rendering an intimate and embodied understanding, with a simultaneous distancing “apart” allowing clarity and individuality. Architecture can return an immediacy to the landscape by engaging and allowing use of fundamental datums such as ground, horizon and sun. At a basic level, the structural rhythms or grid of a building can be revealed and focused outwards to frame and articulate site specificities and views. Unusual tectonics and programming provide a powerful means of generating a cultural distance and spurring a real engagement past typical and habitual images and understandings.

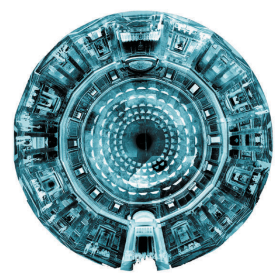
Place ideally allows the individual to find their own touchstones, seek expression for impulses and release from anxiety. The faculty of mimesis re-employed through modern realism allow for an unstable contemporary ground to be re-made as a foundation for place both physically and psychologically. In the end, the project does not present a direct solution for anxieties and the modern condition but creates a place on the edge that allows reading in whatever way possible for the individual.

0.6 - a house on the portlands - section a - approximate scale 1:250 - original 1:50

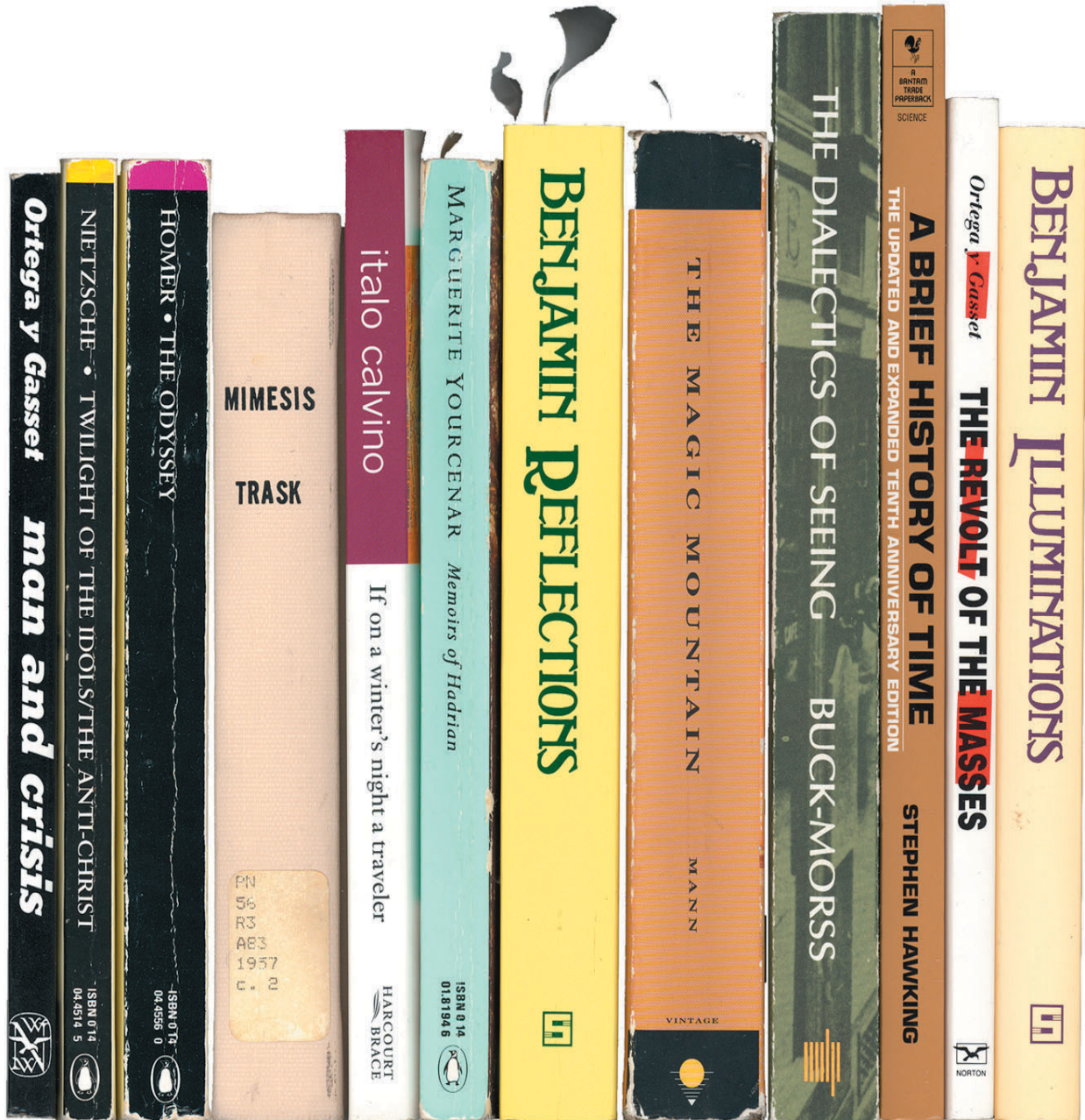


- Living Area and Book Storage:**
- 1 - rainwater collection**
 - 2 - book storage units**
 - 3 - water reservoir**
 - 4 - theatre rigging counterbalance**
 - 5 - projection screen storage**

Books provide a most simple and direct mass (both physical and psychological) hanging above the living area as part of the roof. The shelving slides along a track using standard theatre rigging components to be counterbalanced by a rainwater reservoir. The movement of the books is accomplished by variously filling or emptying the reservoir. At full extension, the system opens up a clear view through the house to the lake.



On Reading



1.2 - On Reading - Selected Visual Bibliography

1 - Reading and Place

This essay attempts to provide a reading of contemporary place using reading as a means of exploration and analysis. Place can be defined as a type of reading that is both cultural and individual at the same time. The creation of place itself, is a cultural expression of an understanding of the world, shaped inherently and explicitly. What is conveyed is a mode, or understanding, that both contains and expresses location and orientation for the individual within the civilization and the world formed by it, whether the understanding is articulated as certainty, meaning, faith, truth or clarity. The experience of place, however, is essentially an individual moment and intimate in each case.

As a most basic mode or condition, place involves an unconventional blurring of mind and body. Place initially arises as a physical experience or impression, registering spatial qualities through the available senses of the human body. The experience conveys not only perceived sensual phenomena but crucially also conveys a cultural sense of understanding at the same time, which utilizes bodily modes as a language. Architecture frames and articulates the landscape, both physical and cultural, in order to make the experience of a place tangible and thereby tangibly understandable. This primary impression becomes far more powerful in retrospect as the experience is read and reflected upon and provides a vital datum, both consciously and unconsciously, for understanding, location and action in the world. Modern place is, in the end, most simply a moment in which the world appears more clearly or more real and subsequently allowing an individual location within it.

2 - Mimesis - *Reflections* - Aristotle and Walter Benjamin

Imitating is natural to human beings from childhood onwards: man differs from other animals in being extremely imitative; his first steps in learning are made through imitation, and all people get pleasure from imitations.

Part 4. *Poetics*. Aristotle.

Perhaps there are none of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role.

Pg 333, *Reflections*. Walter Benjamin.

In brief, it is nonsensuous similarity that establishes the ties not only between the spoken and the signified but also between the written and the signified, and equally between the spoken and the written.

Pg 335, *Reflections*. Walter Benjamin.

"To read what was never written." Such reading is the most ancient: reading before all languages, from the entrails, the stars, or dances. Later the mediating link of a new kind of reading, or runes and hieroglyphs, came into use. It seems fair to suppose that these were the stages by which the mimetic gift, which was once the foundation of occult practices, gained admittance to writing and language. In this way language may be seen as the highest level of mimetic behaviour and the most complete archive of nonsensuous similarity: a medium into which the earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed without residue, to the point where they have liquidated those of magic.

Pg 336, *Reflections*. Walter Benjamin.

Aristotle identifies three basic types of human understanding in dialectic, rhetoric and mimesis.⁰ The mimetic faculty is consistently ranked last in antiquity by thinkers including Plato and Aristotle because it provides neither the progressive logic presented by rhetoric nor the diametric clarity of opposition presented by dialectic. Instead, mimesis relies upon the body and the unconscious to generate an understanding that emerges whole out of tensions and contradictions, as well as compliments and casual connections as revealed in the impulse for imitation or mimicry. This aspect of place may also be related by a kinaesthetic type of knowledge, such as hunger which is inarticulate but at the same time uncompromisingly known, embodied and fundamental. In actual experience these three means of understanding are inter-reliant, and especially so in the experience of place today.

Mimesis identifies the basic bodily sense of understanding that is central to reading, whether of a book or of place. A clear example of mimesis is found in play, where “the child plays at being not only a shopkeeper or teacher but also a windmill and a train.”¹ In each case, as with place, there is an aspect of embodied knowledge which is precipitated by specific observed details, but furthermore there is a general engagement that is bodily and thereby both passive and active, unconscious and conscious. The play at imitation and mockery, like music, relies upon an understanding that emerges from between the particular notes and details that are amplified or exaggerated for effect. This same relationship is inherent to place, with a cultural understanding of the world emerging, at once, obscurely and wholly out of the landscape and its focus through architecture.

Walter Benjamin explored language as a sublimation and transformation of the mimetic faculty. Rather than obvious relationships such as onomatopoeia which convey a physical understanding by the saying of the word, it is instead the activity of reading that allows the word to convey its intended meaning. The use of “nonsensuous similarity” allows advantages of speed and precision, although at the cost of losing direct engagement. The steady transformation of this faculty, and not the human body itself, is identified by Benjamin as allowing new possibilities of experience and understanding.²

Rather than an oppositional disjunction between the modes of experience described by “magic” or “language” the contemporary understanding floats in the tension between the abstract and the physical, with the individual trying to locate their personal understandings between these experiences. Although this thesis does not go as far as to theorize the liquidation of the mimetic faculty, its transformation, or sublimation, into the abstraction of language presents an undeniable aspect of the modern world and points towards new ways of engaging the city.

The transference of mimetic modes of experience into language also allows for the conveyance of place through cultural expressions such as epic poetry. Not coincidentally, a study entitled *Mimesis* by Erich Auerbach explores historical Western types of place through the analysis of stories from various periods ranging comprehensively from the ancient to the modern. The reality or sense of place from each period is inherently captured and conveyed in every aspect of a story from syntax and grammar, to the chosen subjects of representation and limitations of consciousness made evident by later texts.

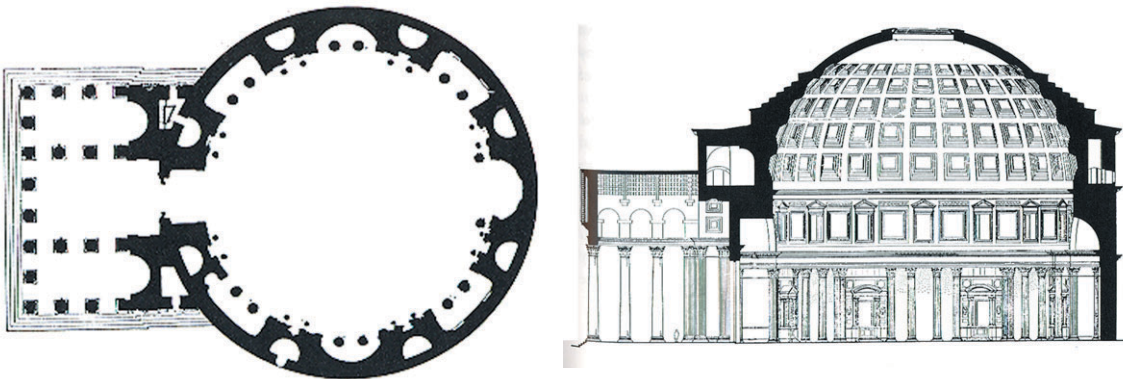
3 - The Pantheon and *The Odyssey* - Homer and Erich Auerbach

The date chosen for this festival was the anniversary of Rome's birth, the eight day following the Ides of April in the eight hundred and eighty-second year after the founding of the City. Never had a Roman spring been so intense, so sweet, so blue.

On the same day, with graver solemnity, as if muted, a dedicatory ceremony took place inside the Pantheon. ... My intention had been that this sanctuary of All Gods should reproduce the likeness of the terrestrial globe and of the stellar sphere, that globe wherein are enclosed the seeds of eternal fire, and that hollow sphere containing all. ... This temple, both open and mysteriously enclosed, was conceived as a solar quadrant. The hours would make their round on that caissoned ceiling, so carefully polished by Greek artisans; the disk of daylight would rest suspended there like a shield of gold; rain would form its clear pool on the pavement below; prayers would rise like smoke toward that void where we place the gods.

This solemnity was for me one of those moments when all things converge...

Pg146. *Memoirs of Hadrian*. Marguerite Yourcenar



1.3 - Pantheon Plan and Section

Achilles and Odysseus are splendidly described in many well-ordered words, epithets cling to them, their emotions are constantly displayed in their words and deeds – but they have no development, and their life-histories are clearly set forth once and for all...Even Odysseus, in whose case the long lapse of time and the many events which occurred offer so much opportunity for biographical development, shows almost nothing of it. Odysseus on his return is exactly the same as he was when he left Ithaca two decades earlier.

Pg14. *Mimesis*. Erich Auerbach

The Homeric poems, then, though their intellectual, linguistic, and above all syntactical culture appears to be so much more developed, are yet comparatively simple in their picture of human beings; and no less so in their relation to the real life which they describe in general. Delight in physical existence is everything to them, and their highest aim is to make that delight perceptible to us. Between battles and passions, adventures and perils, they show us hunts, banquets, palaces and shepherds' cots, athletic contests and washing days – in order that we may see the heroes in their ordinary life, and seeing them so, may take pleasure in their manner of enjoying the savory present, a present which sends strong roots down into social usages, landscape and daily life... And this "real" world into which we are lured, exists for itself, contains nothing but itself; the Homeric poems conceal nothing, they contain no teaching and no secret second meaning. Homer can be analyzed, as we have essayed to do here, but he cannot be interpreted.

Pg10. *Mimesis*. Erich Auerbach

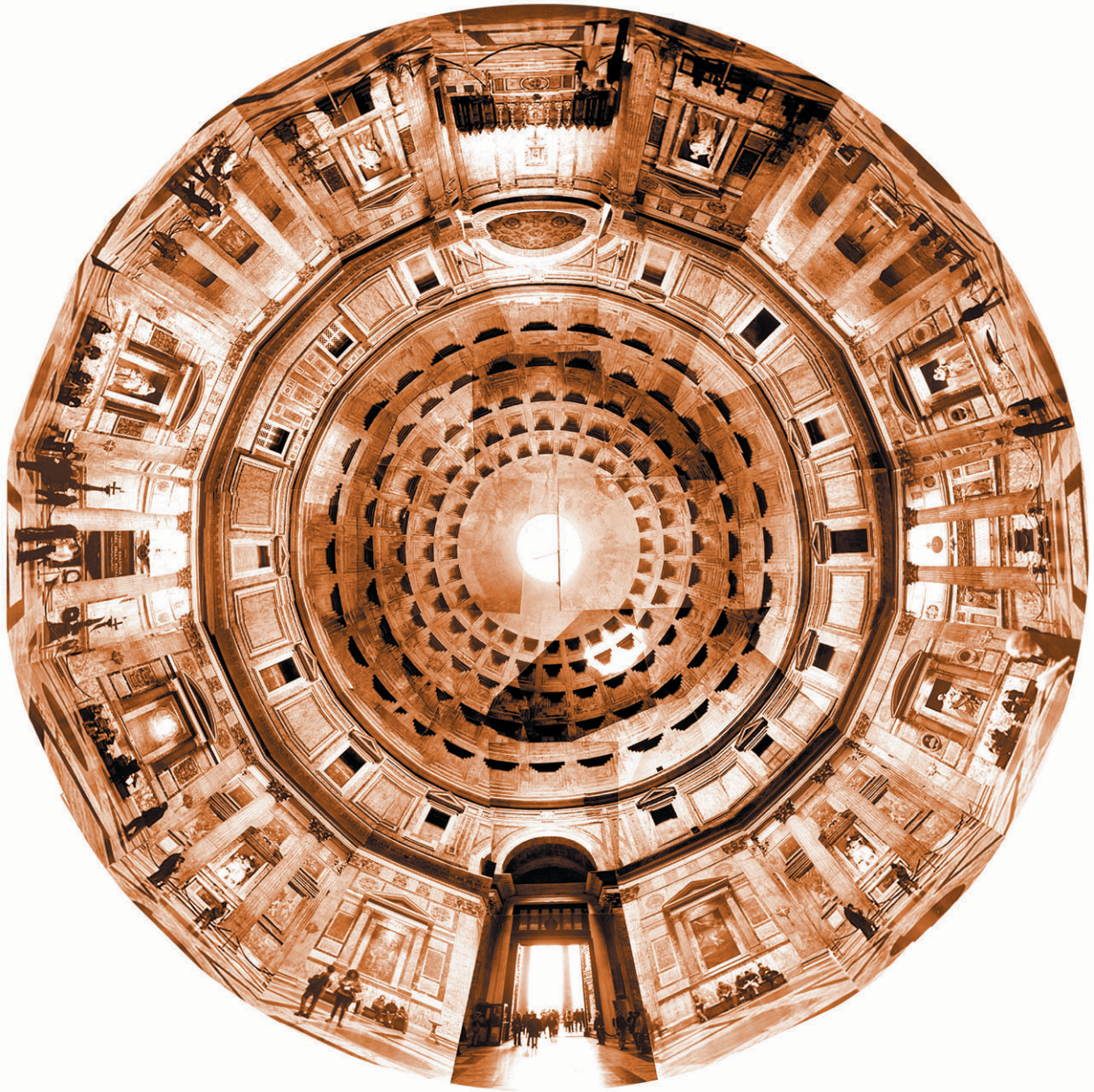
The Pantheon provides a standard example of architectural place and in concert with a reading of *The Odyssey*, reveal an understanding and experience of the world that can be identified as Ancient place. Standing under the oculus with both rain and light falling in from the sky, the Pantheon conveys an incredibly tangible experience of place. The basic impression is a physical moment that can be conveyed as a sense of warmth and stillness. The Ancient understanding of place in the world, as experienced in the Pantheon, is also clearly inscribed in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. In a reading provided by Erich Auerbach, the Ancient world is revealed to be essentially different from that of modern experience, as Odysseus stands within his world firmly, explicitly and blessedly even as he finds himself adrift on the oceans for twenty years.³

Homer explicitly describes every aspect of Odysseus' world providing an "uniform illumination" that connects and locates everything. This device is able to convey a crucial aspect of the Ancient world in which nothing is left uncertain, or in shadow, and instead all things that exist in the world stand revealed and are given an equal weight and reality. The explicit quality of Ancient place is likewise manifest in the Pantheon as a "likeness of the terrestrial globe"⁴ In making the Pantheon, Hadrian likely conceived of the building without any sharp disjunction between appearance and reality. The narratives locating place within a cosmology are explicitly inscribed and layered into the architecture from the conception to the tectonics. There is neither obscurity nor mystery as even the gods are real and ultimately manifest by the oculus; "that void where we place the gods."

Another crucial aspect of Ancient place is a sense of stability that arises from the static understanding of the Ancient world. The fully revealed nature of the world of the *Odyssey*, not only describes things fully, but also fixes them definitely and in relation to each other. This is exemplified by the long lineages establishing social place for each of the characters that are introduced, invariably including even gods as they enter the story. More dramatically this permanence is inherent to Odysseus himself, as he moves through the whole story "the same as he was." This stability and solidity is most clearly readable in the Pantheon utilizing the modern conventions of plan and section. The building is composed of whole geometric forms centered on each other, with the hemisphere enclosing the space inwards. Accordingly, the interior of the Pantheon is readable as a centered space, and conveys through the body, *mimetically*, a sense of centeredness, grounding and stillness.

The most vital aspect of the stillness and solidity inherent to Ancient place is an inexpressible richness that is conveyed most clearly by the shifting qualities of light within the Pantheon. Odysseus lives in a world that is deeply based in physical experience and expressed by the same means, the senses, thereby making it apparently flat or unable to "be interpreted." However, this does not imply any lack of depth or richness, but instead allows a location within the world that is confirmed, grounded or rooted and establishing a rich engagement to the world through the senses.

Within the Pantheon the sense of stillness, rather than presenting a frozen experience, is both received and animated by the senses. Sunlight is focused and seemingly amplified by the oculus allowing varying colours, intensities, temperatures, and etc. of light to enter the interior and be held. The qualities of light are able to mimetically convey not only a solidity as it shines on the ground and the building, but more vitally a warmth that makes Ancient place both understandable and attractive. Even this diffuse and intangible quality, however, is made manifest and focused as a "disk of daylight...suspended there like a shield of gold" rendering it all again directly tangible and, thereby, real.



1.4 - Pantheon Interior View

...fully externalized description, uniform illumination, uninterrupted connection, free expression, all events in the foreground, displaying unmistakable meanings, few elements of historical development and of psychological perspective...

...on the other hand, certain parts brought into high relief, other left obscure, abruptness, suggestive influence of the unexpressed, "background" quality, multiplicity of meanings and the need for interpretation, universal-historical claims, development of the concept of historically becoming, and preoccupation with the problematic.

**Commentary on The Odyssey and The Old Testament
Pg19. *Mimesis*. Erich Auerbach**

...So that what had seemed real – nature and ourselves as part of it – now turns out to be unreal, pure phantasmagoria; and that which had seemed unreal – our concern with the absolute or God – that is the true reality.

This paradox, this complete inversion of perspective, is the basis of Christianity. The problems of natural man have no solution: to live, to be in the world, is perdition, constitutional and unchangeable. This life can only be cured by the other life...

Pg 135, *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1958

The Ancient focus on the sensory and its warmth is thrown into diametric clarity by the Christian type of place that begins to supplant it, even before the construction of the Pantheon. The clear and solid ancient world is drastically replaced by a focus beyond the sensual, locating the world in an almighty and mysterious God.⁵

Auerbach identifies the figural as a key device revealing the change in understanding of the world as occurrences begin to signify not only themselves as in the Ancient understanding, but also, and always, reveal a connection to something further. "The connection between occurrences is not regarded as primarily a chronological or causal development but as a oneness with the divine plan, of which all occurrences are parts and reflections."⁶ In contrast to the immediate world presented by Homer, the stories in the Old Testament demand interpretation for understanding as their true meaning lies hidden and perhaps unknowable. Rather than tangible relationships the world is defined by a God who acts supra-temporally and supra-spatially. In the interim, as Christian impulses find cultural articulation, there is an unavoidable loss of place as individuals are moved by new impulses, but lacking means of expression, as well as representation in the world.

4 - Historical Crisis - *Man and Crisis* - Jose Ortega y Gasset

What a tremendous theme, this, of the polarity or the contrast between solitude and society!
Pg 76, *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1958

...That is the normal. Well, then, an historical crisis occurs when the world change which is produced consists in this: the world, the system of convictions belonging to a previous generation, gives way to a vital state in which man remains without these convictions, and therefore without a world...It is a change which begins by being negative and critical. One does not know what new thing to think – one only knows, or thinks he knows, that the traditional norms and ideas are false and inadmissible...Since that system of convictions, that world, was the map, he again feels himself lost, at loose ends, without orientation. He moves from here to there without order or arrangement; he tries this side and then the other, but without complete convictions; he pretends to himself that he is convinced of this or that.

Pg 86, *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1958



1.5 - Cherry Beach Shoreline Detail

This actual possibility of living without pure reason makes modern men wish to rid themselves of the duty of reasoning, refuse with disdain to use reason. And this, when one is faced with the bigotry of pure reason, of “culturalism,” is not difficult. We will soon see that every crisis begins in this manner. The fifteenth century also started with a cynical refusal to use reason. It is curious that every crisis begins with a period of cynicism. And the first crisis of the western world, that of Greco-Roman history, begins by inventing and propagating cynicism. The phenomenon is one of desperate monotony and repetition. But when men find themselves happiest in that apparent –and so easy- liberation, so do they feel themselves most hopelessly prisoners of that other and irremediable reason; of that from which –whether you like it or not- it is impossible to escape because it is one and the same thing as living: vital reason.

Pg 84, *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1958

The Pantheon locates a critical period in Western history especially relevant to the modern condition as it not only presents a powerful counterpoint to the sense of placelessness in contemporary cities, but the construction of the Pantheon significantly also occurred during a period of historical crisis, a process which is approaching again today. The contemporary social mood, coloured alternately by phoniness⁷ and apathy, acts as both an indicator and product of approaching crisis and also a crucial mechanism in driving this historical process.

Jose Ortega y Gasset defines an idea of historical crisis as a grand scale paradigm shift within a civilization. The resulting process is inherently contradictory but also uncertain, confused and complex as every aspect of society and life slowly reorganizes to express radically new impulses and ideas: Place is unavoidably confused and lost. In addition to the “first great crisis” with the displacement of Ancient sensory place by the figural Christian world, Gasset also explores the transition from Christianity to Modernity, marking the formation of the contemporary crisis.

Gasset describes the mechanism for historical crisis as two fundamental human impulses that can be understood through the conflicting experiences of “solitude and society.” To begin, generations of individuals naturally develop and articulate the world in which they live, making it richer and clearer. The basic embodied ideals of a culture become slowly disengaged and removed as they are formalized and proceeding generations of individuals develop and articulate the original impulses. Accordingly, this engenders uncertainty within the individual who is born into a predefined world with a comprehensive set of established institutions and systems of value. Today individuals find themselves in a ready made world that is faster, brighter and more complex than ever, and all apparently easy to buy. Directly, the lack of reading, both mimetic and otherwise, leaves the individual without any engagement to the values and ideals that their culture manifests or bestows, resulting unavoidably in a feeling of living a “false life.”

Popular readings of the contemporary city today are noticeably coloured either by phoniness or apathy. Television provides a rich and sensitive register of popular culture and social mood where cynicism has become almost colloquial, even in advertising. These social moods are endemic to historical crisis, and literature from previous periods of crisis echo this impulse. Gasset characterizes this tendency as essentially negative and reactionary but arising out of a basic impulse towards simplicity amidst convolution, represented throughout history by writers ranging from Cicero, the Christians, the Cynics and Stoics, to Cusanus, Erasmus, Luther and Montaigne, to Galileo and “the man who was simplification itself, Descartes.”⁸

This civilization of the XIXth Century, I said, may be summed up in the two great dimensions: liberal-democracy and technicism. Let us take for a moment only the latter. Modern technicism springs from the union between capitalism and experimental science.

Pg107, *The Revolt of the Masses*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1930

The world is a civilized one, its inhabitant is not: he does not see the civilization of the world around him, but he uses it as if it were a natural force. The new man wants his motor-car, and enjoys it, but he believes that it is the spontaneous fruit of an Edenic tree. In the depths of his soul he is unaware of the artificial, almost incredible, character of civilization, and does not extend his enthusiasm for the instruments to the principles which make them possible.

Pg82, *The Revolt of the Masses*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1930

The widening of man's horizon, and the increase of his experiences, knowledges, ideas, and possible forms of existence, which began in the sixteenth century, continued through the nineteenth at an ever faster tempo – with such a tremendous acceleration since the beginning of the twentieth that synthetic and objective attempts at interpretation are produced and demolished every instant ... At the time of the first World War and after – in a Europe unsure of itself, overflowing with unsettled ideologies and ways of life, and pregnant with disaster – certain writers distinguished by instinct and insight find a method which dissolves reality into multiple and multivalent reflections of consciousness.

Pg485. *Mimesis*. Erich Auerbach

...the author at times achieves the intended effect by representing herself to be someone who doubts, wonders, hesitates, as though the truth about the characters were not better known to her than it is to them or to the reader. It is all, then, a matter of the author's attitude towards the reality of the world he represents. And this attitude differs entirely from that of authors who interpret actions, situations, and characters of their personages with objective assurances, as was the general practice in earlier times. Goethe or Keller, Dickens or Meredith, Balzac or Zola told us out of their certain knowledge what their characters did, what they felt and thought while doing it, and how their actions and their thoughts were interpreted. They knew everything about their characters...there was hardly ever an attempt to render the flow and the play of consciousness adrift in the current of changing impressions.

Pg472. *Mimesis*. Erich Auerbach

The originating impulses of modernity can be clarified by the device of historical crisis which places the modern world in contrast to the Christian place from which it emerges. The clearest stage of modernity occurred through the Enlightenment period in which modern impulses came to an apex and concretized as institutions which persist to define contemporary cities and life.

Modernity emerges as a conscious and deliberate break from tradition and history, newly made possible with ideas both discovered and recovered from Asia and the Ancient world during the Crusades. The Church defined the world in the medieval period with increasing articulation by hierarchies, codes, doctrines and interpretations all of which defined a static but highly complicated world. Logical reason re-opened the world to discovery and knowledge, whereas it had been hidden for centuries, obscured in the will of God and ultimately unknowable to man. The ideas recovered from Aristotle and other thinkers provided the tools to both dissect God and establish concepts of humanism, and rational progress, as a replacement datum enabling an idea of change and re-exploration of the world. Galileo is located by Gasset as the “initiator” of the modern world, opening up a revolutionary modern type of place in the moment of his conceiving an ideal empty plane, the basis of modern physics. The revolutionary focus of science emerges out of this gesture and focuses reading towards phenomena rather than experience, necessitating an initial step of removing the self and other obstructions.

The particular development of modern institutions can be retraced through the development of Social Darwinism. Charles Darwin conceives of the theory of evolution based out of empirical science, at once providing an alternate possibility to God as Creator and destroying the static understanding of place in the world. Empirical observations provide the basis for a spectacular and revolutionary understanding of place and purpose.⁹ The crucial development however is in the appropriation of the scientific theory into the social realm, providing a cornerstone of both capitalism and liberal-democracy, as Social Darwinism. Today the critical social problems inherent to this theory clearly reveal its perversion as a social and economic rationalization that easily sheds responsibility and consideration. The necessity of removing the self and experience to approach a type of truth is revealed by time as, at least, ethically flawed and possibly misleading.

Science, capitalism and liberal-democracy continue to develop and define the modern world but no longer provide a sense of place for the individual living in it. In the contemporary city an empirical sense of place has become practically impossible due to the diversification and specialization of knowledge. The “self-taught man” described by Camus¹⁰ rather than finding place through collecting knowledge, today presents at best a comic figure engaged only in a futile endeavour. Additionally, even a cursory exploration of contemporary knowledge reveals increasingly confusing and contradictory narratives. Mathematics itself has been fractured into a diffuse diversity such that the various fields are mathematically incompatible and await further developments, like a Unified Field Theory, to allow coherence and a connection back to the world which it references. The type of place assembled by Diderot’s encyclopaedia, besides being outdated the moment it is printed, is no longer practically possible for any individual. The rational and progressive understanding of place presented by Hegel’s history¹¹ is no longer inherent to individual understanding and experience of the world, but problematically without anything else by which to locate ourselves.

The absence of reading is termed as “barbarian” by Gasset who identifies it as particularly inherent to modernism. The forces of specialization and mechanization directly minimize the need for reading and active engagement allowing massively scaled production and development. The advance of science is likewise dependant upon the disinterested technician who does not even need to consider the origin nor consequences of their work.¹² The world thereby becomes abstracted and disconnected as abstractions are no longer used as tools but, instead, mistaken for reality. In the end, the contemporary city is left without place as datums from modernity begin to appear and feel hollow although there is nothing clear to replace it, except for a modern form of uncertainty and unstable ground.

5 - Modern Place and Fascination - *The Magic Mountain* - Thomas Mann

This much was certain: illness meant an overemphasis on the physical, sent a person back to his own body, cast him back totally upon it, as it were, detracted from the worthiness and dignity of man to the point of annihilation by reducing man to mere body. Illness, therefore, was inhuman.

Illness was supremely human, Naphta immediately rebutted, because to be human was to be ill. Indeed, man was ill by nature, his illness was what made him human, and whoever sought to make him healthy and attempted to get him to make peace with nature, to "return to nature" (whereas he had never been natural), that whole pack of Rousseauian prophets – regenerators, vegetarians, fresh-air freaks, sunbath apostles, and so forth – wanted nothing more than to dehumanize man and turn him into an animal. Humanity? Nobility? The Spirit was what distinguished man – a creature set very much apart from nature, with feelings very much contrary to nature – from the rest of organic life. Therefore, the dignity and nobility of man was based in Spirit, in illness.

...he now took up his position on the side of "illness," for there alone were to be found nobility and humanity. Settembrini, meanwhile, had become the advocate of nature and its nobility of health, ignoring any previous notions of emancipation. And matters were no less confusing when it came to "objective reality" and the "self" – indeed, the confusion here, which was in fact always the same confusion, was so hopeless and literally confused that no one knew any longer who was the devout soul and who the freethinker...

Pg. 456 *The Magic Mountain*. Thomas Mann. 1924.

The contemporary loss of place can be readily identified with Friedrich Nietzsche who expresses the basic modern impulse to simplify or destroy. Nietzsche explicitly attacked the social datums that defined the world at the end of the Nineteenth century in *Twilight of the Idols*, definitively destroying the remaining foundations of a Christian world and specifically the moral valuations that define individual relationships with society and the world at large. Christian moral valuations continue to define society by providing a datum for individual judgement and action, such as modesty or improvement (for your own good), despite the shift of focus away from God, the source and foundation of those values. Intricate reason, both dialectical and rhetorical, are used by Nietzsche with devastating clarity to expose perceived perversions of logic and hypocrisy inherent not only to Christian morality, but further including the tools of reason and logic themselves, ultimately aiming towards a modern “revaluation of all values.”¹³

A comprehensive examination of possible meanings, and types of place, in the modern world are both articulated and simultaneously cast into doubt through conversation in *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann.¹⁴ The novel is written two decades after the appearance of Nietzsche as political and social ideologies have continued to diverge and diversify leaving the Western world facing the imminent catastrophe of the First World War. The novel attends Hans Castorp at a sanatorium in the Swiss Alps and his “education” over the course of seven blurred years. A continuous torrent of ideas, or fascinations, are encountered by Castorp through the resources of the sanatorium such as books, lectures, a powerful mountain landscape and, most particularly, other patients.

The drastic destructive positions presented by Nietzsche through reason and aphorisms, are reached instead by Mann through conversation. A large portion of the novel follows Castorp as he tries to locate his own position between two powerful and well developed perspectives represented by two fellow patients: an Enlightenment Humanism championed by Lodovico Settembrini “the freethinker” and a diametric perspective of caustic Christian rejection of the world propounded by “the devout soul” Leo Naphta. Invariably, these two positions representing the two explicit cultural possibilities of place available to modern man, result only in confusion and contradiction as various topics are discussed. Settembrini presents to Castorp the progressive and liberal ideas of humanism formed during the enlightenment, based out of the modern belief in rational logic, as explored by Gasset. Naphta manifests a Christian position in rejecting the sensory world, with a consistent cynicism towards modernity, classification, empirical knowledge and a focus instead on “faith” and validating an absolute that exists beyond the world. Both characters ultimately present far more complex views and impulses as they talk with Castorp throughout the novel rendering rhetorical monologues and dialectical arguments with many sudden and drastic reversals by both sides. The conversations capture and convey a comprehensive disorientation with the topics ranging over the whole modern conception of the world, including diversely philosophy, science, politics, economics, society, illness, death and on to a conclusion with the advent of war and Castorp’s return to the world. Conversation between Naphta and Settembrini is able to render the interaction and relationships between perspectives including contrast, contradiction, dissolution, and their inevitable mixture and confusion in the modern condition.

“Fine, a freak of nature,” Hans Castorp said. “And yet not just a freak, not just something to taunt us. For people to be actors, they must have talent, and talent is something that goes beyond stupidity and cleverness, it is a value for life. Mynheer Peepkorn has talent, too, no matter what you may say, and he uses it to put us in his pocket. Set Herr Naphta in the corner of the room and have him deliver a lecture on Gregory the Great and the City of God, something well worth listening to – and in the other corner have Peepkorn stand there with his strange mouth and a brow raised in great creases and say nothing except, ‘By all means! Permit me to say – settled!’ And you will see people gather around Peepkorn, down to the last man, and Naphta will be left sitting there alone with his cleverness and his City of God, although he can express himself so clearly that it makes your blood and spit run cold...”

Pg. 575, *The Magic Mountain*. Thomas Mann. 1924.

A key impulse also arises in Castorp which is distinctly independent from the perspectives propounded by Settembrini and Naphta, although never as articulate. Throughout the novel, beginning with the purchase of a needed thermometer, Castorp is drawn to fascinations which include the whole diversity of modern world ranging from the occult, memory, physiology, sports to the many technological developments such as the revered x-ray machines or a new phonograph player. The attraction to the loud and bright surface of the world is personified by Mynheer Peeperkorn who enters late into the story as a “personality” who solely babbles, but extra-expressively and far more entertainingly than Castorp's other mentors. Science, music, philosophy, the occult or, in short, a list of the ideas that concern the higher-minded pedagogues becomes instead only distraction for a short period. The research and engagement of these ideas by Castorp is limited to a surface fascination.

Irony pervades the whole of the novel, defining a loss and confusion of place through the general texture and tone of the novel. The irony is lent a richness and value through Mann's delicacy and complexity. The tone never falls to simple mocking cynicism or nostalgic tragedy but remains restrained and critical and is thereby able to convey aspects of absurdity and gravity together, to provide a bleak but decent statement of modern place. Mann provides an exploration of modern place as described by Gasset and Auerbach, except at a detailed individual scale and thereby a scale able to convey the specific nature and experience of modern disorientation.

Thomas Mann provides an exploration of the modern condition and its lack of location by encompassing and examining all the possible tools and means developed by culture for reaching place. The cultural definitions of place are sounded out throughout the novel by conversation between the characters that ultimately leads Castorp away from the sanatorium and uncertainty itself, and back down to his life and blurry action in the world war.

6 - Architecture, Place and Contemporary Reading

Place allows a whole understanding that reconnects and relocates individuals within their cultures and worlds. The dominant ideas of modernity continue to define capitalism, liberal-democracy and science while the cultural impulses which originated and developed them have changed, leaving the contemporary individual in a world without cultural orientation or stable meanings.

Several main aspects of the contemporary loss of place have been traced through this essay, each in turn removing culture to a surface and fascination. A primary aspect of contemporary disorientation is due to our place in history, wherein previous and traditional datums such as nature, science, memory, faith or custom now offer only conflicting and confused perspectives, making any specific datum appear and feel false. Another crucial aspect is clarified by historical types of place which likewise offer only a hollow location as they ultimately do not encompass the scope of the contemporary individual and thereby entail an aspect of deliberate blindness. In regards to reading, as culture is taken for granted, the engagement of reading is abandoned and these datums and experiences comprise instead components of the massive surface of culture. This surface provides a landscape for fascination that is able to temporarily locate and connect any and every individual today, seeming to provide a fragile meaning, ways to view the world, intimations of truth, and endless diverse possibilities.

Walter Benjamin's reading of mimetic experience having been transferred into language provides for a powerful contemporary type of place that is exemplified in fascination. The previously mimetic aspect of the world is instead conveyed through the abstraction of language, allowing the retention and conveyance of meaning and understandings by a surface. This is reflected in the reading of magazines of every description, flyers, catalogues, news all of which allow engagement with and comprise the surface of the contemporary world. The reading in this case is likewise evolved from the usual empirical analysis or identifiable narratives and still less like the magical mimesis of the pre-ancient ages. This emergent aspect of place is currently exemplified best by television which defines a whole cultural world that largely references itself like a spongy tautology, but still allows a temporary location without meaning and, in the end, comprises an undeniable aspect of the modern world and modern consciousness.

Architecturally this is reflected directly in the provision of amenities and features. The range of possibilities provided by science and engineering and popular culture can be employed and focused by architecture to physically clarify selected specific narratives including cool tectonic devices, cultural trends, whether green, technological or stylistic features, and even traditional narratives on the scale of landscape.

Other readings of surface range from a conception of place as pure fascination or entertainment as exemplified by conceptions of event or spectacle by Situationist International, or a more contemporary presentation of meaning compressed into a surface as exemplified by the buildings of Herzog and DeMeuron or UN Studio.¹⁵ Even further, contemporary architecture is often produced as pulp, with a focus upon the reconfiguration of styles and conventions to make more complex images, but without any consideration of either the landscape or the implied place, as in shopping and strip malls. At another level the surface generated by abstraction provides a rich field that can be engaged as a reality allowing some of the most clever and incisive reconfigurations and programmatic gestures. The modern approach of working within abstraction is most prominently seen in Post Modern architecture where traditional architectural conventions became used as symbols or more recently in the work of Rem Koolhaas which is explicitly conceived and produced at an abstract programmatic level or otherwise based out of research and readings of capitalism, with its markets and trends, mistaken as a full landscape in itself.¹⁶

Overall, it is likely that architecture continues to lack a proper language that engages the new mimetic modes and cultural possibilities developed, and in development, by modernity as it approaches an historical crisis. Architecture has always trailed cultural impulses, and even other more fluid modes of cultural expression, as impulses slowly find their appropriate physical manifestation and articulation.

To return to fascination, its acceptance can be explored as an aspect of the Good Life or the American Dream which essentially concern pleasure and enjoyment. The contemporary conceptions of these two ideals acknowledge and encompass many fundamental flaws which makes them neither whole nor especially true. Accordingly, the modes of living they portrayed are now known, at least in part, as shallow images. However, even as they are understood as flawed these lives and dreams are nevertheless attractive simply because they best serve individual interests while other perspectives appear only equally invalid. In fascination, guilt and scepticism are unconsciously or deliberately abandoned to provide a necessary respite from everyday stress, allowing for an artificial and temporary but easy and fantastically bright and varied location.



1.6 - Water Photo

The contemporary surface of culture bears resemblance to the fully illuminated aspect of the Ancient world as both “contain no teaching and no secret second meaning.”¹⁷ Although abstract and fragmentary, contemporary popular culture offers a surface at least as rich, varied and full as that of Odysseus’ world, while also far more convenient and fluid. The modern city and its surface landscape of fascinations only becomes unsatisfactory as a complimentary impulse for meaning and place gathers and becomes aggravating to an individual, typically due to a personal crisis. Ultimately, fascination proves to be hollow, much as with sports which provide a supremely tangible, almost animal, type of place but is limited in scope to a game, the full depth and breadth of the contemporary individual is not engaged and place remains incomplete.



On Reading Anxiety

1 - Modern Anxiety - *I'm Not Stiller* - Max Frisch

2.2 - Cherry Beach - Winter Panorama



'why?'

I shrugged my shoulders. I felt about them as I did about this landscape, which in fact, like almost every landscape, is worthy of affection. It must be my fault...

pg. 305, *I'm Not Stiller*, Max Frisch.

1a – introduction

This essay pursues evident disjunctions such as anxiety and illness that can be read as moments of amplification able to clarify forces in conflict within the ill individual, but also forces inherent to contemporary life in general and thereby to contemporary place. Anxiety defines a vital aspect of the modern condition which is diffuse and uncertain but, nevertheless, nearly ubiquitous throughout contemporary society.

The modern conditions of anxiety are generally founded on and characterized by a broad sense of irresolvable doubt and disorientation. A social datum, such as place, ascribes meaning to the world, locating and orienting the individual who must live in it. However, resulting from the loss of datums, especially those developed in Humanism, the individual today lives in a fragmented and contradictory world, comprising only an unstable ground upon which people are anxious and easily lost.

Place fundamentally remains an individual experience, although it is an experience of a social and cultural location and orientation in the world. An essential, even world changing, anxiety arises in the disjunction between “solitude and society,”¹⁸ two of the basic human impulses in any age, but especially relevant to place and architecture today. This essay allows for an expanded exploration of contemporary place through modern novels, which portray anxiety and place at an individual scale and within an individual context.

Max Frisch explores a critical modern anxiety in the novel *I'm Not Stiller*, 1954 that encompasses doubts of identity, truth, faith, logic, emotion, art, work, friends and love for a man desperately searching for understanding and place.¹⁹ The first part of the novel takes the form of seven notebooks that are written by the central character, in jail, as he attempts to convince the public prosecutor, and anyone else who will listen, that he is not the missing Anatol Ludwig Stiller. He is being held to determine his official identity and remains in prison due to his increasingly strained but cynically civil insistence that he is Sam White of America and not the missing semi-famous sculptor, Stiller, as whom he is recognized. The second part of the novel takes the form of a postscript written by the public prosecutor, after Stiller has been judged by the court to be himself and is summarily released from prison.

...We live in an age of reproduction. Most of what makes up our personal picture of the world we have never seen with our own eyes – or rather, we've seen it with our own eyes, but not on the spot: our knowledge comes to us from a distance, we are televiewers, telehearers, teleknowers. One need never have left this little town to have Hitler's voice still ringing in one's ears, to have seen Shah of Persia from a distance of three yards, and to know how the monsoon howls over the Himalayas or what it looks like six hundred fathoms beneath the sea. Anyone can know these things nowadays. Does it mean I have ever been to the bottom of the sea? Or even (like the Swiss) almost up Mount Everest?

And it's just the same with the inner life of man. Anyone can know about it nowadays. How the devil am I to prove to my counsel that I don't know my murderous impulses through C.G. Jung, jealousy through Marcel Proust, Spain through Hemingway, Paris through Ernst Jünger, Switzerland through Mark Twain, Mexico through Graham Greene, my fear of death through Bernanos, inability ever to reach my destination through Kafka, and all sorts of other things through Thomas Mann? It's true, you need never have read these authorities, you can absorb them through your friends who also live all their experiences second-hand.

What an age! It means nothing any more to have seen swordfish, to have loved a mulatto girl, it could all have happened during a matinée performance of a documentary film; and as for having thoughts – good heavens, it's already a rarity in this age to meet a mind that's moulded on one particular model, it's a sign of personality if someone sees the world with Heidegger and only with Heidegger; the rest swim in a cocktail containing pretty well everything and mixed in the most elegant manner by Eliot; we know our way about everywhere and, as I have said, not even our accounts of the visible world mean anything; there's no terra incognita nowadays (except Russia). So what's the point of telling all these stories? It doesn't mean you've been there. My counsel is right. And yet –

I swear:

Pg 161, *I'm Not Stiller*. Max Frisch.

SOME REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE
YES
 FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 On JAN. 2nd, 1911

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And develop Toronto's greatest asset.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And the neglected Ashbridge's Bay can be made worth many millions of dollars to Toronto.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And the Harbor will pay for its own development, and regulate freight rates for all time.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And make Toronto's Harbor the finest on the Great Lakes.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And make this City one of the greatest Industrial Centres of the Continent.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 An improved Harbor means more work, more wages, cheaper freight, and a Greater Toronto.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And secure a wise, business-like and continuous management for Toronto's Harbor.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 The present Harbor Board unanimously approve of this Commission.

VOTE FOR THE HARBOR COMMISSION
 And help yourself and your city.

2.3 - Advertisement for The Toronto Harbour Commission (1911)

...We have never tried to rethink them on our own account, or to find the evidence for them. On the contrary, the reason we do not think about them is not that they are evident to us, but that other people say them. We have abandoned ourselves to other people and we live in a state of otherness, constantly deceiving and defrauding ourselves. We are afraid of our own life, which is synonymous with solitude, and we flee from it, from its genuine reality, from the effort it demands; we hide our own selves behind the selves of other people, we disguise ourselves behind society.

Pg 92, *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset.

1b – loss of orientation, uncertainty, confusion and unstable ground

The contemporary city provides fantastic fascinations but also means of self-definition that do not require any reading. Although the tension of living as a “teleknower” is occasionally perceived, these anxieties remain easily, although shallowly, covered by Stiller’s semi-successful career and comfortable life. Stiller’s central concerns are manifest most simply by his occupation as a sculptor. Through his work, Stiller is able to explicitly define and express himself in the world. His sculptures present a material form of self-portrayal and thereby a means to simultaneously manifest himself in the world and make himself understood by others in clay and bronze. In the same manner, Stiller sculpts his own identity, and place, by consciously choosing bits of established cultural perspectives and popular opinion. His constructed identity ranges comprehensively from a naïve ideological communism to tragic ideas of art and heroic ideas of love. The character seems to be an almost natural individual in modern society with each part of his identity fitting more or less smoothly and expectedly into the next. These datums help to define and articulate his ideas, actions and friends, even down to the detail of the restaurants in which he chooses to eat. The rustic country establishments preferred by Stiller, explicitly and deliberately manifest an image of rootedness and authenticity, that is easily bought and sold.

However, even as Stiller has defined himself with a clever array of ideas, making himself as he wants to be and caulking all the holes in his world, there remains a delicate and undefined anxiety that floats just beneath the surface. The despondent situation of losing both his wife and his mistress, forces Stiller to confront himself as habitual rationalizations cannot smooth over such a drastic and intimate disaster. Stiller responds with a disappointed cynicism and rejects the datums that have jumped into clarity as phony.

The values and convictions that he presented to the world were never really his, as the modern world offers only unstable datums and never requires that they be read nor engaged. This is exemplified in fashion which presents a continually changing datum for identity and social relevance, without allowing any engagement beyond choosing something that you can afford. As a result, when those ideals are insufficient to placate Stiller’s disappointment, the radical step of abandoning his values and convictions occurs with the utmost ease. In reading himself more deeply, Stiller becomes uncertain also about his thoughts, knowledge and even experience with his world being inverted by an easy but accurate cynicism. In the city today, cynicism presents an undeniable aspect of the popular public perception or mood, most obviously in advertising where it is employed to appeal to the everyman consumer. As Stiller confronts his personal crisis, even the usual platitudes ranging from taking comfort in his “nonetheless honourable career” or alternately “the ill-will of his environment” or being “unrecognized”²⁰ act only as aggravations. The stifling perception of phoniness sparks Stiller’s first desperate action in which he abruptly abandons his life.

I can see their missing Stiller pretty clearly...He suffers from the classical inferiority anxiety that comes from making excessive demands on himself, and he mistakes his fundamental sense of shortcoming for depth of character, or even religious feeling... He would like to be truthful. In him, the insatiable longing to be truthful is partly due to a special kind of untruthfulness: he is truthful to the point of exhibitionism so that he can use the consciousness of being particularly truthful, more truthful than other people, as a means of skirting around a sore point. He doesn't know just where this point lies, this black hole, that keeps cropping up again, he is afraid even when it doesn't appear. He lives in anticipation.

Pg 219, *I'm Not Stiller*, Max Frisch.

The world and our convictions about the world make up our sense of direction, orient us, give us the compass points which direct our actions. Crisis man has been left without a world, handed over to the chaos of pure circumstance, in a lamentable state of disorientation. Such a structure of life opens a wide margin for very diverse emotional tonalities as a mask for life; very diverse, but all belonging to the same negative type. on feeling himself lost, man may respond with sceptical frigidity, with anguish, or with desperation; and he will do many things, which though apparently heroic, do not in fact proceed from any real heroism but are deeds done in desperation.

Pg 92, *Man and Crisis*, Jose Ortega y Gasset.

1c - driving impulses...identity...meaning

The anxiety that drives Stiller to first define his identity by various abstract cultural ideas and later to define himself by their absence, arises directly from a fear of recognizing himself, and more specifically of accepting his own faults and weaknesses. It is on the occasions that Stiller is forced to confront a personal failure or disappointment that an anxiety briefly becomes apparent. Political, economic, social, moral, cultural, and religious ideals then serve Stiller as a shallow, although often convoluted and over-articulated, perspective with which to view his shortcomings or unfulfilled desires in a comforting and comfortable fashion. This evasion of himself is, paradoxically, most notable in his conscious will to truthfulness and authenticity that he presents as his explicit identity. Almost every decision is guided by a will to live an authentic life, while this conscious authenticity is later read by himself, only 'as a means of skirting around a sore point.' Stiller's will to live authentically and his carefully constructed image of artistic authenticity are ultimately only a paradoxical and thin means of avoiding himself as he truly is.

In contrast to Stiller's impulse for an emotional sense of authenticity, the public prosecutor, Rolf, employs an equally complex but opposing idea of neutral and logical objectivity as a means to avoid self deception. Rolf seeks a truthfulness and makes his identity by displacing himself externally to logic and reason, with his theories, or datums, supposedly true and meaningful because they are, 'based on the knowledge afforded by various sciences.'²¹ Additionally, Rolf uses his professional acquaintance with the misfortunes of living a self-deceptive life to reinforce his rhetorical scientific views. In arguments, he always ends up using variously proven and objective theories that, even while making him uncomfortable, nonetheless gives him the temporary upper hand in the argument with a position that is unassailable by modern logic and reason.

These paradoxical explicitly truthful but ultimately unreflective and hollow identities fall apart as each of Stiller and Rolf are forced by their various personal crises to confront their own weaknesses and desires. The identities chosen and formed within civilization are realized as partly alien and giving rise to a sense of "phoniness" or living a "false life." These anxieties, or crises, are not only modern problems but are inherent to civilization and recur even at an historical scale. The modern world and crisis, however, is defined largely by the abstraction of contemporary culture and specifically of rational, Occam's Razor, logic, as its general foundation. Occam's Razor exemplifies a modern perspective as it defines a choice between two competing theories by simply specifying as truth the "efficient" idea with fewer components or conditions. The characters of Stiller and Rolf define a comprehensive range of modern lives, representing equitable extremes of emotion or intellect as means to understanding and place. But, in the end, both approaches and their respective concepts and perspectives are realized as focused outwards and specifically missing the most central and indefinable point: their own selves.



2.4 - Water

Things were, understandably, most difficult in relation to Frau Julika, his wife from before; with her he had the greatest temptation to relapse into old fears and destructive perplexities, to be at a less advanced level of development than he really was in relation to other people. A shared past is no small matter; the habituation that springs up whenever our energy is naturally at a low ebb, the habits that present themselves at every stop, can be diabolical. They are like water weeds to a swimmer – who doesn't know that? On the other hand, I believe, our friend was now aware of the impossibility of flight: it was no use starting a new life by simply leaving the old one behind. Was not Stiller's main concern really to do away with the past in his relationship with this woman, the sterile force that had knit the two of them together, not to flee it but to melt it down in the new living present? Otherwise this new present would never become quite real. That's what it was all about – to realize potentialities or suffer failure, to breathe or suffocate, in this sense to live or die; more accurately, to live or waste away. Naturally, the relationship with a woman, in the sense of marriage, need not always become this ultimate touchstone; in this case it had become so. There are all kinds of touchstones: Stiller had found his.

Pg 358. *I'm Not Stiller*. Max Frisch. 1954.

Nothing is harder than to accept oneself. Actually only the naïve succeed in doing it, and I have so far met few people in my world who could be described as naïve in this positive sense. In my view Stiller, when we met him in custody, had already achieved this painful self-acceptance to a pronounced degree. Why did he nonetheless defend himself in such a childish way against his whole environment, against his former companions? ...

In spite of his self-acceptance, in spite of all his will to self-acceptance, there was one thing our friend had failed to achieve, he had not been able to forego recognition by those around him. He felt himself a different man –quite rightly, he was a different man from that Stiller as whom people immediately recognized him – and he wanted to convince everyone of this: that was the childish thing. But how can we forego being recognized, at least by those nearest to us, in the reality that we ourselves do not know, but at best can only live?

Pg.357, *I'm Not Stiller*. Max Frisch. 1954.

1d – layers...complexity...change and return

A central aspect of anxiety, and of modernity, is caught in the complexity and innumerable layers and relationships and continual change contained within each individual life. The novel begins at the dramatic moment of Stiller's return, a second desperate action, unfortunately into imprisonment. After casting off his life, Stiller wanders the world in search of something authentic or true, a meaning or an understanding, or again more simply: place. As Stiller reappears in his hometown he has been fundamentally transformed by a recognition of himself. He locates an apparent knowledge of himself in which he is simply certain of who he is not.

As Stiller sits in jail, he deliberately does not expect any understanding or recognition from his old life and, accordingly, he treats the situation of his imprisonment with a mocking irony, employing the most direct possible device of simply assuming a wholly new identity. From the beginning, Stiller plays games and tells fantastic tales recounting images of authentic landscapes and women to his warder, his prosecutor and generally anyone who will listen, thereby setting up the titular problem of his true identity. Stiller outwardly affects somewhat of a victorious conquerors return as he feels an aspect of transcendence of his life's phoniness and limitations, in his certainty as his newly bare self.

However, within Stiller's newfound unencumbered self and facetious slant, a less distinct but more potent aspect of desperation and anxiety re-emerges. His friends and family continue to rationalize his unusual demand for (mis)recognition and brush it off with alternately bemused or patronizing smiles. A steadily rising tension in his actions and thoughts reveals an unresolved anxiety despite his assurance of who he is not.

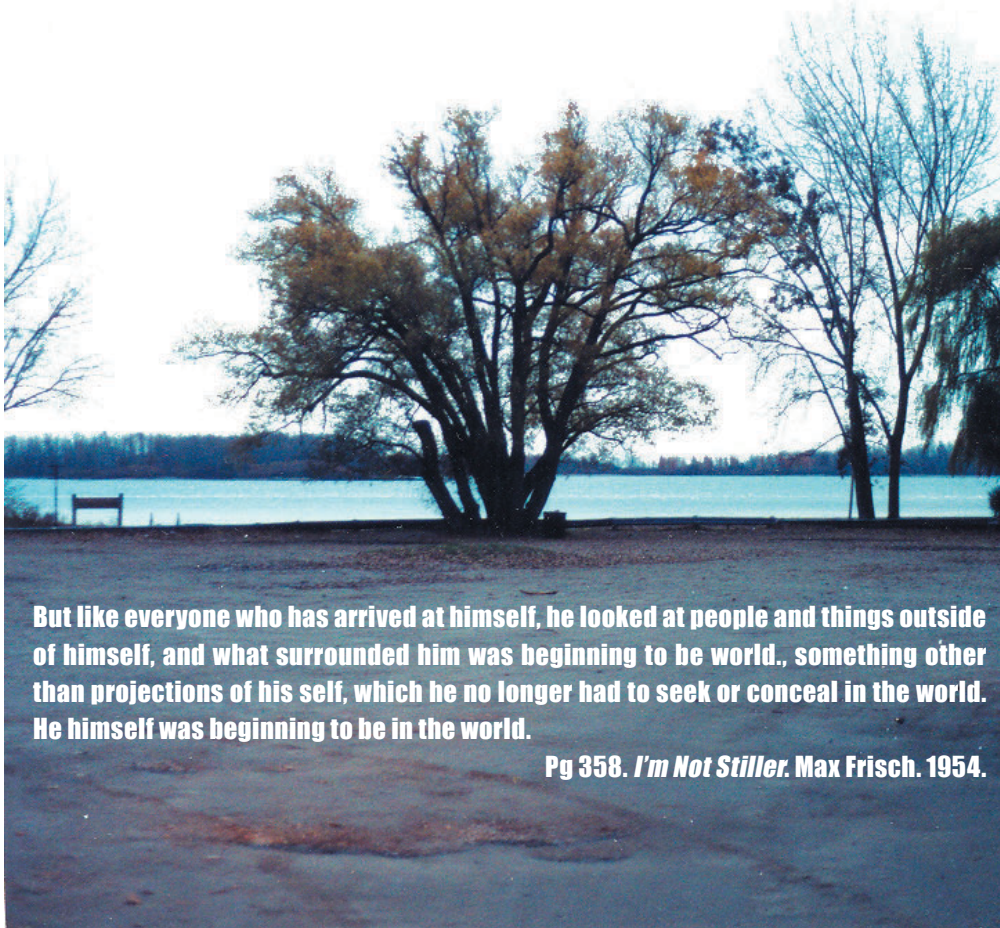
A whole complex of multifarious problems trap Stiller between the states of recognition and full acceptance. In recognizing and accepting some of his weaknesses and desires Stiller achieves a tremendously freeing and locating sense of place and certitude but he is, nevertheless, drawn back home to his life. Amongst the forces within Stiller are a desperation inherent to hollowing cynicism, the impossibility of directly willing acceptance or place, a nagging uncertainty that demands reaffirmation of his convictions, and ultimately the reality of his only lived life.

Frisch explores the anxieties of recognition and expectation throughout Stiller's story. Although he has recognized himself, Stiller demands that this change be reflected in the world and recognized by others. Stiller has distinguished himself, in his own eyes, from the abstracted world of mechanical reproduction but still finds that the world and everyone he meets, continues to treat him with, and allows engagement only by "phony" cultural mannerisms.

Each of these obstacles are exemplified in Stiller's relationship to his wife. One of Stiller's deepest hopes is for his newly authentic and self aware identity to enable a truthful and full love. Stiller is unable to accept the world upon his return largely because he continues to hope for his new identity to be reflected out in the world. This is most acute in his hopes and expectations that his wife will recognize his change and not only accept him, but that he might be able to rescue her as well, and all in a self-deceptively heroic manner of love.

The other thing that occupied my mind was, of course, Stiller himself. Something had happened to Stiller, it seemed to me. The tiresome question of whom we took him for had lapsed, so had his fear of being confused with someone else. In his company I felt as though I had been liberated from some hitherto barely conscious constraint; I myself become freer. As long as a person does not accept himself, he will always have this fear of being misunderstood and misconstrued by his environment; he attaches much too much importance to how we see him, and precisely because of his own obtuse fear of being pushed by us into the wrong role, he inevitably makes us obtuse as well. He wants us to set him free; but he doesn't set us free. He doesn't permit us to confuse him with somebody else. Who is misrepresenting whom?

Pg. 356, *I'm Not Stiller*. Max Frisch. 1954.



But like everyone who has arrived at himself, he looked at people and things outside of himself, and what surrounded him was beginning to be world., something other than projections of his self, which he no longer had to seek or conceal in the world. He himself was beginning to be in the world.

Pg 358. *I'm Not Stiller*. Max Frisch. 1954.

2.5 - Cherry Beach - Winter - View towards Lake Ontario

1e – recovery - reading , recognition, acceptance and place

Max Frisch identifies recognition and acceptance as two central components, or moments, within reading which are necessary to modern place. Within the unstable world of modernity, reading allows an engagement that while distancing and analytical, also provides a means to approach a sense of full engagement, immediacy and reality.

Release from anxiety is not simply found in recognition followed by either easy engagement or rejection of cultural datums, but presents, for Stiller, a continually layered and developing experience. The world doesn't seem to harbour any sense of authenticity or truth and he struggles centrally with his own identity and life in this unreal social context. The majority of the book passes with Stiller being caught by his anxiety as he is able to neither accept nor reject the cultural world and cultural people that he finds around him. The world and its inhabitants had suddenly become unreal for Stiller as he saw it all being composed of only reproduced, abstracted and ungrounded ideas and even experiences. Against this, Stiller's main struggle is simply to reach an immediacy or sense of immediacy to the world.

Through the story Frisch slowly uncovers Stiller's recovery from the modern conditions of uncertainty, phoniness and anxiety as being cured by reading, but more specifically by reading himself. Rather than following his impulses to find or define himself in the cultural world so that he may be recognized, accepted and understood, Stiller reaches a moment where he quietly but explosively unburdens himself of his own image. Stiller's section of the novel concludes with a third dramatic moment of action in which he finds himself irresistably acting out a calm explosion to manifest and mark a final appeal for recognition and change. Brought by the court to visit his old studio and residence, Stiller's facade of cultural austerity finally breaks and he smashes his sculptures, throws all his old works and possessions out of his studio window and, in the end, begins to accept that, even while filled with uncertainty, he cannot escape himself nor his own life.

Returning to architecture, Frisch portrays a modern moment of place in which Stiller is able to separate from himself to finally arrive at a sense of immediacy and subsequent location in the world. Understanding and place are defined by Frisch as a difficult release to an unselfconsciousness and rather than a location founded on meanings or values, presents a modern moment of clean and open place in the world.

An essential component of Stiller's recovery from anxiety is allowed by a separation from himself to allow recognition and eventual acceptance. It is only after a difficult process of acceptance, which spans the whole novel, that Stiller regains an openness and immediacy both to himself and to the world. Frisch identifies the necessity of recognizing ourselves along with our ingrained rationalizations as a pre-condition for unselfconsciousness and actual openness and being in the world. The world inhabited by Stiller remains fast and uncertain, but no longer experienced through a prism of self-reference, and thereby allowing Stiller a sense of calm and ease.

...the primary relationship of man with the naked surroundings, made up of pure and ill-disposed enigmas, which force him to react by seeking an interpretation of them; in short, they force him to think, to form ideas, which are the tools par excellence with which he lives. The whole complex of these ideas make up the world, the horizon within which we live. But ordinarily we live installed, too safely installed, within the security of our habitual, inherited, topical ideas, until we become accustomed to taking them for reality itself; the result is that we do not understand even our own ideas, but think them in vacuo, without proof. Our ideas are reactions to a problem. If we do not live that problem, our concept of it, our interpretations of it, lack meaning and are in no way lively, full and living ideas.

Pg 78, *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset. 1958

'Ah," I say, 'I remember you.'

'At last!'

'My public prosecutor told me about you'

So this is Sturzenegger, a friend of Stiller's, once a young architect full of enthusiasm for consistent modernism, now a man with a career, a man who is cheerfully resigned, a man with both feet on the ground, and since he is a success he is full of hearty comradeship.

'How about you?' he says at once, without mentioning his success, his hand still on my shoulder. 'What have you done, old fellow, to have been put in this State-subsidized apartment?'

As expected, he takes everything very cheerfully, including my request not to mistake me for the missing Stiller.

'Seriously,' he says, 'if there's any way I can help you –'

Once again I feel something uncanny, a mechanism at work in human relations which, whether they are called acquaintanceship or even friendship, immediately takes all the life out of them, all the immediacy. What could a prisoner like myself do with a banknote? But everything functions like an automatic machine: the name, the supposed name, goes in at the top and the right mode of behaviour comes out at the bottom, ready for use, the stereotype of a human relationship which (so he says) means more to him than almost any other.

Pg. 211. *I'm Not Stiller*. Max Frisch. 1954.

2 - Illness and Freud - *The Confessions of Zeno* - Italo Svevo

It is much less difficult to be unhappy. Suffering comes from three quarters: from our own body, which is destined to decay and dissolution, and cannot even dispense with anxiety and pain as danger signals; from the outer world, which can rage against us with the most powerful and pitiless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations with other men. The unhappiness which has this last origin we find perhaps more painful than any other; we tend to regard it more or less as a gratuitous addition, although it cannot be any less an inevitable fate than the suffering that proceeds from other sources.

Pg. 11, *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Sigmund Freud.

At various times in my life I have thought myself to be at last on the road to health and happiness, and this faith was never stronger than during my honeymoon and the few weeks immediately following our return home...

I have talked a lot about her blushes. When these faded, as naturally as the colors of the dawn fade before the full rays of the sun, Augusta walked boldly along the path so many of her sisters have trodden before her on this earth; those who are content to find all their happiness in law and order, or else to renounce it altogether. Although I knew her security to be ill-founded, since I was its foundation, I loved and adored it none the less. I felt obliged to treat it with the same respect I had previously shown to spiritualism. It might be true, and so might faith in human life...

I am trying to arrive at her source of well-being, but I know that I cannot succeed. For directly I start analyzing it I seem to turn it into a disease. And now that I have begun writing about it I begin to wonder whether health like hers did not perhaps need some treatment or training to correct it. But during all the years I lived with her such a doubt never crossed my mind.

Pg 146. *The Confessions of Zeno*. Italo Svevo.

The mysterious transformation of anxieties to tangible illness is of primary importance to place as it identifies an experience that is similarly psychological and physiological at the same time. The aspects of the individual inextricably involved in anxieties include the mind and body, the conscious will and unrecognized impulses or basically the whole of an individual.

The many effects of anxiety are felt in everyday life. The tensions arising from the individual relationship to the modern condition, usually remains obscured by the frantic pace of contemporary life or rationalized as an irresolvable but familiar tension. However, this diffuse but fundamental anxiety becomes crucial as it combines and amplifies with other stresses to result in illness. Anxiety manifests in a wide range of conditions with an upper register occupied by psychosomatic illness and a lower register defined by everyday stress. Regardless of severity, illness critically reveals a point where the split and varied privileging of mind or body become insensible and almost useless. As with place, illness is able to convey a basic and whole moment, although it is uncomfortable, unwanted and ultimately unread.

The conception of the unconscious marks a powerful moment in the development of modern place as it identifies a central part of the modern individual as fluid and unknowable. The unconscious defines a mysterious basis of human life that is simply unknown including impulses such as self-preservation, but also for meaning and for truth. One of the central tenets of psychoanalytic theory, and a distinctly modern perspective, is a cure of neurosis by reading the unconscious, in an effort towards making the originating causes of the illness recognized and thereby affecting a revolutionary and subversive release from the problem. Illness is perceived as originating out of the unknown and curable through reading.²²

The theories and systems developed by Sigmund Freud attempt to identify and articulate the complex relationships between individual consciousness and the modern world. Devices including the ego, id and superego each articulate a general impulse inherent to almost every modern individual.²³ However, the clear relationships of these parts is unfortunately complicated as each component is comprised of innumerable layers and instabilities, leading to conflicts even within a single aspect of the individual. The devices of Freudian theory provide a useful introduction to the psychological aspect of place but are unavoidably too institutional, too rigid and removed from their real context of individual everyday life, with its subtlety, complexity and essential intimacy. The obvious conflicts between individual impulses and civilization eventually render the subtlest fabric of anxieties that escape any classification. The complexity of this fabric becomes crucial as tensions begin to multiply and build to a point where it is expressed as neurosis or physical illness.

Italo Svevo explores many of Freud's theories in a fictional novel rendering an individual experience of social proprieties and anxieties by the doubting character of Zeno Cosini. The novel itself is introduced as a revenge by publication that a psychoanalyst, Dr. S., takes on his patient who has written his memoirs in an effort to be cured of smoking and various associated but unidentified pains. The story and confused type of place it evokes is expressed through and arises from self-doubt and general uncertainty.²⁴

This is an error; even in so-called normal people the power of controlling the id cannot be increased beyond certain limits. If one asks more of them, one produces revolt or neurosis in individuals or makes them **unhappy.**

Pg68, *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Sigmund Freud.

Later that same evening, while we were still at supper, my feelings were wounded again; this time by Guido.

...he did two caricatures of me...

Everyone laughed a great deal, too much I thought. I was extremely pained by this very successful attempt to pour ridicule on me. It was on this occasion that I was conscious for the first time of a stinging pain in my right forearm and hip, an intense burning sensation, a turmoil of my nerves, as if they had been seized by a kind of cramp. I held my hip in alarm and clutched at the same time at my right arm with my left hand;

... I have never got rid of that pain... it played a large part in my life, because I was always trying to get cured. Why must I bear the brand of defeat throughout my life, and become as it were a walking monument to Guido's victory? It was necessary to banish that pain from my body.

And so began my series of cures. But the irrational cause of the malady was soon forgotten, and even I soon found it difficult to retrace. This was natural, for I had great faith in the doctors who were treating me, and sincerely believed them when they told me the pain was due sometimes to imperfect metabolism, sometimes to defective circulation, to tuberculosis, and various infections shameful or otherwise. All my treatments gave me temporary relief, so that each fresh diagnosis seemed at the outset to justify itself. Sooner or later they would break down, but they generally contained some element of truth, because none of my bodily functions are ideally perfect.

Pg 129. *The Confessions of Zeno*. Italo Svevo.

Anxiety cannot be clearly nor easily explored as it both arises from and is framed by civilization. Individuals are raised and live in cities and, resultantly, are defined by the ideas and values, or lack thereof, within their society. The cultural condition of approaching historical crisis does not allow for a clear cultural sense of place in the world. The opinions, or imagined opinions, of other people in society, thereby gain tremendous value and importance as the individual holds no reliable datums for judgement, either of the world or of themselves.

The central antagonist of the novel is Zeno himself, with his dilemmas created in his perceptions of opinion. There is rarely any clear or explicit oppression or restrictions other than the constant sense of doubt or a complimentary guilt arising from his uncertainty. Every action that Zeno takes is preceded by periods of worry and followed by periods of guilt over how it was perceived by other specific characters, as well as an anonymous judgement by society at large. Zeno naturally, but problematically, turns to the people around him for affirmation and absolution from solitude. Living in a modern city, Zeno is born into a world with no stable ground to stand upon and is alternately wracked by doubt and guilt as he tries to justify his life to himself. Perpetually afraid of being misunderstood, misinterpreted, misjudged, mocked or maligned, he goes to incredible and desperate lengths, including marriage, in order to avoid any direct perceptions of embarrassment or failure. In a somewhat absurd paradox, the forces of doubt and uncertainty serve only to generate and amplify the anxieties arising from social propriety, rather than releasing the individual from their tentative control.

Svevo also uses the character of Zeno to explore the Freudian concept of Hysteria. Zeno's illness is described by his wife as a "malade imaginaire."²⁵ The first occurrence of a pain is recalled as being directly precipitated by an embarrassment due to two drawings. The consequential illness becomes an obsession for Zeno and he continually feels pains waxing and waning while shifting around his body. Hysteria, as a concept, presents a free relationship between the mind and the body. This is clearly illustrated by hysteric internal ailments as the precise pains of many patients match only popular misconceptions of human anatomy, while escaping detection by conventional medical diagnosis and making no conventional medical sense.

Aside from Zeno's obsession with his illness, his other central focus is in his relationship with women. Appropriately, his wife offers the most powerful and clear foil to Zeno's pathological perspectives. Augusta presents an easy, or easily pacified, acceptance and experience of the social world, further contrasting and illuminating the introspective thoughts and actions of Zeno. She lives comfortably in the world as it is variously defined by tradition, religion, politics, law and the myriad cultural institutions that define the modern world. The "content" social location is felt by Zeno to present the same dilemma as cynicism or anarchy, each problematically remaining defined by the cultural world. Although there are inevitable conflicts in Augusta's life as well, these are readily handled by the variously prescribed proverbs, aphorisms or, better yet, new clothes.

Zeno's relationship to the cultural world is thereby framed by an empty nostalgia as the place and world which culture describes is "loved and adored" but also inherently "ill-founded, since I was its foundation."²⁶ Zeno's illness essentially arises as he seeks absolution from solitude and its responsibility but at the same time cannot trust nor believe in cultural life and society as he finds it. Instead, he is forced to turn inwards and his own illness becomes a pathological datum and Zeno's primary means of seeing and relating to the world.

May 3, 1915.

But now that I have seen through it, and know that it is nothing but a stupid illusion, a foolish trick that might take in an hysterical old woman, how can I any longer endure to be in the company of that ridiculous man, with his would-be penetrating eye, and the intolerable conceit that allows him to group all the phenomena in the world round his grand new theory? I am going to employ my free time in writing as I please. And, to begin with, I shall write the story of my cure. All sincerity had disappeared between me and the doctor; now I breathe again. I am no longer under constraint.

Pg 382. *Confessions of Zeno*. Italo Svevo. 1923.

March 24, 1916.

I have not touched this notebook since May of last year. And now suddenly Dr. S. has written from Switzerland asking me to send him as much as I had written up to now...

He is no doubt expecting to receive more confessions of weakness and ill-health, and will receive instead an account of my perfect health; as perfect, that is, as my rather advanced age permits. I am cured! I not only have no desire to practice psychoanalysis, but no need to do so. And my good health is not merely the result of feeling myself to be a privileged person among so many martyrs. It is not only by comparison with others that I feel myself to be well: I really am well, absolutely well. For some time past I have realized that being well is a matter of conviction, and that it is a mere day-dreamers fantasy to try and get cured otherwise than by self-persuasion. Of course I have pains from time to time, but what do they matter when my health is perfect? I may have to put on a poultice now and then for some local ailment, but otherwise I force my limbs to keep in healthy motion and never allow them to sink into inertia. Pain and love –the whole of life, in short- cannot be looked on as a disease just because they make us suffer.

Pg 413. *Confessions of Zeno*. Italo Svevo. 1923.

In contrast to Max Frisch's description of searching and projection outwards into the world for place in the character of Stiller, the story by Italo Svevo explores an introspective search for meaning and thereby frames an opposing attempt for place. However, in order to reach a modern conception of place, again cure and recovery are affected through reading. Svevo utilizes a satirical tone and reveals the various rationalizations and machinations of Zeno's mind as he moves in layers towards uncovering, reading and subverting his life, his doctor and, ultimately, himself. The final cure results as Zeno is able to identify his attachment to his illnesses and is thereby simply released from them by taking an opposing conviction in his "good health."

Zeno's various pains describe a common ailment within contemporary cities, as fibro myalgia, being one general term for unidentified or imagined pains, and other psychosomatic illnesses have become an acknowledged medical condition. Psychosomatic illness presents a shifting physical expression of complex and dynamic psychological states and processes. This renders these psychosomatic illnesses difficult both to diagnose or to treat.

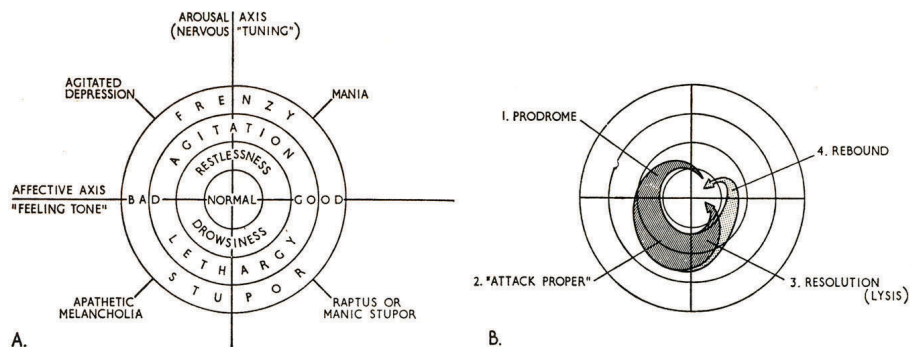
Central to Freudian theory is an engagement of reading and, ideally, a subversive release from anxiety and ultimately from analysis and reading itself. One of the central difficulties with psychoanalysis is simply that any recovery is individually defined and depends solely upon the individual. The various psychoanalysts and doctors in the story are subverted over a period of conviction as Zeno recovers and becomes cured by recognizing the absurdities of his focus on illness as well as the treatments and readings of the doctor. The recognition and release from reading is further reflected as Zeno begins to take action and engage the exterior world, most directly by beginning to buy everything in his trade business rather than working silently under the names of his business partners and friends.²⁷

In the end, the pains which were focused as illness are recognized and accepted allowing a release from his doubts and anxieties. Although he is not free of pain, Zeno is able to escape his doubt and anxieties through a stay from introspection. Contrary to Stiller's outwards misplacement of meaning, the problematic search for meaning is pursued inwardly but can lead to the same anxieties. Despite Zeno's pathological self-focus, the possibility of place through recognition of self is not a given nor inevitable, indeed it is shown to be more problematic for Zeno as it spirals into anxious physical illness. The cure remains through reading which requires conditions that set the characters (a)part from their own selves, neither framed by introspection nor extroversion in the modern city.

3 - The Unconscious Body - *Migraine* - Oliver Sacks

There is one question, however, which I can hardly ignore. If the evolution of civilization has such a far-reaching similarity with the development of an individual, and if the same methods are employed in both, would not the diagnosis be justified that many systems of civilization – or epochs of it – possibly even the whole of humanity – have become neurotic under the pressure of the civilizing trends? ... but it behooves us to be very careful, not to forget that after all we are dealing only with analogies, and that it is dangerous, not only with men but also with concepts, to drag them out of the region where they originated and have matured.

Pg 69, *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Sigmund Freud.



2.6 - Migraine Diagram from Oliver Sacks. *Migraine*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) 176.

Whichever mechanisms are employed, migraine shows itself both eloquent and effective in providing an oblique expression of feelings which are denied direct or adequate expression in other ways. In this, it is analogous to many other psychosomatic reactions, and no less analogous to the languages of gesture and of dreaming.

Pg. 226. *Migraine*. Oliver Sacks

Migraine serves as a focus case to allow a physiological approach to the exploration of anxiety and place. Today, the number of patients, as well as the number of psychosomatic illnesses, is rapidly increasing. One of the broadest types of psychosomatic disease is identified as Generalized Anxiety Disorder. The most evident symptoms of this disorder are mainly prolonged stress and worry, making it extremely difficult to properly diagnose.

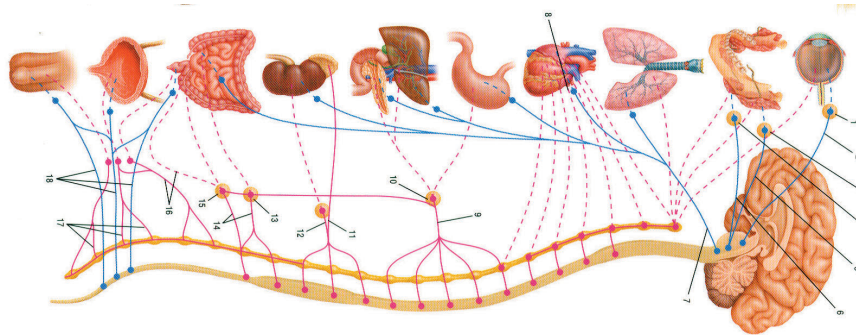
The steady rise of illness, in part, arises from an increasing cultural anxiety of the approaching historical crisis. For the simple reason that individuals live in cities, the modern cultural condition frames their views, experience and understanding, whether it is by concord or contradiction. The cultural aspect of psychosomatic illness has been explored by a wide range of writers including Bataille, Foucault and Julia Kristeva who notes an increasing proportion of her patients suffering a general depression marked by disorientation rather than more classical Freudian diseases like hysteria. However, it remains unrealistic to attribute the dramatically rising cases of anxiety and depressive disorders to any single cause, especially one so abstract as a cultural condition. Amongst the many other identifiable factors for the rise, are an increasing awareness and acceptance of psychosomatic conditions, better methods for diagnosis, and, of course, more medicine to sell.

For a brief description, migraine is best described as a basic cycle of excitation followed by inhibition both mentally and physically. Of the many different types and patterns of this illness, situational migraine classifies the most severe and recurrent type, which frequently becomes a defining element of the patient's identity and life.²⁸ The chronic symptoms gradually force conscious and unconscious adaptations to the disease and can eventually become a sort of unwanted datum as in many of Dr. Sacks cases.

The symptoms of migraine are framed, in part, by the specific physiology of the human body. A migraine attack itself, may include symptoms of headache, hallucinations, nausea, lethargy, as well as a range of concomitant disorders such as asthma or epilepsy. However, there are no defining symptoms as even headache is not necessarily a component of an attack. The range of available symptoms is used flexibly with one symptom easily replacing another when it is repressed, such as by medication. The flexibility of migraine symptoms is a basic and problematic aspect of the illness. Most significantly, migraine and any psychosomatic illness is an essentially individual condition which does not allow any easy ascription of value, meaning or narrative, especially due to its intimate nature and individual discomfort. The definition and articulation of migraine is highly variable even within a single patient and accordingly may be drastically different from the migraines of another. Further, as with most psychosomatic illnesses, migraine frequently overlaps with other disorders, generating an exponential increase in complexity.²⁹ Accordingly, diagnosis and treatment are imprecise and difficult processes, although no less desirable for it. The essential flexibility of migraine as an "eloquent and effective" language reveals, also, the fundamental nature of the body and its connections to the unconscious.

It would be cruel and pointless to deny medication to an acutely-suffering patient, but it is another matter altogether to tout any form of drug therapy as the sole treatment of severe, frequently-recurring migraines.

Pg. 231. *Migraine*. Oliver Sacks



2.7 - Diagram of Main Human Organs and Autonomic Pathways. S. Harris. Permchart Quick Reference Guide. (Concord: Papertech, 1999) 2.

We envisage that psychosomatic reactions, like neurotic defences, have become not only more necessary with the increasing complexity and repressiveness of civilized life, but also more versatile and sophisticated: thus, the simple protective reflexes we have discussed (fight-flight, vegetative regression) may evolve into the richly allusive, over-determined and protean migraines so common in present society.

Pg. 209. *Migraine*. Oliver Sacks

As an embodiment of an individual relationship, or conflict, with the environment, migraine can be considered as an individual and specific, although negative, manifestation of individual place. In cases of situational migraine, Sacks reads that the migraines have become defining factors of their lives and identities and providing an embodied manifestation of their worlds. A reading of contemporary migraine cases is used to show the varieties and complexities of migraines, but also of individuals and their diverse relationships to the complicated modern world.

Situational migraine is defined by Sacks as an unwanted but assumed datum for the patient, utilized to define action, judgement and, sometimes, reality, thereby demanding a cure by whatever means are available. Contemporary research is beginning to identify the physiological components of these diseases at the imperceptible scale of chemical processes. Although the extensive scientific knowledge that has been developed does not simply or directly lead to recovery, the development of new ideas and medications provides extraordinary aids to recovery that cannot be simply dismissed. Advances in genetic testing and brain scanning technologies indicate more specific possibilities in diagnosis while advances in neuroscience and biotechnology provide an expanding array of medicines to assist the patient in recovery.

Nevertheless, migraine is eventually recognized by Sacks to be a necessary physical outlet for individual psychological needs. An attack of migraine gives an outward expression to both physical and mental stresses, in order to force a restoration of some unconscious equilibrium. As a clear case, Sacks relates the precise weekly schedule of attacks suffered by particularly driven individuals working at demanding jobs, which enforces a reliably periodic interlude of needed rest and recuperation. The willful control of the ego is shown to have a limit which, when exceeded, leads to a compensation which originates psychologically as indicated by the culturally defined period of a seven day schedule. The needed rest can be either from physical exhaustion or mental strain, but illness is revealed to always involve both aspects to varying degrees.

Sacks relies, in part, upon the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud to explain the main causes of migraine. Psychosomatic conditions, as posited by Freud, arise primarily out of psychological stress which is generated by individual conflict with the environment. Civilization is read as a highly complex environment which is inherently and necessarily a system of repressions that allows individuals to live together. Neurosis and illness arise as individual needs cannot be expressed and force an unconscious articulation through physical illness.³⁰ Basic human instincts, which are part of the unconscious, are tuned to self-preservation in the form of fight-flight or paradoxical vegetative regression reflexes. The rising complexity of civilization allows and forces an equally complex articulation of these basic protective measures so that migraine is employed unconsciously by the body to force a regression both physically and culturally. The essential origin out of the unconscious points to the necessity for various ailments as outlets, but also to the possibility of recognition as a component of recovery.

Case 18 This 24-year-old man had suffered from frequent nightmares and somnambulistic episodes until the age of 8, attacks of periodic, usually nocturnal, asthma until the age of 13, and classical and common migraines thereafter. The classical migraines would come, with considerable regularity, every Sunday afternoon. The use of ergot compounds effectively aborted these attacks, and after three months of therapeutic care, he suddenly ceased to experience even the premonitory migraine auras. Some weeks after this he returned to me angrily complaining that his long-defunct attacks of asthma had returned, and that they came, in particular, on Sunday afternoons. He regretted the change, finding his migraines preferable to, and altogether less frightening than, the asthmas...

Pg. 42, *Migraine*. Oliver Sacks

Thus with patient 18 – one of the first patients I saw, and a patient I saw at a time when I thought purely in physiological terms – there was a singular “replacement” of migraines by asthma...“Do you think,” said the patient, “that I need to be ill on Sundays, that I need to have migraines, asthma, whatever?”...With further and searching discussions of the question he had raised ... his migraines (and asthma) entirely disappeared, and this without any further use of drugs. He became able to enjoy Sundays, and lost the need to be ill.

Pg. 267, *Migraine*. Oliver Sacks.

It is, paradoxically, not so easy to be well – it is easier in some ways to have a limited life, to be ill. With frequent migraines, with all-intrusive symptoms, one adapts, one learns, in a paradoxical way, to be ill. As new drugs and other new measures are developed, as the physiological affliction begins to retreat, one needs to convalesce, to have an interim period to recover – one has, now, to learn to be well. Only with this, and gradually, with insight and care, is the shadow of the once all-pervasive illness finally left behind, and the possibilities of full recovery open before one.

Pg. 267, *Migraine*. Oliver Sacks.

Yet again, even within a physiological expression of anxiety, reading provides a vital element of cure and recovery. Illness utilizes the same human faculties as mimesis but crucially, rather than a physical reading providing understanding, illness works as an unconscious physical expression of unrecognized anxieties. For Sacks, migraine itself has developed in tandem with civilization to be able to express the subtlety and complexity of modern life such that it provides “an eloquent and effective” language.³¹

For the patients of Dr. Sacks, the needed distance for proper reading is established through the dual means of a physical change through narcotics and a psychological recognition through conversation with Sacks. Despite all the medical tests and objective readings of his body, a mimetic understanding of the patient’s own unconscious is needed to allow a cure. Like in architecture, the unconscious and ingrained expression of impulses by headaches is initially distanced and removed by the useful chemical and physical means of medication. However, a release from migraine towards recovery is achieved more essentially and directly by patient 18 in paradoxically recognizing and accepting his impulse towards illness, essentially focusing them in order to be free from them.

Although migraine originates partly out of physical imbalances, it is revealed to be equally a social and cultural ailment arising from stress or anxiety. The cure for patient 18, like that of Stiller and Zeno, relies upon a recognition and acceptance of his own life and its consequences. Reading is revealed to be component to recovery from anxiety, whether to greater or lesser degrees.

Sacks also identifies a need for “an interim period to recover” or a place where the patient is allowed to remain (a)part from themselves and their lives, even when the physiological symptoms have been neutralized by medication. To escape the “shadow” of ingrained coping mechanisms, almost every aspect of the patient’s life requires a reading, recognition and acceptance to allow the “possibilities of full recovery.” The patients require a place to read, find and frame their problem arbitrarily in order to establish individual understanding and conviction which allows their release from illness and finally a return to the city and their lives.

4 - Toothache and Phenomenology

... I said before that life is solitude, basically, fundamentally, solitude. By this I did not mean to express an opinion about life which was at all vague. This is something very simple, precise, and beyond question; a platitude, if you like, but one with consequences that are exceedingly fertile. Life is the life of each one of us; each of us has to go on living his own life by himself. Our aching tooth hurts us and only us...

pg 89. *Man and Crisis*. Jose Ortega y Gasset

The basic instrument that we use to make our experience intelligible is our body itself. With it, we articulate the constant stream of impressions on our senses, differentiating the world into discrete entities and unifying it into an interrelated whole. Our body defines axes of reference: position, size, direction, density...We fill the world with stones, mountains, leaves, trees, men and animals. These, even if they move, do not lose their fixed identities. We still see them as things and our self as the central thing – the subject – that observes, measures and understands all the others.

pg. 204. *The New Landscape*. Gyorgy Kepes

Toothache in itself offers a common ailment that blurs the modern medical dialectic of reading the body and a mimetic reading by the body. Through a physical pain which becomes equally emotional, toothache points towards the blurred relationship between the ideas identified by Freud and the related ideas of phenomenology. The ailment of toothache limits the reasonable resolution solely to escape for moments, whether by medication or equally by reading which, in the end, pursues an escape from itself.

Phenomenology plays a central role in the reading of architecture and place as it describes their basic foundation in the body and its senses. Gyorgy Kepes relates a basic conception of phenomenology, in which the body and its senses provide the basis for understanding and place in the world.³² Kepes work is founded on a perspective of place that follow the discourse developed primarily by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Edward Casey. The body and its senses provide the basic information to our selves but also provide and define the basic means of understanding. Mimesis describes the act of the body reading in the world or, alternately, reading the world in the body. This faculty enables a central aspect of architecture that has become increasingly disengaged within the contemporary city as the modern focus remains on abstraction and its possibility for perfection as in the contemporary architectural imitations of the modernist buildings and forms of Mies or the early work of Corbusier. Place remains, at base, a mimetic understanding of cultural location, but sidetracked today by the loss of even the mimesis of abstraction and the possibility of dialectical perfection. Geometry is employed not as a tool, but as a means and ends in itself. Vision, as perhaps the most developed sense, offers a primary means of reading and mimesis although it has also been increasingly focused within modernity towards the dialectical and rhetorical possibilities of image, such as those of the consumerist “good life.” Architecture, today, necessarily operates dialectically and rhetorically as these means of understanding have been well developed and ingrained in western culture. Their flexibility, however, also allows their use towards re-engaging a mimetic aspect of experience.

Two further areas of modern medical research that continue to pursue and articulate the mimetic faculties are identified by kinaesthetic research and the continued study of the human brain centers. Kinaesthetic research explores memory within the body such as the physical knowledge acquired through repetition of an exercise, like a physical type of rote knowledge. In a complimentary branch of medical research, ex-proprioception attempts to trace the formation of understanding by the brain centers which combine the data from the various senses with the body and its positioning. Each of these techniques describes a scientific reading of the body but also, at base, begins to explore understanding by reading through the body, in a return to mimesis.

The primary value of the body is refocused by illness. In toothache, the basic physical pain forces an awareness of physicality and the body as a means of understanding. A parallel aspect of toothache is a translation of the ache into emotional states such as desperation or solitude. The body provides a basic point of orientation but also shows an uncertainty that is unconscious. The modern faculty of mimesis has been split into many fields of research with two of its central components identified by phenomenological and Freudian ideas. The foundation of understanding in the body and its senses, the central tenet of phenomenology, corresponds to the physical reading of mimesis, while the drastic role of the unconscious and its impulses within mimetic understanding is indicated by Freud.

Architecture describes a possibility of location that operates in a similar manner as anxiety, but also of reading and recovery. Architecture itself necessarily operates both physically and culturally. Clarity can be recovered by a direct use of distance or mass that generates an experience which coincides mentally and physically, counter to contemporary habitual experience. Most simply, a break from habit generates a distance needed for reading. Further, architecture can easily generate a physical sense of space and vastness that also conveys a corresponding psychological or cultural distancing. Architecture today has a complex task of allowing reading in the landscape, which is both cultural and physical.

In this essay, contemporary place is defined by modern writers as lying neither exclusively in the outer world nor solely within the inner world but, instead, each character continues towards a release through reading. The realities pursued in phenomenology and by Freud show complimentary aspects of mimesis that are each necessary and useful to both recovery and contemporary place.

5 - (a)part: place and recovery by reading

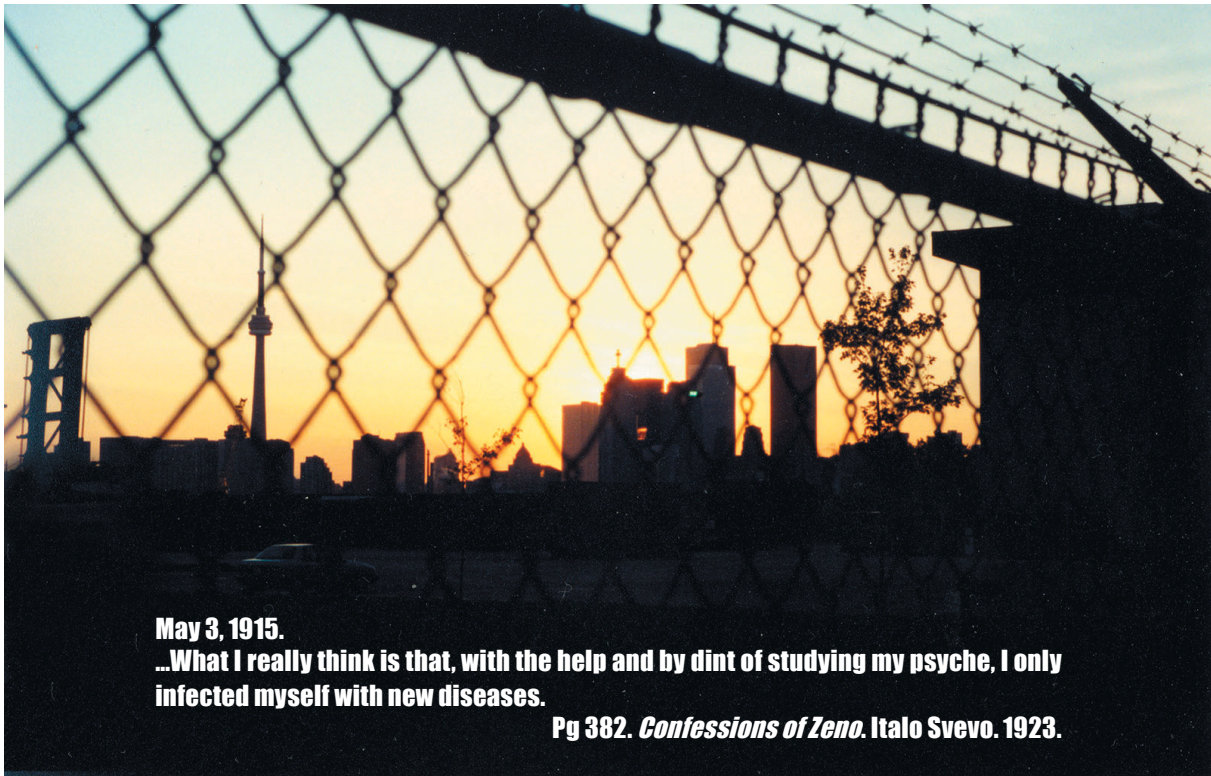
... We definitely have to go find out what we can learn from all this. You say our job is to get healthier, not more clever. But the two must be compatible, damn it...

pg. 380. *The Magic Mountain*. Thomas Mann.

The modern ailments of anxiety are shown to be fundamentally both physical and psychological, allowing an address by architecture which likewise works culturally and physically. Recovery, as defined by the authors examined in this essay, requires a place to be **(a)part**, a condition similar to and which allows reading. A place to sit away from the disjunction of “solitude and society.” The ancient type of rooted or animal place which is physically based, such as in phenomenology or sports, does not allow for any clear distance. The necessarily immersive quality supports inertia rather than recognition, which is even more problematic in the modern world of uncertainty and constant change. Within Freudian theory, however, the release from anxiety is made possible through a moment of recognition. Mimesis allows a type of reading and recognition which is both physical and psychological. Place today, like recovery from anxiety, even in city and landscape, relies upon individual, intimate and arbitrary readings. To both enable and spur recovery, each character, in the end, finds a place to be (a)part and read, a place for Stiller to think about his identity and his wife, for Zeno to think about his illness and fear of ridicule and for Sack’s migraine patients to think about whatever their “touchstones”³³ may be. More precisely, what is required for their recovery is a place to stop reading, such as for Stiller to stop picturing Julika as an image and how he wishes to relate to a frozen idea of her and begin instead to begin openly living with his wife.

Recovery is necessarily an individually defined condition. Place does not necessarily involve an escape from anxiety but, instead, can also recognize and accommodate anxiety, such as at an extreme in pathological illness. Several of Sacks patients find that their migraines are necessary components of their lives with their being happier and more productive overall in maintaining, but controlling, their ailment. The most specific case provided by Sacks recounts a migrainous mathematician whose abilities to focus on math were treated away by medication along with his symptoms of migraine, and leaving the man in worse anxiety. The patient, in the end, chooses to maintain his illness and recovery is re-defined as an acceptance of the headaches as a part of himself and his life, echoing Zeno’s necessary acceptance of his own “pain and love - the whole of life.”³⁴

Architecture provides possibilities of recovery through reading and individual location. Aside from a basic physical location and body positioning, architecture also addresses social and psychological location, for instance by manipulation of programme or metaphorically through a mimetic reading of space and tectonics. This is perhaps most evident at contemporary post-industrial sites which sit culturally (a)part from the city as economic development has forced them to be left behind and distanced both physically, by zoning, and also culturally. The remaining site conveys a sense of lost intention as industry powerfully shaped and formed the landscape but was then lost and largely forgotten as the economy continued to advance. The old industrial sites and structures have escaped development as its qualities are not traditionally pictured as valuable or socially desirable. The sense of emptiness on the sites, directly engenders a parallel sense of distance and unselfconsciousness in the individuals walking, sitting or reading in the dislocated landscape. As in illness, an address of the body through architecture also generates an address of mental states since the two are essentially “compatible” and even intertwined. Through mimetic metaphor, the individual begins to sense an unselfconsciousness that suspends the ego with its desires and rationalizations, to allow a momentary escape from uncertainty and anxiety. Architecture can articulate the sense of emptiness on these sites, and rather than a strange perception of hardness or the lack of usual orders, can emphasize the absence of intention and generate an intimate sense of unselfconsciousness. To allow recovery, architecture today can provide a clean and clear space to allow a patient to recalibrate themselves to a landscape without meaning or value.



2.8 - View from Cherry Beach back towards the Toronto Skyline.



On Water

1 - Modern Realism - moment, clarity and place

What takes place here in Virginia Woolf's novel is precisely what was attempted everywhere in works of this kind (although not everywhere with the same insight and mastery) – that is, to put the emphasis on the random occurrence, to exploit it not in the service of a planned continuity of action but in itself. And in the process something new and elemental appeared: nothing less than the wealth of reality and depth of life in every moment to which we surrender ourselves without prejudice. To be sure, what happens in that moment – be it outer or inner processes – concerns in a very personal way the individuals who live in it, but it also (and for that very reason) concerns the elementary things which men in general have in common.

Pg. 488, *Mimesis*. Erich Auerbach.



3.2 - View of Beach, Varadero, Cuba.

"I don't understand," Hans Castorp said. "I don't understand how someone can not be a smoker - ... - what I'm saying is, that if a man has a good cigar, then he's home safe, nothing, literally nothing, can happen to him. It's the same as when you're lying on the beach, because there you lie on the beach, you know? And you don't need anything else –"

Pg. 46, *The Magic Mountain*. Thomas Mann.

This concluding essay uses water to convey the central aspects of Modern Realism and explores them as a foundation for architectural place. A consideration of the experience of water reveals many of the qualities of realism including a sense of elemental, clear and shifting properties and also an intangible simplicity/complexity that conveys a rich spatiality. The basic quality of fluidity, amongst other impressions, gives an sensation that can be read both as momentary or constant. This fluidity is here used to convey a contemporary type of cultural ground based in realism, that may be complex and contradictory but ultimately offers a type of place in which for a clean moment, *“nothing, literally nothing, can happen to him.”*

The experience of place pursued in Realism can be condensed as “moment” which conveys an apparent sense of immediacy to the external world. From an experiential perspective things, time, places and the world at large seem to be more real for a vital flash, that subsequently allows an unstable but whole sense of understanding and orientation for the individual: a moment of place. The solid sense of the world represented by realism presents a most drastic distinction from the unstable and doubtful worlds of anxiety. In place of an understanding reached through abstractions and narratives, realism pursues a representation of the world as “truly” as possible. This impulse to clarity and transparency plays a central role in modernity as reason and logic provided the means to escape from the perceived obscurations and limitations of established traditions, myths and morals. However, the moment also provides a break from modern perspectives as it does not rely upon causality, comprehensiveness or synthesis to generate a sense of place, but instead works by a mimetic reading across wide and complex fields. The moment describes not an articulated understanding, but something read across the story and seemingly contained, or at least precipitated, by an arbitrary occurrence.³⁵ Although these mimetic moments, as well as the experience of place, dissipate or obscure quickly they are mimetically remembered and can serve as individual datums.

A key aspect of modern realism, as noted by Auerbach, is its central focus applied to and through arbitrary details, fragments and half-thoughts. Modern realism provides a revolutionary means of “seeing the world in a grain of sand,” pursuing details as a means and ends in themselves and with their own weight. This is, again, most starkly illustrated by contrast to the Christian world in which reality remains outside of the world and its details to rest solely in an ideal, unreachable God. Within Modern Realism the engagement of reading allows a mimetic understanding to emerge as much from between details as it does from an overarching narrative or the details themselves. Although the arbitrary focus apparently produces a subsequently subjective understanding, the resulting moment that emerges in Realism instead “concerns the elementary things which men in general have in common,”³⁶ things that are ultimately also elementary to place. The preceding essays on fascination and anxiety explore these two modern conditions as crucial individual experiences that may be focused and clarified by architecture, to allow their release and a subsequent moment of place which floats free from the modern condition and the modern city.

The term (a)part has been used thus far to convey a type of engagement by distance, specifically as exemplified in reading wherein a psychological distance is a precondition for the clear engagement of recognition and acceptance. The distance offers a needed space away from oneself that is not present in purely phenomenological sensory experience. The means towards creating distance include the basic gesture of creating psychological distance with actual physical distance or the use of vast and empty modern architectural scales to spur an awareness of solitude and its complement in society. Distance is also generated through strangeness as the resultant break from habitual “experience” directly generates a separation from an habitual cultural self to allow a clearer view and relationship to a thing and to ourselves.



May 15, 1915.

In order to be able to concentrate better, I spent the afternoon of the second day alone, on the banks of the Isonzo. Nothing helps one to concentrate so well as gazing for a long time at running water. One remains perfectly still oneself and all the necessary diversion is provided by the water, which is never the same for a single instant, either in color or design.

It was a wonderful day. A strong wind must have been blowing in the upper air, for the clouds were continually changing shape, but down below there was no movement in the atmosphere. From time to time the sun, which already gave some warmth, found a gap in the swiftly moving clouds and streamed through, flooding with light some expanse of upland or some mountain peak, and lifting the tender May green out of the shadow that covered all the landscape. The air was warm, and there was something spring-like even in that flight of clouds across the sky. There could be no doubt the weather too was convalescent.

In my contemplative mood I enjoyed one of those moments that niggard life so rarely grants, when one ceases to feel oneself a victim, and can take a large, impersonal view of things. In the midst of all that green, so exquisitely radiant under the fitful sun-rays, I was able to smile at life and at my malady. Women played a great part in both. Even the details of a woman's body – her feet, her waist, her mouth – were enough to fill my days. And as I looked back over my life and my malady, I felt that I loved and understood them both.

Pg398. *The Confessions of Zeno.* Italo Svevo.

3.2 - Water

The unusual distance of being (a)part can be clarified by a common contemporary experience of public space in the city, in which social activity and life are juxtaposed against solitary silence and emptiness. Exterior public pools present a drastic distinction between summer and winter with the contrasting experiences of light and laughter remembered against a return to the site when it sits empty, cold and unused. The main distance that (a)part references, remains in the separation/connection caught in the moment where the world becomes distinct but finally open and immediate. Each of Stiller, Zeno and Patient #18 are only recovered, and really themselves, in a moment where they stand apart from their impulses. The characters all eventually arrive at a point where they can read and recognize essential aspects of themselves, and are thereby able to escape both introversion and extroversion, to truly become a part of their own lives and worlds.

Architecture holds a similar possibility of making a site seem more real for a moment. The basically material, and therefore bodily, nature of architecture allows mimesis to work more directly than in language, but can essentially provide the same type of focus to the landscape, both culturally and physically, in order to amplify specific details, characteristics and qualities. Basic datums like the sun, horizon or ground can be engaged by simple architectural devices including framing, programming and tectonics. These devices do not operate by abstractions or metaphors, but rather can be employed as means to subvert and escape habitual images and re-engage the landscape in a physically direct, or mimetic, manner.

Realism, relative to the worlds of fascination and anxiety, defines not a retreat, surrender or resignation in the conflict between society and solitude, but instead a firm step into the world, made possible by recognition and acceptance of self and its unconscious. There is specifically no explicit meaning nor understanding in the worlds described by realism and this results both as consequence and as an expression of a release from the need or desire for absolute datums. Realism presents a world momentarily free from anxiety and doubt and instead richly grounded in the world and in life.

Reading occurs in a drastically different mode as it is necessarily founded on a view out of the individual's own eyes, but in modern realism, vitally clear of a whole self and identity behind the retina, pushing and searching outwards into the world for meaning or alternately reflecting inwards for understanding. The condition of being (a)part becomes embodied for a brief moment and defines a move past a self-conscious view of the world, and begins to convey an open and unselfconscious place in the world. With overwhelming impulses resolved, or at least recognized, the individual can finally perceive that the city is, and has always been, a real and immediate world.

2 - Ernest Hemingway - Simplicity and Landscape

Then there is the other secret. There isn't any symbolism. The sea is the sea. The old man is an old man. The boy is a boy and the fish is a fish. The sharks are all sharks no better and no worse. All the symbolism that people say is shit. What goes beyond is what you see beyond when you know.

Ernest Hemingway. *Selected Letters*, 1952

All good books are alike in that they are truer than if they had really happened and after you are finished reading one you will feel that all that happened to you and afterwards it all belongs to you; the good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse and the sorrow, the people and the places and how the weather was.

Ernest Hemingway. *By-Line*, pg. 184

The realism of Ernest Hemingway represents a deliberately simple focus on the world and a correspondingly basic, but rich, type of place. The most commonly noted, and also most architectural, aspect of Hemingway's Realism is a solid and stable sense of the world. Clarity and solidity are conveyed through detailed descriptions and a clear articulation by simple language. This occurs most basically in the rich descriptions of landscape and immediate settings which include climate, topography, vegetation and etc. to clarify the characters' experience and location. Hemingway employs a modern technique in stripping down language to efficiently convey highly complex conditions ranging from individual character to cultural forces. Even the concepts and situations themselves, including war and displacement, are focused to a point of almost diametric clarity, with right and wrong sides well demarcated, recognized and accepted by the characters and to the reader. The world is seen and experienced "clear and as a whole" by Hemingway before he sets down a single word and resultantly the story manifests a clear and whole sense of place both inherently and explicitly through the modern idea of moment.³⁷

Another deliberately modern gesture in Hemingway's writing is an absence of traditional styles, values and morals. The hard authenticity of Hemingway is primarily conveyed through the essential displacement or alienation suffered by almost all of his characters such as young ex-patriots in Paris or Spain, injured soldiers or an elderly and poor fisherman. The perspective provided by these characters is directly displaced from tradition as they do not fit into the existing niches of their societies and thus also freeing them from the social constraints of traditional values and ideas. Immediacy to the world is thereby generated and conveyed through an essential break from our habitual views.

Hemingway's realism conveys a solid landscape without narrative or value as its foundation. Themes, values and narratives are contained and found in the details themselves as opposed to structuring the story, so that the focus is placed upon the world as it is apparently found. A basic sense of landscape can be likewise focused in architecture to act as a foundation for other aspects of place. Basic elements, including the ground, horizon or sun can be recovered, made readable or engaging, by a range of architectural devices that work through the body and its senses. Both the natural landscape and the city offer a powerful and solid reality that is undeniable although generally lost in abstraction or taken for granted. Architecture holds the potential to restore a sense of solidity and stability to the external world by framing in a direct manner, similarly to the focus provided by Hemingway, in order to generate a moment of place.

They were located in a specific class of sites which suddenly became attractive because of their low land value and privileged location. These were mostly forgotten pockets of urban areas that had previously been occupied by industrial, transportation, distribution or institutional facilities of the pre-First-World-War industrial era...The character of these sites was negative: hardness of materials, harshness of texture, roughness of shape, industrial colour, fragmentation of space. The realist architects made a world which represented the very negative, 'dirty' attributes of these sites.

Once again, one can recognize in their architecture the technique of defamiliarization. But this use of 'strangemaking' is uniquely strange...They hold up a convex mirror whose lens emphasizes rather than covers up reality.

**pg. 22. *Between Utopia and Reality: 8 Tendencies in Architecture Since 1968.*
Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre,**

A second crucial aspect represented by Hemingway has been identified as Dirty Realism, both in literary and architectural criticism. The dirty aspect manifests a contemporary impulse, and aesthetic, that values dirt, grit or an unpolished quality as somehow truthful, or less contrived, than sanitized ideals. The reactionary impulse towards dirtiness is exemplified by the specificity of modern perspectives, provided by science and technology, which are increasingly perceived as a deception rather than a clarification through objectivity. Instead, Hemingway's stories move towards a blurry sense of meaning as connections are read mimetically between simple and clear arbitrary details.

Dirty Realism also identifies an architectural trend noted by Tzonis and Lefaivre in, *8 Tendencies in Architecture Since 1968*. A landscape of the rough or unfinished is commonly found today at post-industrial sites on the edges of many contemporary cities. The continued development of the economy has left most cities with tracts of land falling into disrepair as production has shifted towards an information economy, leaving the old industrial sites with a sense of lost deliberation and unselfconsciousness. The key architectural gestures employed focus towards an amplification, rather than negation, of the unfinished qualities of the site, including rough materials and a sense of disjunction or displacement. Tzonis and Lefaivre note that architecture of Dirty Realism utilizes strangeness as a deliberate "defamiliarizing" technique to break the typical values and habitual experience by arbitrary emphasis on the harder details of the site. Strangeness offers a central technique with which to create distance from narratives, images or values so that they can be better engaged and read.

This impulse towards the rough, can also be read in the current popularity of loft apartments in the same post-industrial sites and buildings. The loft apartments also illustrate a complexity in contemporary realism as its basic impulses have been commodified and accordingly idealized, contrary to its origin and intent. A basic disconnection occurs as impulses are necessarily idealized and mechanically reproduced for consumption. The commodification of the cultural impulses manifest by Hemingway is explored by the theorist Raymond Williams.³⁸ The displaced characters from Hemingway's novels have long been appropriated by the various medias as an heroic and authentic type which is effective in marketing and promotion. The impulse towards the unfinished has itself been polished into a sanitized and distanced aesthetic that requires a "defamiliarizing" break. The potential of realism as a foundation for place is revealed here, as moment continues to emerge regardless of the complexity of impulses. Re-engagement through distorted impulses or abstract images can be approached directly through usage. The contemporary architectural narrative of water filtration technologies can be engaged by providing a place to swim or drink the filtered water, rather than making an image by a facade which contains the technology. The most fundamental method of of strangemaking in realism, however, remains in simply attempting to represent the world without pre-conceived values or narratives, as in found conditions. Rather than a technical analysis of the landscape, a careful reading can uncover strange found conditions, such as displaced salt-water ecosystems, which can be amplified and articulated by architecture to spur a sense of immediacy. Aside from the atypicality of things without narrative, the very diversity and strangeness of the contemporary city itself, when un-processed and especially when clarified, forces an individual revision and re-placement in the world.

In the end, Hemingway's central aim can be conveyed in a clean moment where "the sea is the sea." Water is revealed as simply water with its own existence and value, independent from any other meanings or ideas. Through a focus on details, Hemingway is able to generate a clean sense of place that floats free from established, or even explicit, narratives and meanings. Instead, a basic sense of emptiness arises which is atypically neither heroic nor tragic as in past fictions, but describes a "beyond" which is essentially individual, mimetic and blurry.

3 - A Clean Place

Rien faire comme une bete, lying on water and looking peacefully at the sky, 'being, nothing else, without any further definition and fulfillment', might take the place of process, act, satisfaction and so truly keep the promise of dialectical logic that it would culminate in its origin. None of the abstract concepts comes closer to fulfilled utopia than that of eternal peace. Spectators on the sidelines of progress like Maupassant and Sternheim have helped this intention to find expression, timidly, in the only way that its fragility permits.

Sur L'Eau, from *Minima Moralia*, Theodor Adorno.

In the end, the moment pursued by modern realism allows a clean and open place, a sense of untouchability,³⁹ as the individual becomes momentarily released from details and from the world. An individual generates datums in realism, through random moments that are ascribed value due to subjective and obscure, or unconscious, connections. The exploration of the two common and modern experiences of fascination and anxiety provides vital details which can be re-focused and articulated to allow their recognition and release towards emptiness and nothing as a sense of place.

As the major component of the physical landscape, water provides many details that can be focused and engaged through architecture. Seasonal moments such as flood, rain, and snow or physical properties like buoyancy, fluidity or clarity, or even narrative moments like filtration, environmental processes, and economic value can be found, focused and articulated to provide an escape from their specificity and themselves, as in the cover image of the thesis which combines many waters into a single picture, to generate an experience of place. This realist manner of engaging water operates mimetically, and conveys a bodily understanding to the individual. The overall experience of water is ultimately released from these various details, differences and narratives, in a return to the beach, allowing an individual unfocusing and a modern moment of place.

Reading is revealed to be, in essence, a self-subversive engagement that can provide place in the moment of escape from its own searching and analysis. Architecture is employed to essentially break free from the self and the world, not to retreat and escape from things as a conclusion, but in order to actually realize them, in contrast to everyday disengaged experience. A mimetic reading or engagement of the landscape, through an architecture of realism, allows release from reading and just living.

Sitting next to the water, whether on a beach or in a backyard pool, the element holds an inherent aspect of recognition and acceptance, whether it is due to its volume, fluidity or elemental simplicity. Water can begin to be understood and felt to be just *there*, immediately, and our focus can drift onto other problems with the water remaining present but without an image filtering our experience of it and demanding our attention. The lake or pool can be experienced as receding from focus to provide a quiet and rich background for nice reading.

In place, the individual can find the possibility of the world as a world, not filtered through impulses or meanings, but establishing, for a moment, a direct placement in the world. Finally, when considered practically and without elaborations, realism provides a foundation for a simple, but vital, return to the city.

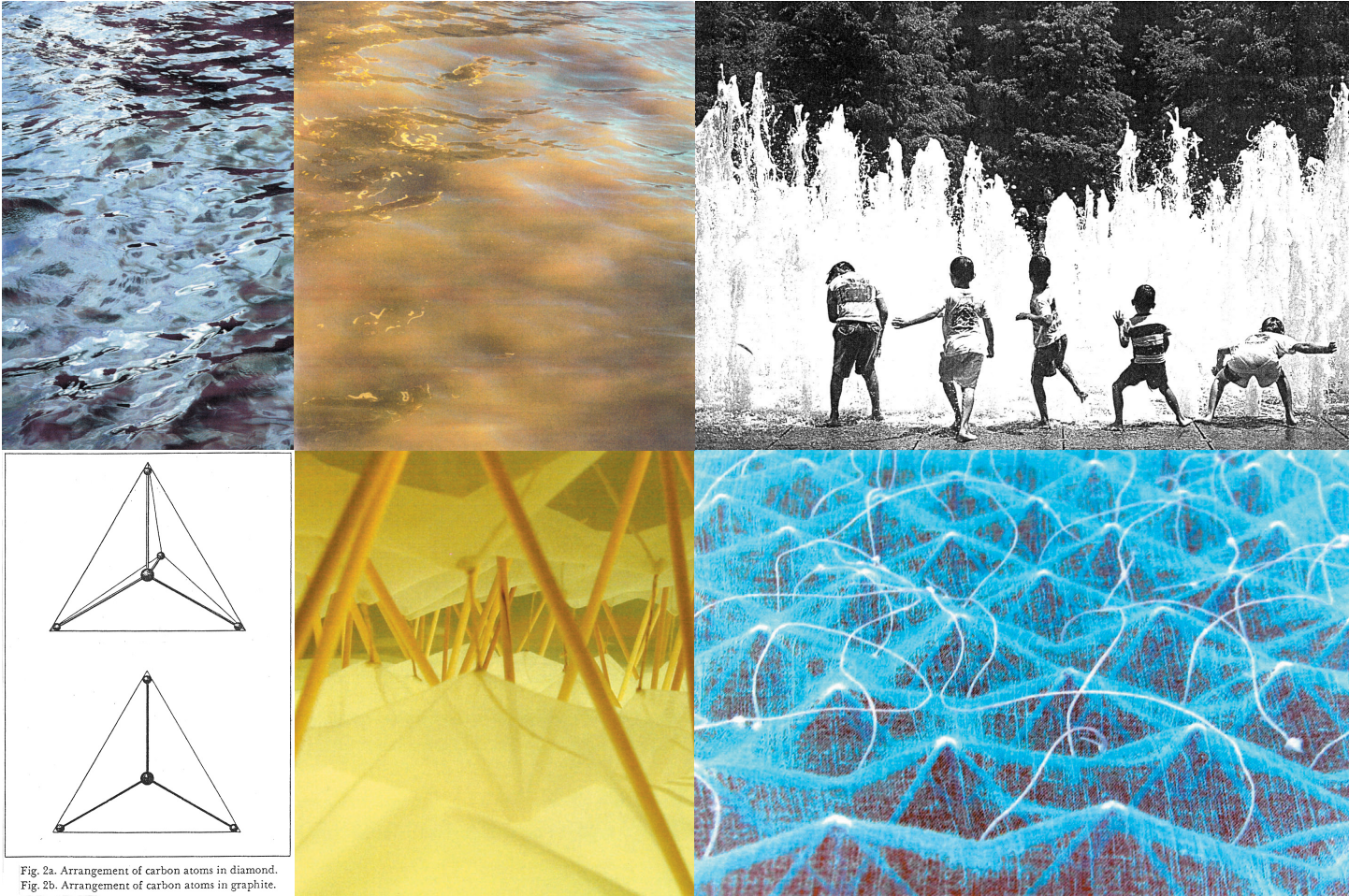
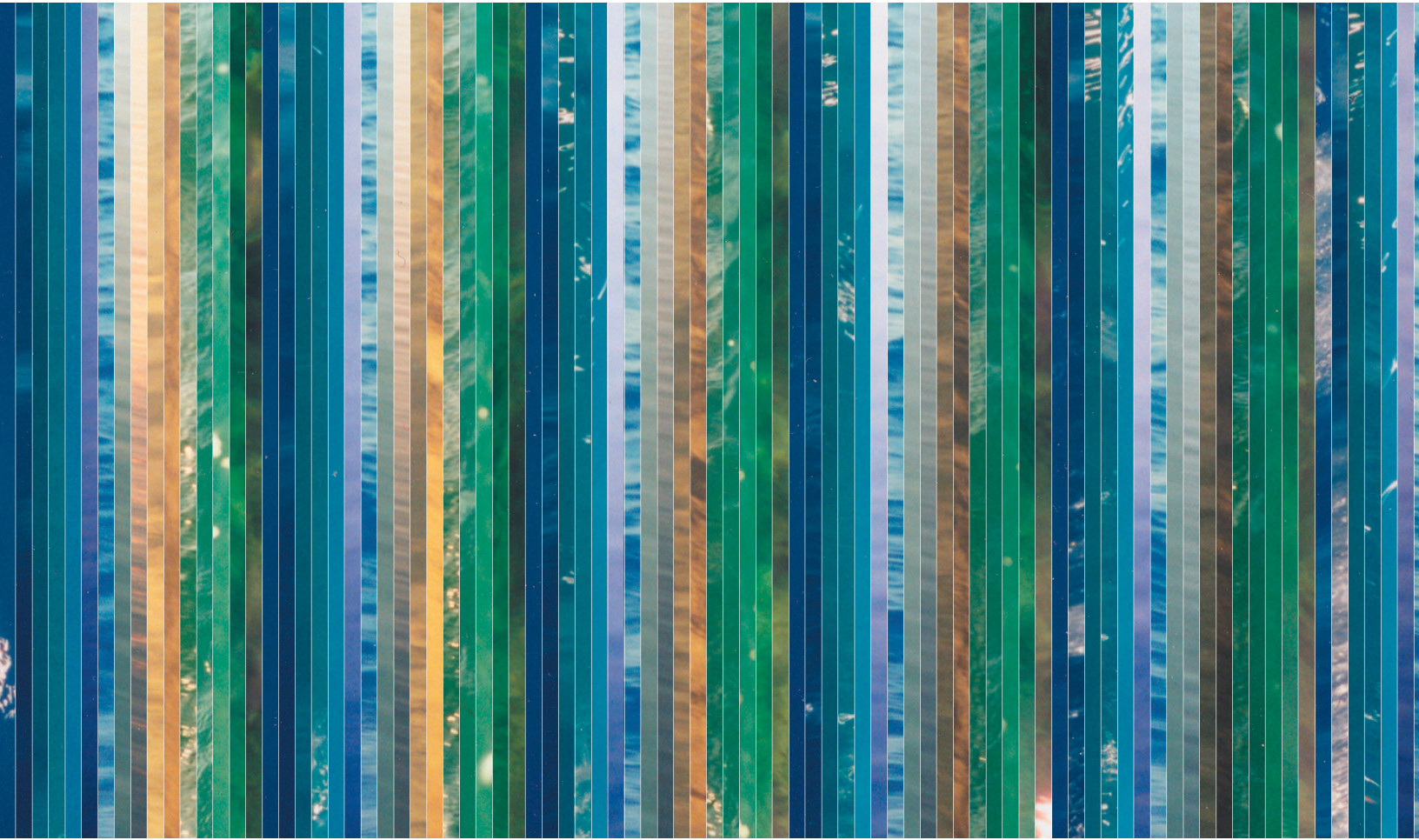
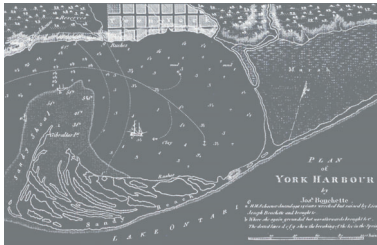


Fig. 2a. Arrangement of carbon atoms in diamond.
 Fig. 2b. Arrangement of carbon atoms in graphite.

3.4 - Water, Fountain Place Dallas, Diamond Structure, and Double Skin Textile Project from M1 Term.



3.5 - Moment of Water - collage.



THC billboard at entrance to East Gap, 1915.



Design Projects

4.2 - Sanatorium and Public Park - site plan



programme: 1 - house
2 - sanatorium residence A
3 - sanatorium residence B
4 - libraries + snow dumps
5 - public reading gallery
6 - water filtration pools + pavilions
7 - swimming pool
8 - soon existing ferry terminal
9 - public market (books)

landmarks: a - cherry beach
b - salt storage
c - smoke stack

Public Park– a place to be (a)part for reading

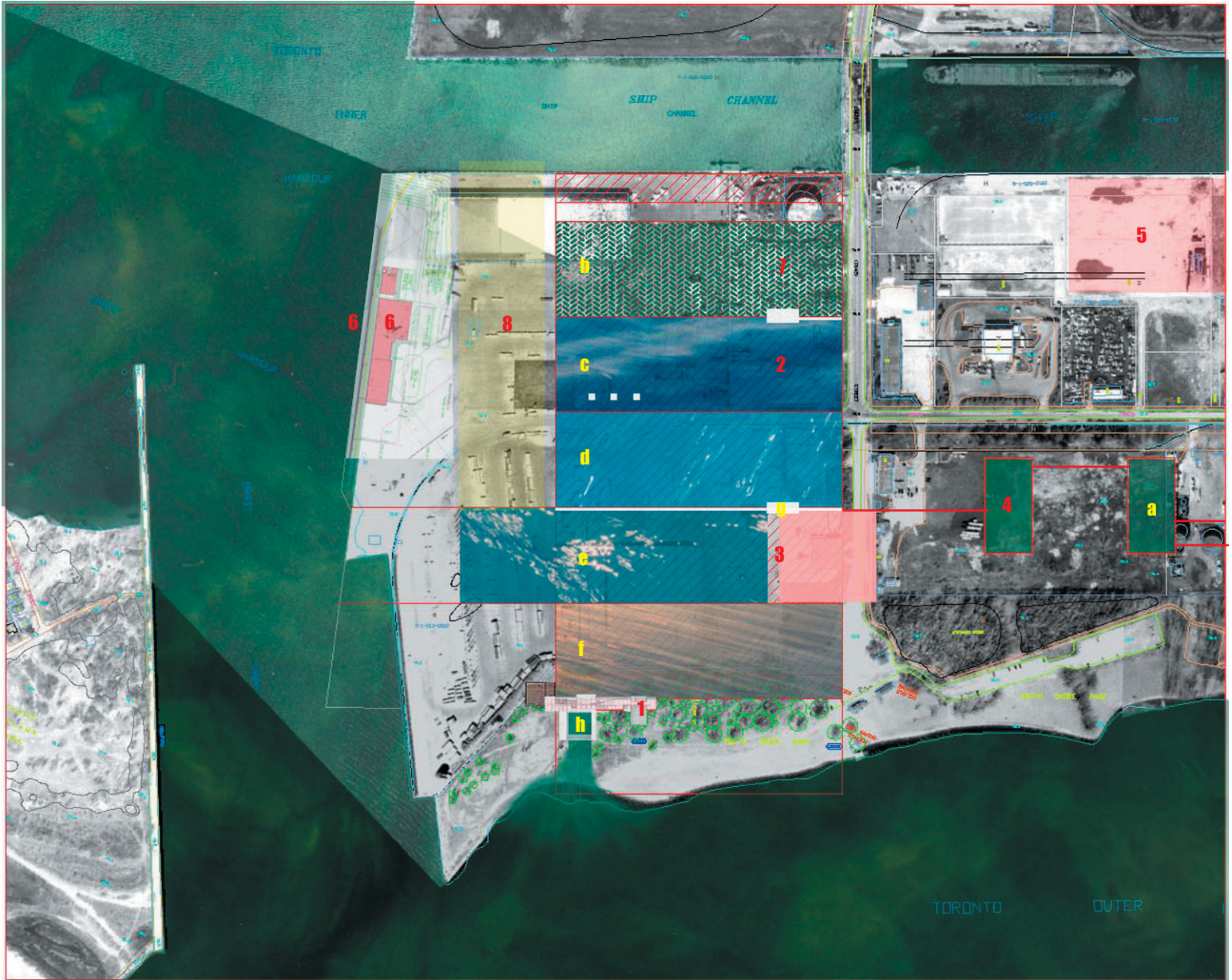
The park is located between the city and the lake defining an edge for Toronto. The amplified conditions of moment or anxiety reveal aspects of everyday life which are common to all individuals living in a modern city. Accordingly the park serves not only the sanatorium but also provides a place to go when stressed or anxious, a place to read as an amenity for the city of Toronto. As an area of boundary, the site is able to hold a particular sense of (a)part place for reading as opposed to traditional modes of *otium* and *negotium* (*The Villa*. James Ackerman) which are instead focused as horizons. The modern confusion of place can also be read in the landscape as the distinction between the city and the suburbs and nature have long been blurred, while even the Ontarian *otium* of Algonquin is dominated by images made for tourism and thereby subject to a form of distancing and doubt that makes a clean escape from the city a problematic proposition.

In contrast, the edge condition of the site attempts to focus and amplify aspects of the site, both urban and natural, including an acknowledgement of anxiety. Rather than obscuring the discomfort of anxiety, the project aims to focus and clarify stress, tension and anxiety towards their own cure by locating individuals (a)part from the landscape and ourselves. Place most vitally locates at a cultural scale, but does so by virtue of its very intimacy and individuality.

In addition to arising directly from the experience of driving around or sitting on the site which presents a stark landscape due to its development, the anxiety acts in a crucial role within the architecture and unfolds back into the landscape and water. A clear structure and tectonics are used to frame the horizon, sun or water in a stark manner by isolation and framing, thereby rendering them readable and engaging. Additionally, a central narrative of the design allows for by-products of the city to be refocused as the basis for unusual amenities. Anxiety is also employed simply to generate depth of range, in a somewhat aesthetic gesture like a psychosomatic chiaroscuro, dark and light generating a type of richness even when it is not consciously engaged. Each of these aspects moves towards pushing the individual out of the familiar and into a re-vision, of landscape and ourselves, especially out of illness and towards recovery.

A central design gesture is the monumentally scaled water filtration system that is created as a cut into the ground of the site, by which water levels are revealed and framed as a fluid datum. A complex ecosystem is defined by the types and species of plants which can survive and filter salt and various other pollutants from the city out of the water. The first large pool provides parking for the market and the ferry terminal on raised steel grating through which pollutants can fall down or grasses can grow up. A series of pavilions/mechanical rooms scattered on the rest of the pools, allow inhabitation of the filtering process and frame it to seasonal or weather defined moments.

4.3 - Public Reading Gallery and Park - site plan - approximately 1:1500



- programme:**
- 1 - public reading gallery
 - 2 - water filtration pools + pavilions
 - 3 - swimming pool
 - 4 - libraries + snow dumps
 - 5 - existing salt storage/dump
 - 6 - soon existing ferry terminal
 - 7 - public parking
 - 8 - public market (books)

- water filtration stages:**
- a - snow dump + libraries
 - b - water settling stage + parking
 - c - filtration by plantings
 - d - further filtration by plantings
 - e - swimming pool
 - f - mixed water (fish)
 - g - mechanical filtration + pavilion
 - h - threshold to lake + theatre

Public Reading Gallery / Water Reservoir /Theatres

The public reading gallery has a programme similar to that of a beach in simply providing a place to sit and to read. The building allows occupation by a reading body which is solid and located but, at the same time, distanced from itself to allow proper modes of reading. The basic parti of the reading gallery is a location as a massive gate terminating the water filtration axis and dividing the landscape along that edge and threshold. The steel reservoir contains integrated drinking fountains, windows and shelving out of wood, while the majority of the steel wall is finished with layers of superfine automotive paint until it is like a translucent lacquer. The reservoir wall itself takes its tectonics and systems of bracing and compartmentalization from the cargo ships which rest around the site.

The reservoir wall is then articulated as a boundary by 5 layers of structure and screens to expand the edge into a building, although always with the massive and opaque layer of water in the center. Concrete bearing walls carry the weight of water down to the underground level where barrel vaults articulate a heavy physical compression. Rather than dark, dank and solid, however, the underground is lightened and made rich by the play of reflected light on the vaulting and rising floor levels floating on water.

The building is largely an exterior pavilion made occupiable in the winter by a series of small super heated spaces working like saunas for warming up in the winter. Each threshold through the reservoir/edge presents an intimately socially scaled room with benches and a fireplace integrated into the reservoir. Additionally, the reservoir and layers of screens form various microclimates throughout the year providing a partially controllable range of conditions.

The alternating series of bearing walls also serve to divide and frame the space of the building. Solitude and (a)partness are partially generated by the vast scale while located within its system of structure. The structural bay remains at 4 meters to provide a comfortable sized space for one or two people and expanding to 5 meters at the gate/bays of water passage where the reading niches also form box seating for seasonal theatre.

The building is mainly oriented to the landscape and its seasons as a datum. The gallery is situated behind and registers a row of existing trees on the site with the top floor of the gallery level to the top of the canopy allowing open views all around.

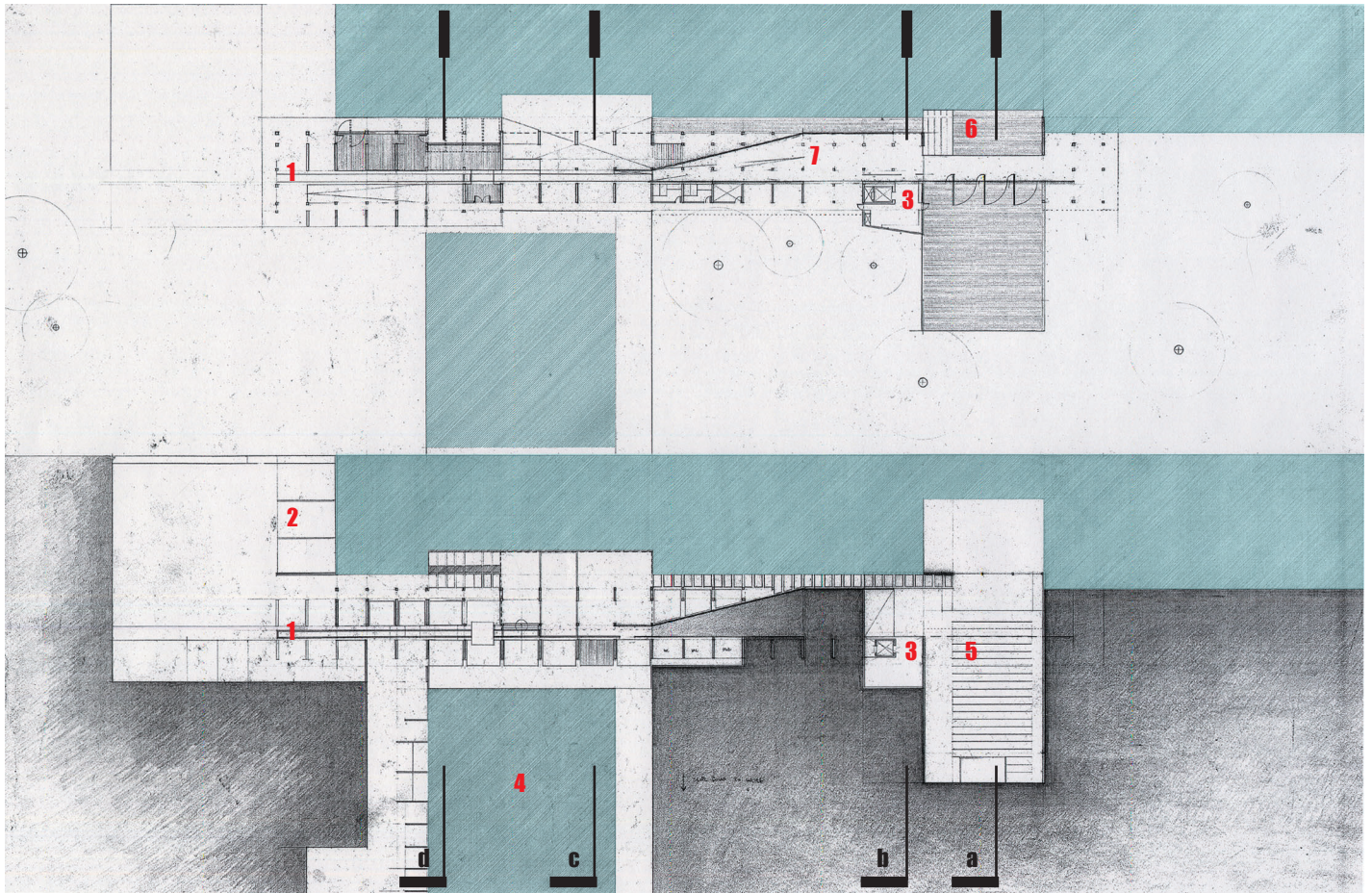
4.4 Public Reading Gallery and Theatre - site photos and plan



View north to the skyline of Toronto

original scale 1:200

4.5 - Public Reading Gallery - ground and underground floor plans - scale 1:1000

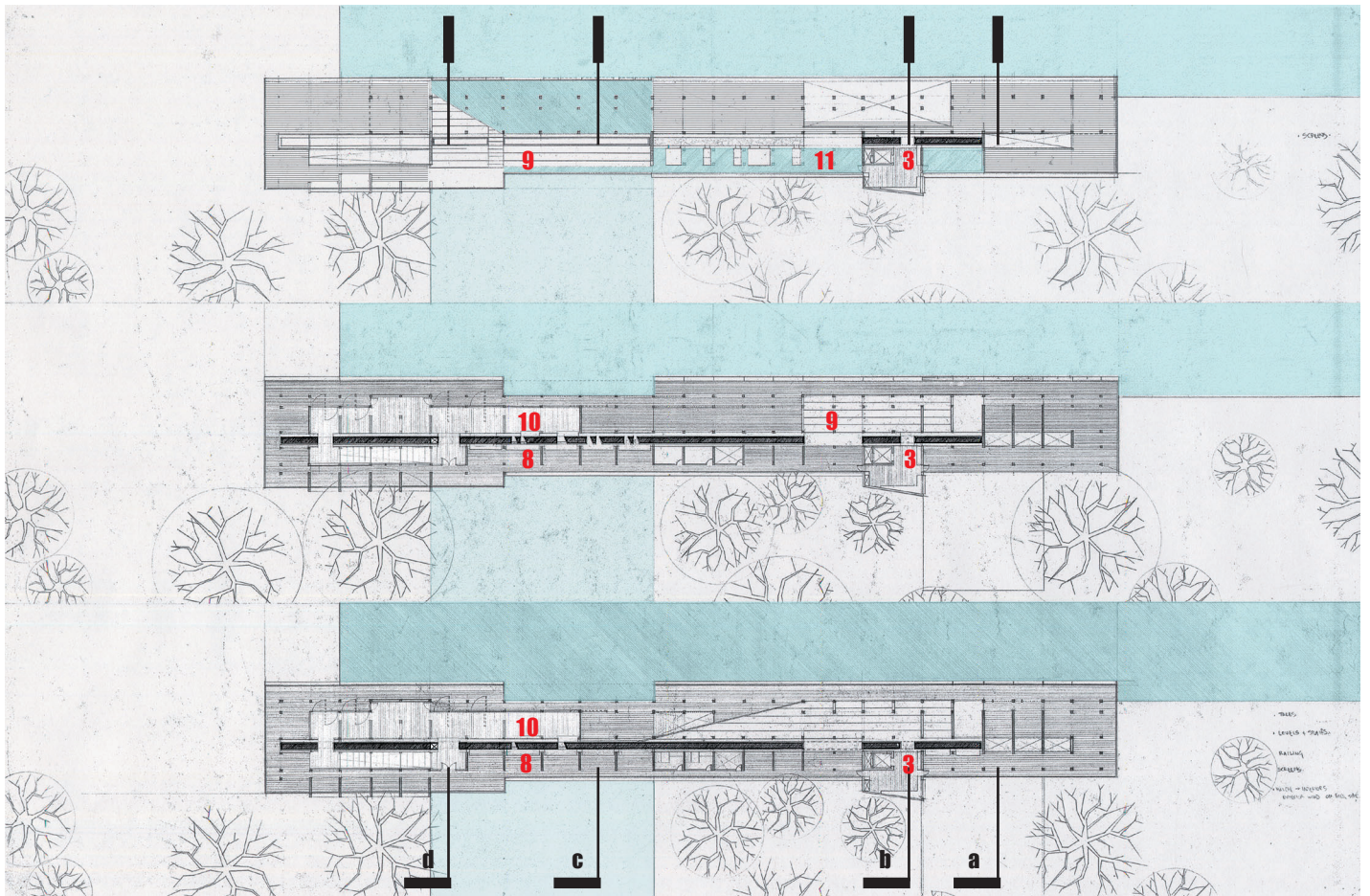


Programme : 1 - drinking water reservoir
2 - changerooms
3 - elevator + heated vestibule
4 - exterior theatre
5 - interior theatre
6 - semi-exposed flyloft
7 - earth ramp down to pool
8 - theatre gallery seating
9 - stepped platform seating
10 - sanatorium gallery/shops
11 - rooftop reflecting pool

Materials : A - water
B - floating wood platform
C - stepping stones
D - gabion floor
E - wood decking
F - concrete barrel vault
G - earth ramp

original scale 1:200

4.6 - Public Reading Gallery - second to fourth floor plans - scale 1:1000

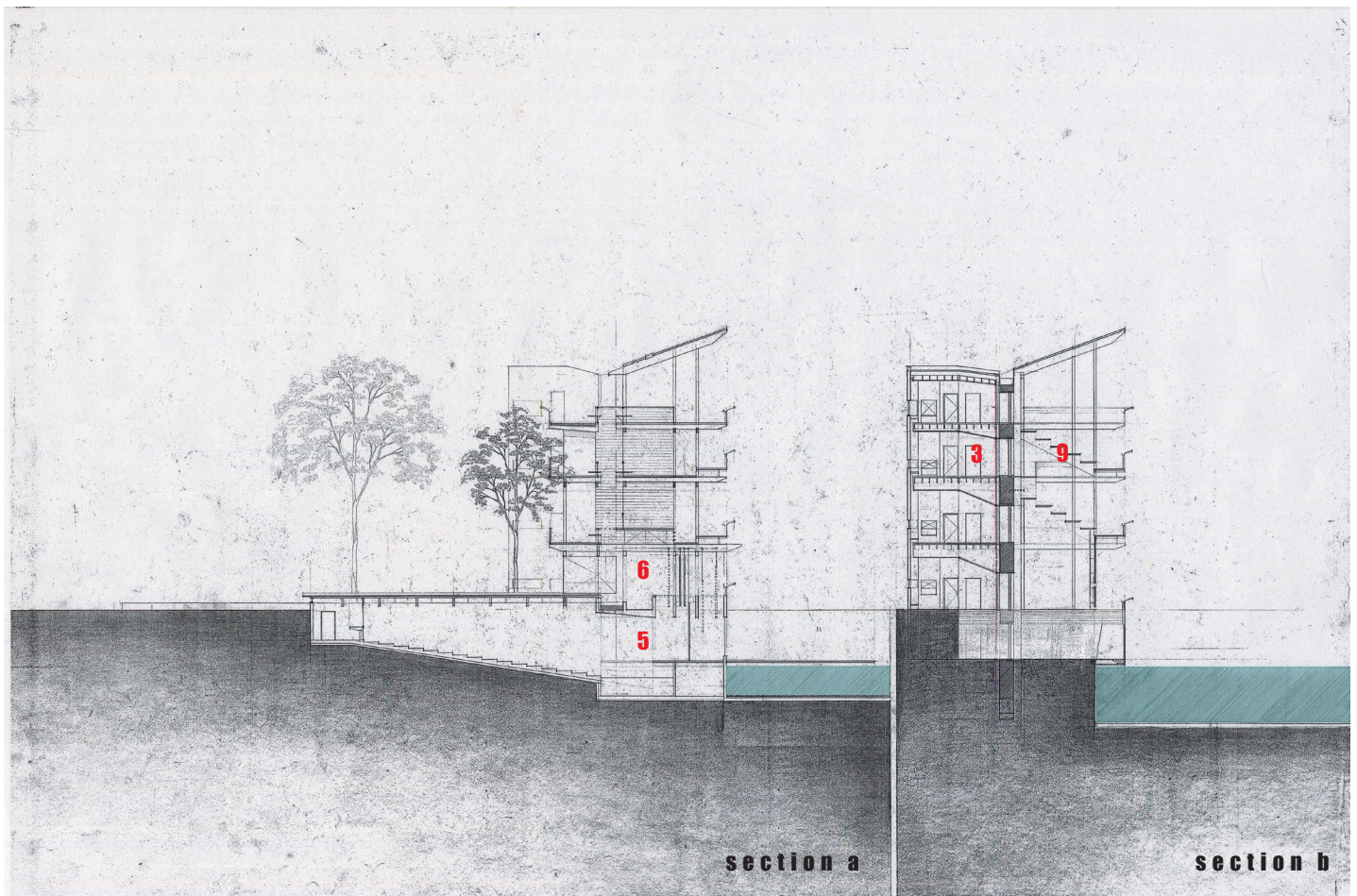


- Programme :**
- 1 - drinking water reservoir
 - 2 - changerooms
 - 3 - elevator + heated vestibule
 - 4 - exterior theatre
 - 5 - interior theatre
 - 6 - semi-exposed flyloft
 - 7 - earth ramp down to pool
 - 8 - theatre gallery seating
 - 9 - stepped platform seating
 - 10 - sanatorium gallery/shops
 - 11 - rooftop reflecting pool

- Water Reservoir :**
- A - drinking fountain + bell
 - B - fireplace
 - C - passage/threshold
 - D - window

original scale 1:100

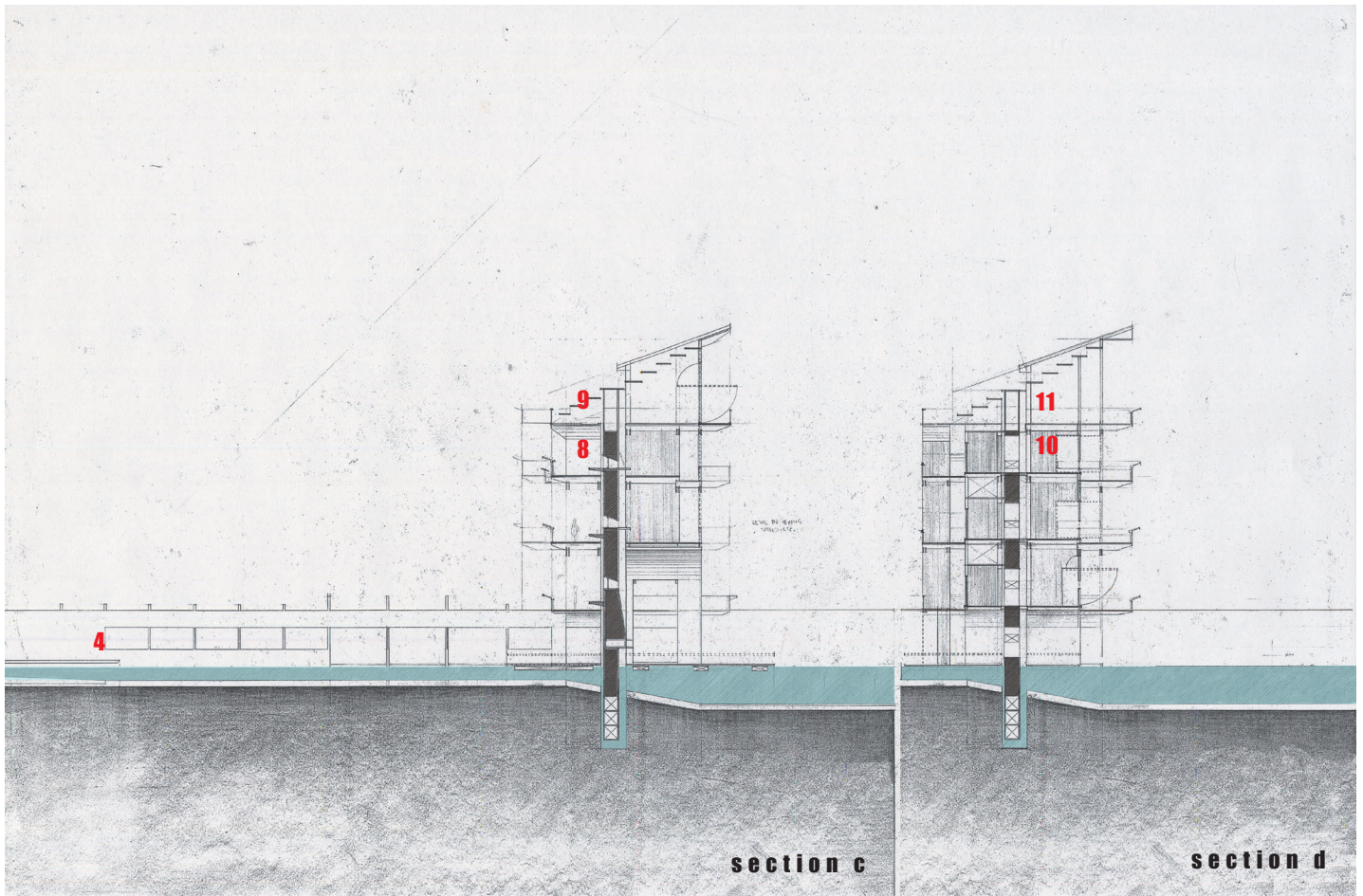
4.7 - Public Reading Gallery - sections a + b - approximate scale 1:500



- Programme :**
- 1 - drinking water reservoir
 - 2 - changerooms
 - 3 - elevator + heated vestibule
 - 4 - exterior theatre
 - 5 - interior theatre
 - 6 - semi-exposed flyloft
 - 7 - earth ramp down to pool
 - 8 - theatre gallery seating
 - 9 - stepped platform seating
 - 10 - sanatorium gallery/shops
 - 11 - rooftop reflecting pool

original scale 1:100

4.8 - Public Reading Gallery - sections c + d - approximate scale 1:500



- Programme :**
- 1 - drinking water reservoir
 - 2 - changerooms
 - 3 - elevator + heated vestibule
 - 4 - exterior theatre
 - 5 - interior theatre
 - 6 - semi-exposed flyloft
 - 7 - earth ramp down to pool
 - 8 - theatre gallery seating
 - 9 - stepped platform seating
 - 10 - sanatorium gallery/shops
 - 11 - rooftop reflecting pool

Programme Descriptions:

- 1 - drinking water reservoir**
- 2 - changerooms**
- 3 - elevator + heated vestibule**
- 4 - exterior theatre**
- 5 - interior theatre**
- 6 - semi-exposed flyloft**
- 7 - earth ramp down to pool**
- 8 - theatre gallery seating**
- 9 - stepped platform seating**
- 10 - sanatorium gallery/shops**
- 11 - rooftop reflecting pool**

1 - Drinking Water Reservoir/Public Reading Gallery

The building mainly operates to generate location by an experience of sheer mass. The reading gallery terminates the monumental water filtration landscape by shifting to provide a vertical axis and a set of clean platforms on which to sit and read, allowing an individual space which is juxtaposed against the two distanced horizons of otium and negotium conveyed by the lake and the city. The water reservoir is heavy, opaque, elemental and, ultimately, massive spine for the gallery. Also inherent to the mass, however, is a moment of delicate balance which is released by seasonal flooding across the site.

The reading gallery is sited directly behind a row of existing trees that enclose one side of Cherry beach, and further oriented to take advantage of seasonal shading and screening provided by the deciduous foliage in the summer, and passive solar heating from the southern sun shining through the trees and onto the reservoir in the winter. The building is sited in close proximity to the tree line to allow the branches and leaves to provide an enclosure and even to occasionally overlap into the building where possible.

The public reading gallery also serves as an ambulatory walk which leads upwards towards lying down above the level of the tree canopy and looking upwards at open sky (programme item #11). Alternately, a passage into the underground is provided by the reservoir itself which splits open at its eastern end to reveal an earth ramp (programme item #7) down to water level and the public swimming pool.

The underground level is constructed out of a continuous series of concrete barrel vaults to articulate a sense of mass and compression. This space is then lightened and made rich by reflected light bouncing off the water and further by the use of floating wood platforms and gabion floors to allow the water level as an engaging datum.

The ground floor of the building is almost completely open and level to the site to allow passage directly through the building to the beach or other parts of the site. The railings, windows, fireplaces and other architectural elements at here set between 1500-2000mm from the ground to correspond to a view from a standing position. As the patient follows the ambulatory upwards, each successive floor frames a lower body position from a chair, to sitting on the ground, to finally lying down and floating above a rooftop reflecting pool containing collected rainwater.

4 - Exterior Theatre 1 – defined by opening/gate to control termination of filtration axis

The gallery is re-inhabited during cultural events, such as theatre, with the individual reading niches becoming box seating. The stage is placed as formal termination of the beach and shoreline that provides a cultural space which is most often empty and open for people to walk across or sit upon in quiet solitude. Additional theatre seating is also provided at the top floor where the roof slopes and steps down to provide benches facing a view across and over the lake.

5 - Interior Theatre 2 – solid buried structure (anchor)

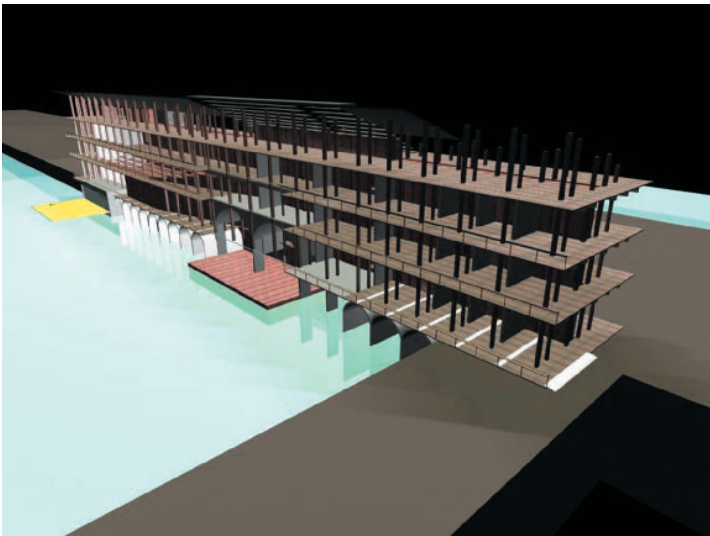
An interior theatre acts as an architectural anchor for the reservoir and the building, being buried at the eastern end of the structure. The area above the stage opens upwards to ground level to create an exposed fly loft (programme item #6) such that the theatrical sets and backdrops act as moving screens to filter views through or out from the gallery. The theatre itself faces the water filtration system and is enclosed by a folding glass wall which can open out to allow use of another floating stage set to the north of the gallery.

10 - Sanatorium Gallery/Shops – interior rooms with rotating screens that open view

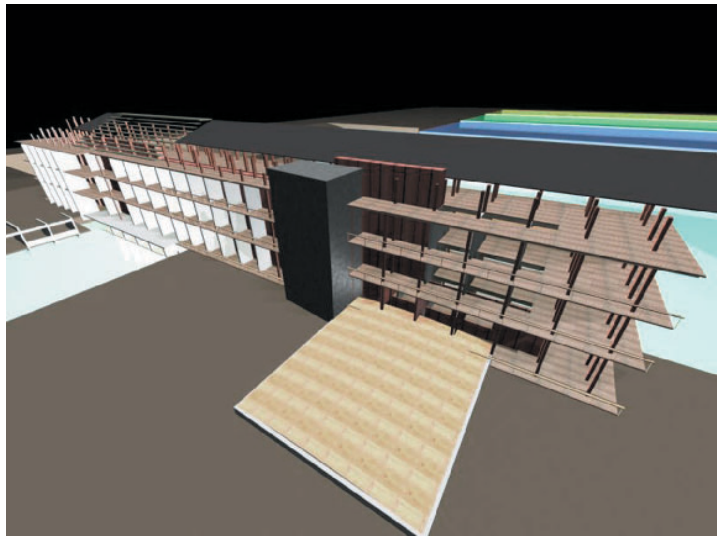
The interior spaces of the reading gallery are programmed as galleries displaying books and art objects, as well as, a small news stand. The enclosure is articulated by pivoting screen walls which can open up the space to the exterior in the summer, while also diverting the ambulatory circulation away from the edge and into the middle of the building. The gallery displays are either attached or set into the water reservoir at specific heights corresponding to bodily viewing positions and providing framed views through the building, which are then occasionally shifted out of functionality when the reservoir floats up.



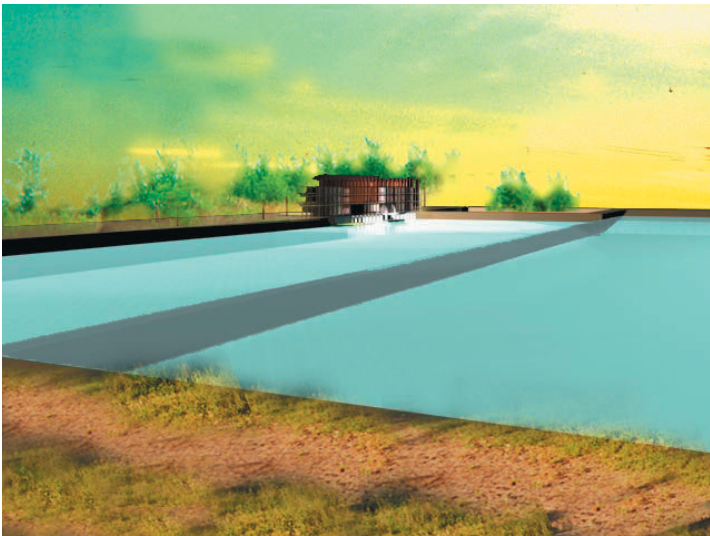
4.9 - Cargo Ship Docked at Western End of Portlands



4.10 - View from North-West



View from South-East



4.11 - Approach view from Cherry St.



Interior view towards Toronto skyline

Sanatorium Residence – A retreat to the edge of the city for reading and recovery

The sanatorium accommodates any level of anxiety, ranging from common stress and unhappiness to diagnosed psychosomatic illness. The programme of the sanitarium is most easily conveyed as a sort of prescribed retreat similar to a monastery or comparable typology of reading and solitude, but also accomodating patients' families and accompanying light and laughter.

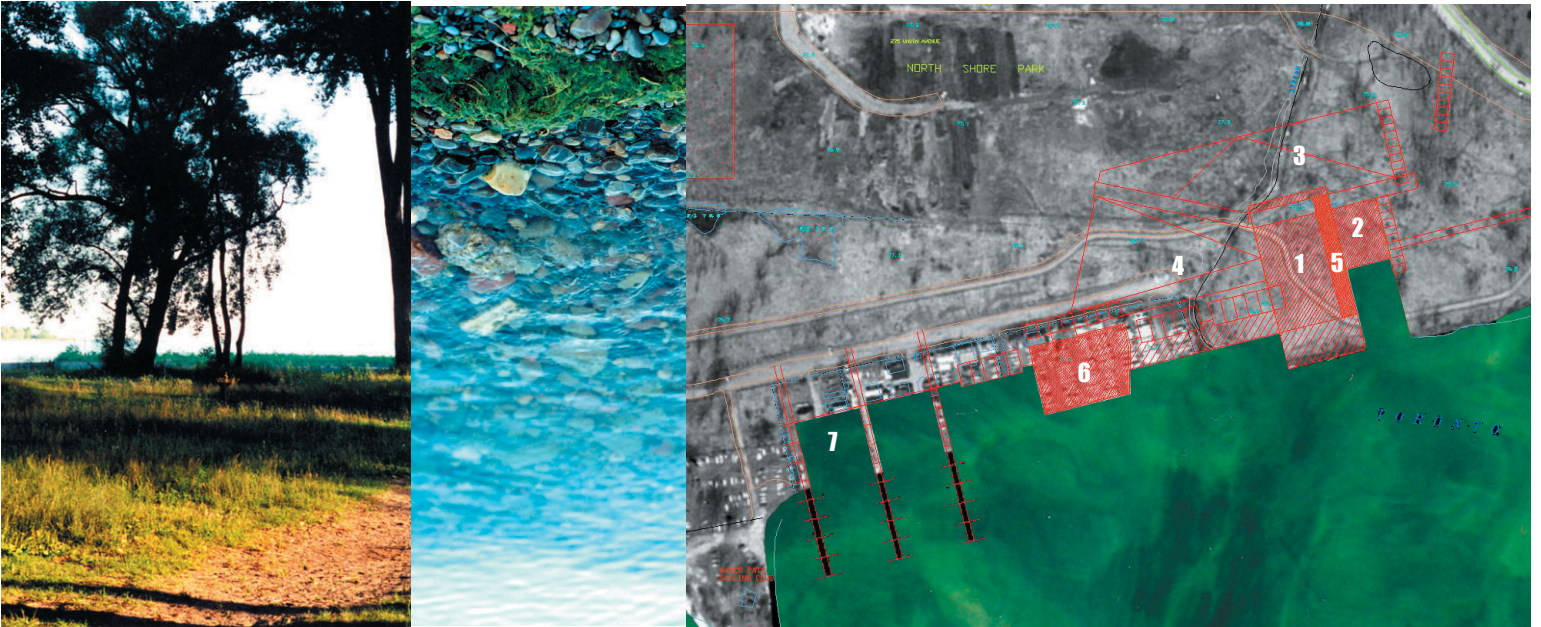
The sanatorium itself tests the thesis place at a communal scale, with approximately 300 beds, and focuses on creating a place (a)part for reading and recovery, rather than solely modern medical treatments that only have limited efficacy in dealing with the subtle and complex range of modern illnesses. The major amenities that supplant various medicines are a library, places for reading and places to gather.

The sanatorium residence complex is primarily composed of three courtyards serving as a place for people to gather, each set in a distinct relationship to the overall site datum of daily and seasonal water levels. The main communal space of the sanitarium is a 30mx40m sunlit courtyard aggregately raised up above flooding waters by a field of groin vaults constructed out of brick. The square is focused around a central solitary tree growing up from the underground where it marks the "original" ground level. Views of water and horizon are forced out to the edge of the square by the use of ramps and low sloping roofs. The underground is variously composed of openings revealing the water and reflected light, gabion pathways allowing water to rise up and flood over them, and floating wooden platforms that seasonally raise the circulation up into the vaults making them inhabitable and touchable.

Paths across the site are gathered up towards the central square by a massive earth ramp constructed out of rubble and backfill as are the rest of the Portlands. These paths cross the first courtyard and through the communal living area structure, to stop sheer at the second courtyard set below at the average yearly high water mark. This courtyard is centered around a small basketball court/hockey rink with a focused view out to the southern horizon. Sports provide a type of place that is possible anywhere and approaches the whole and engaged modes associated with a wholly engaged animal type of place. The basket is mounted on the sanatorium's dividing wall, which separates the two courtyards, keeping the raised square in sunlight and the basketball court appropriately in the shade. The wall marks and locates the sanatorium on the site, rising solidly through three floors of the communal living area to define its structure and providing storage for magazines and newspapers to define a reading area. As a result, the dividing wall holds a silence of reading and conversation on one side while sheer on its opposite side it is pounded on, beat up and re-imagined by kids playing games.

A third courtyard draws water through the vaulted underground against a slope returning up to the rest of the site and allowing water levels to play against an ecosystem based on the original sandbar and marsh conditions. The courtyard is engaged by views in the summer and made directly inhabitable by various programme on the ice in the winter. The lake and its water are framed in this courtyard allowing it to become a datum for the facing residences in its dynamic surfaces, colours and levels and, not least, by reflecting the sky.

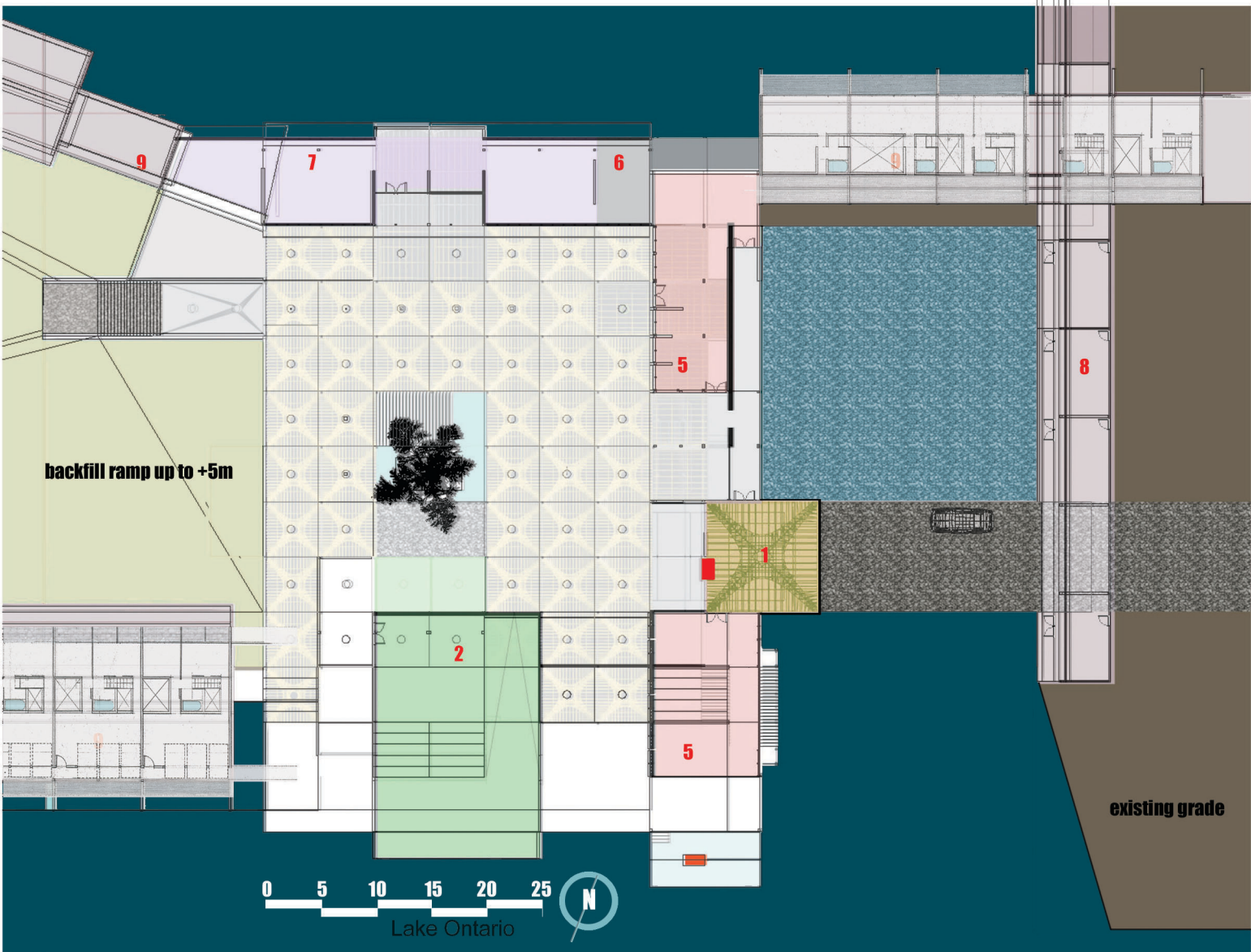
4.12 - Sanatorium 1 - site photos and plan



keating channel - panorama of salt storage

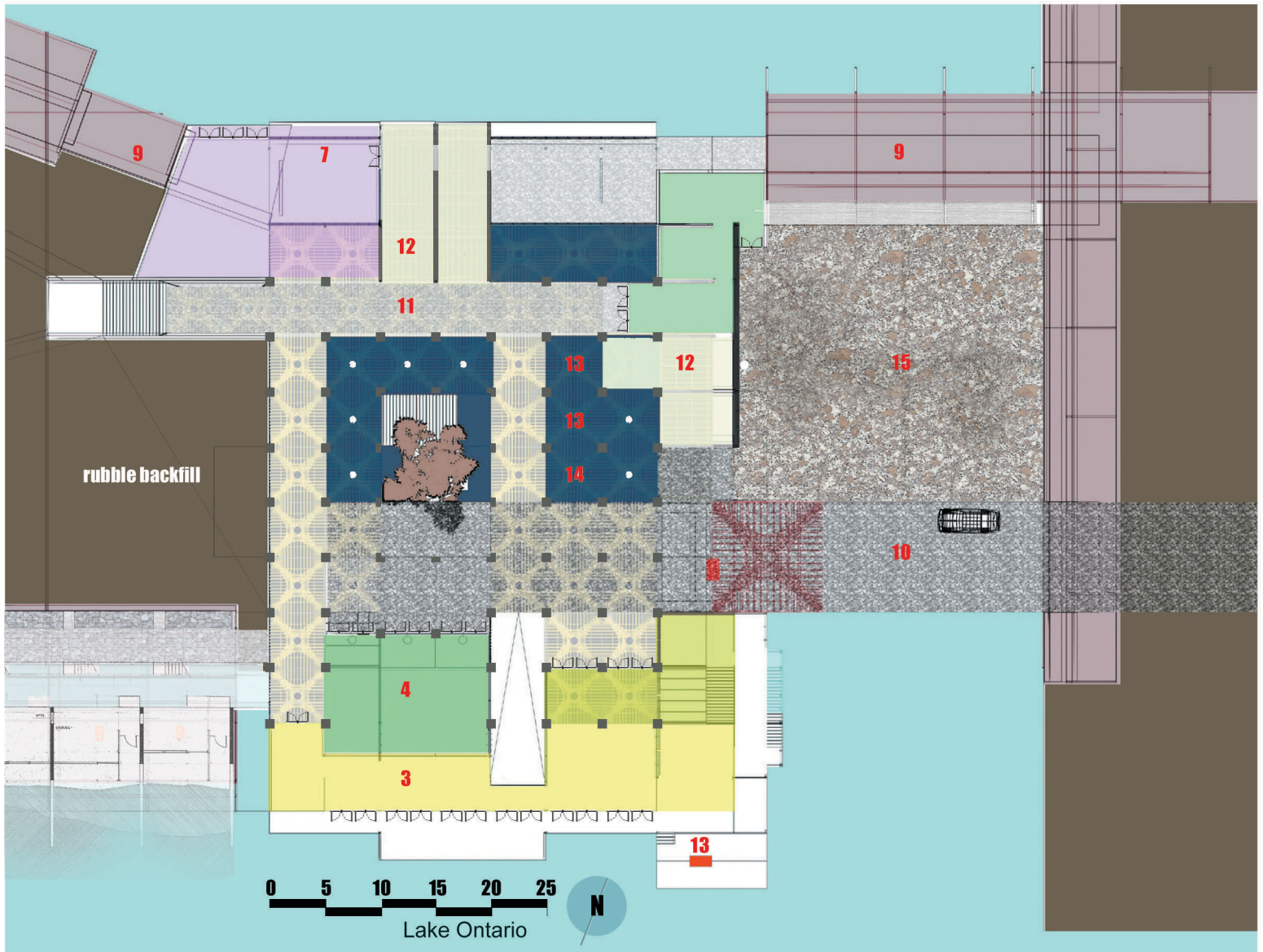
- Programme :**
- 1 - raised courtyard + an underground
 - 2 - basketball courtyard
 - 3 - reflecting pond
 - 4 - earth ramp
 - 5 - communal living area building
 - 6 - indoor swimming pool
 - 7 - existing rowing club

4.13-Sanatorium Residence - raised courtyard level plan - approximate scale 1:500



- Programme :**
- 1 - reception and main hall
 - 2 - lecture area
 - 3 - dining
 - 4 - kitchen and servicing
 - 5 - living and reading areas
 - 6 - small kitchen
 - 7 - daycare (community)
 - 8 - medical and administrative offices
 - 9 - residences (15-20 beds/section)

Sanatorium Residence - courtyard underground level plan - approximate scale 1:500



Programme : 1 - reception and main hall (above)

2 - lecture area (above)

3 - dining (with south facing deck) + lat mean water level +150l

4 - kitchen and servicing

5 - living and reading areas

6 - small kitchen

7 - daycare lower level (also serving residential community)

8 - medical and administrative offices (above)

9 - residences (15-20 beds/section)

10 - drop-off and service road (gabion construction) + lat mean water level

11 - gabion walkway with tables (lat mean water level -50cm)

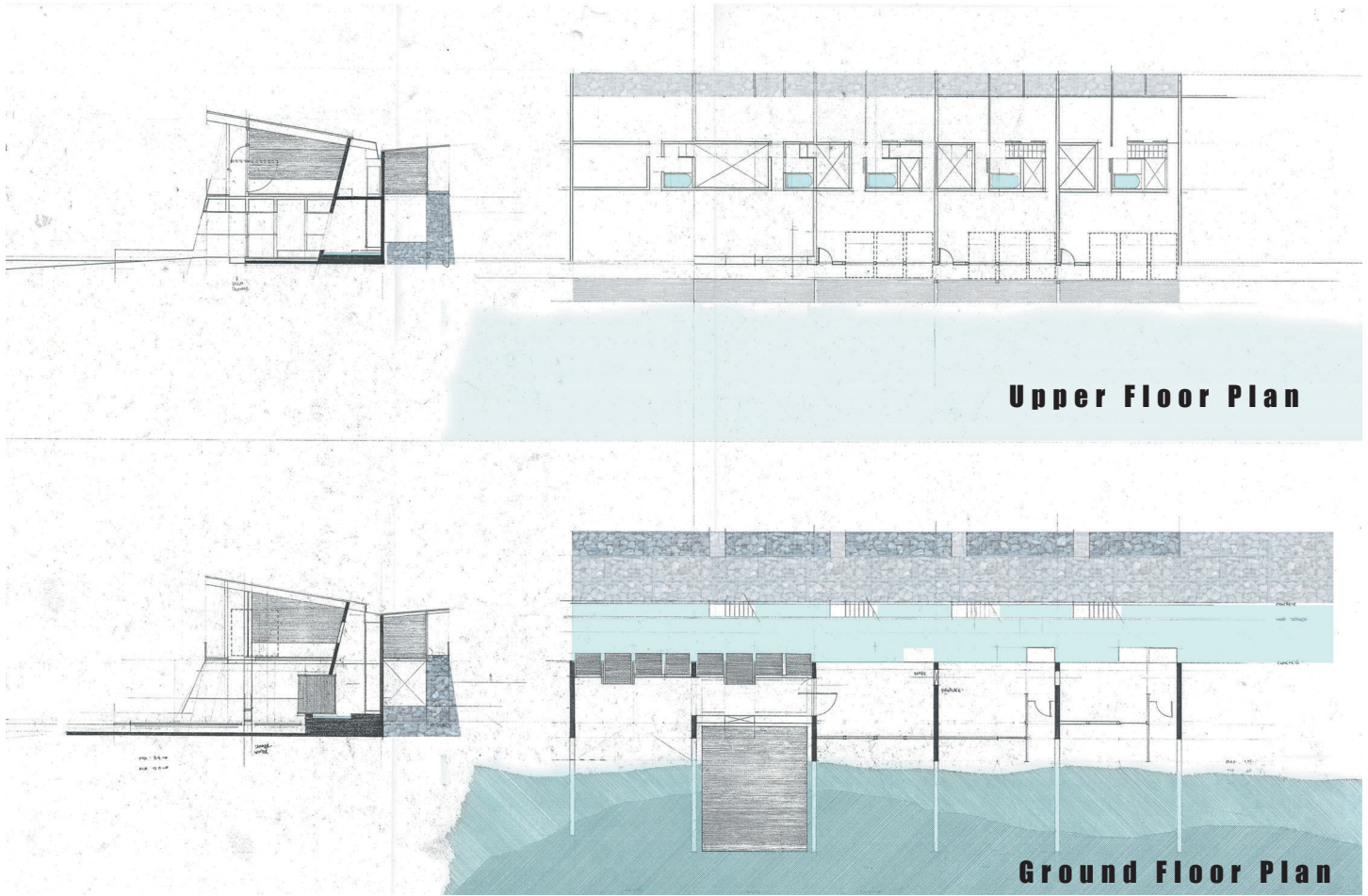
12 - floating platform

13 - fireplaces (seasonally submerged)

14 - drinking fountain (centered under oculus)

15 - basketball court (lat mean water level +50l)

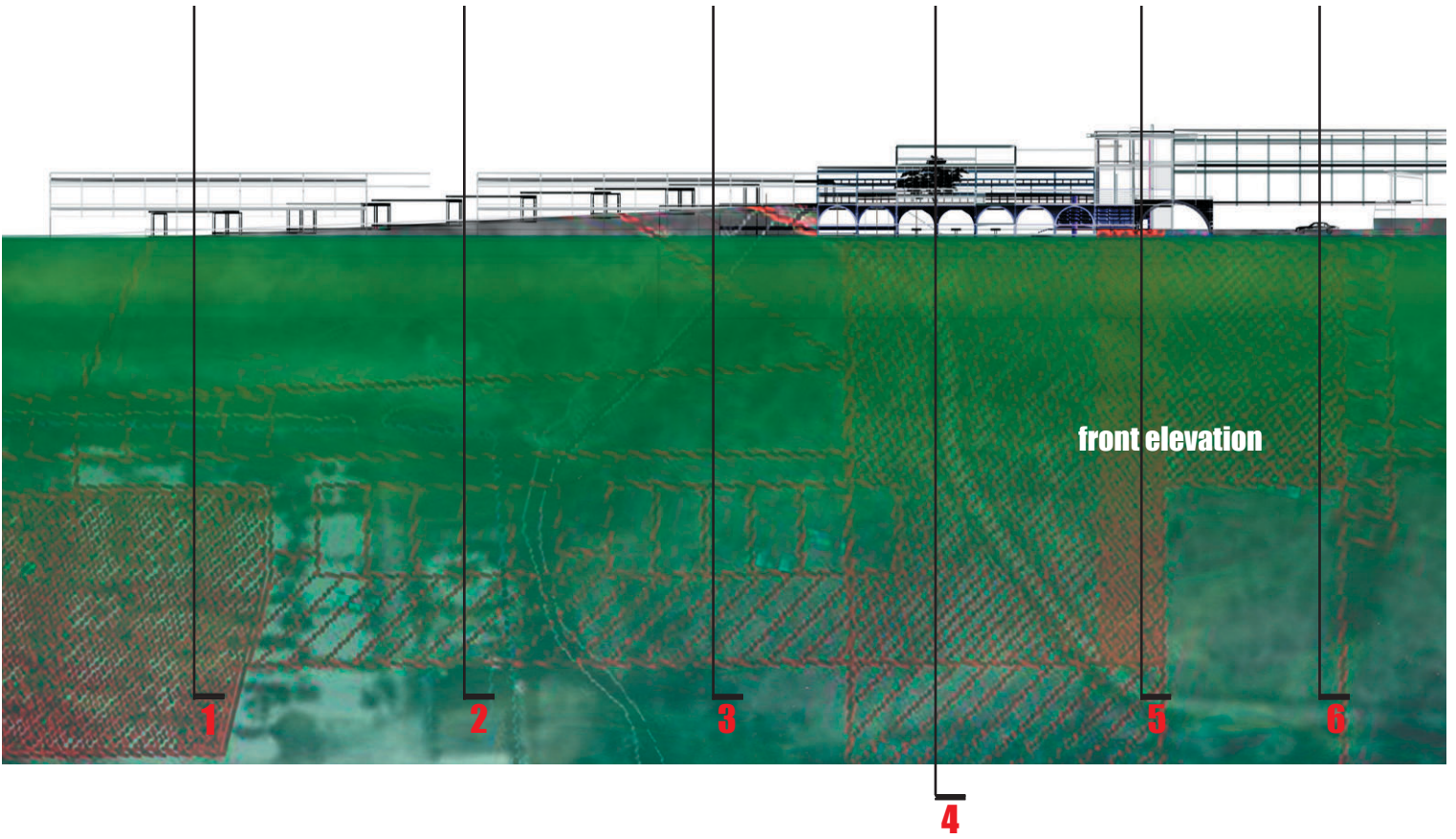
4.15 - Residence Unit - 10 beds - approximate scale 1:500 - original scale 1:100



The central moment and place of the project remains upon water. Rather than a clear narrative the water is allowed to emerge and run everywhere to move towards seeming Immediate as well as imminent as it comes from above, below, adjacent and flows back into the lake. Within the residence units the ground floor provides common space which frames the dynamic relationships between land and lake, to allow the shore to be engaged as a datum.

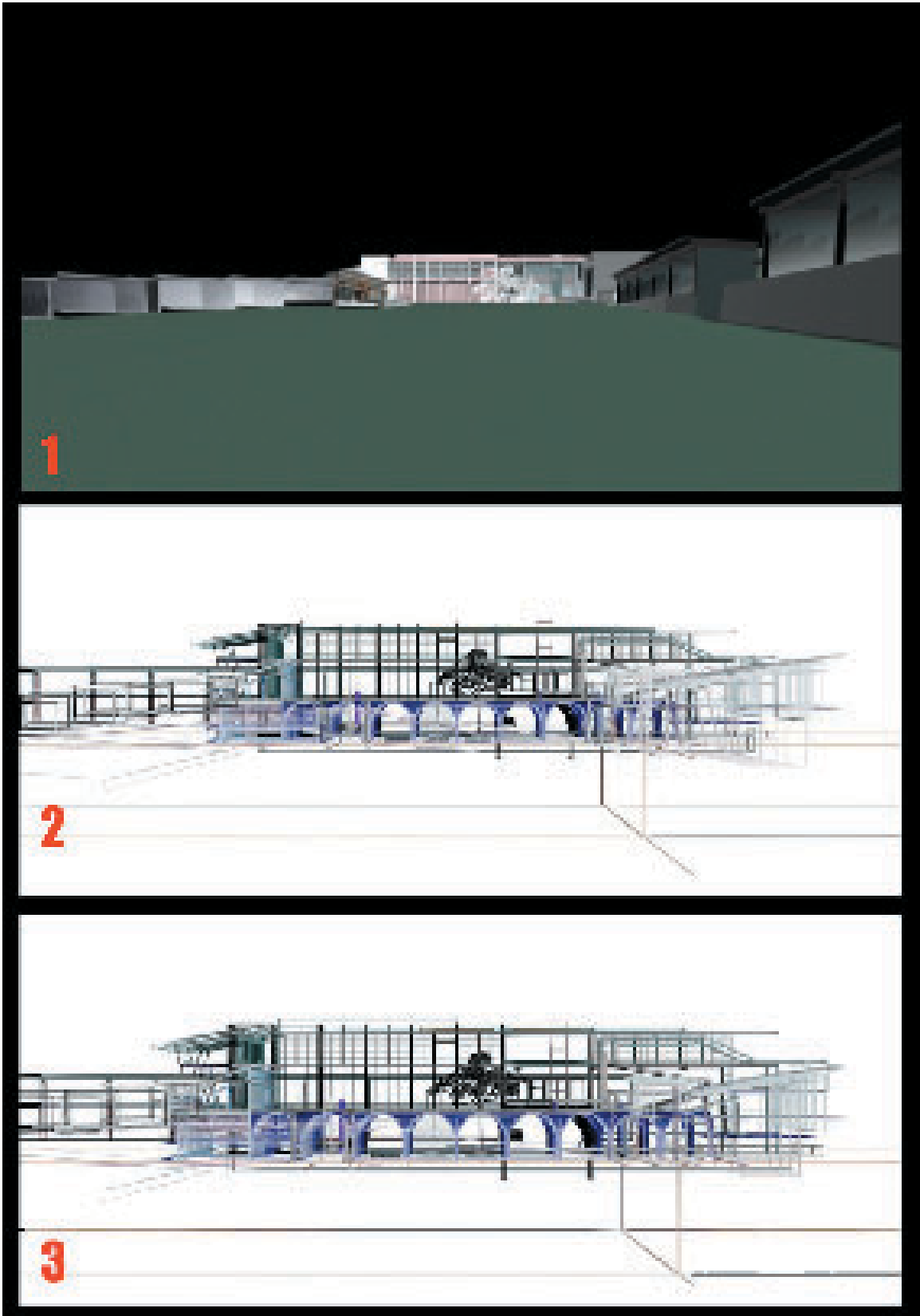
Residence Units are programmed as common areas on the ground floor mainly providing places to sit, gather or read. Views and the spaces are framed towards the lake by tectonics. The structure is composed of massive glulam beams set on concrete foundations with lateral support provided by a concrete barrel vault structural bay. The ground floor contains various floating platforms and drainage details to allow occasional flooding. Further a central reflecting pool reflected light from the light funnels which extend up past the roof and divide the building in half. The light funnel projects above the roof all along the length of the building to define a massive break on the second floor between south facing public areas and quiet bedroom areas facing north.

On the second floor the programme is focused on providing places to sleep or rest. A series of rooms progresses from a private balcony facing north, bed in the bedroom, living area couch in front of the television, bathroom tub under the skylight, deck chairs on communal balcony facing south and finally the lake. The south facade employs pivoting screen walls and a shading screen to allow control of the amount of enclosure or opening towards the lake.

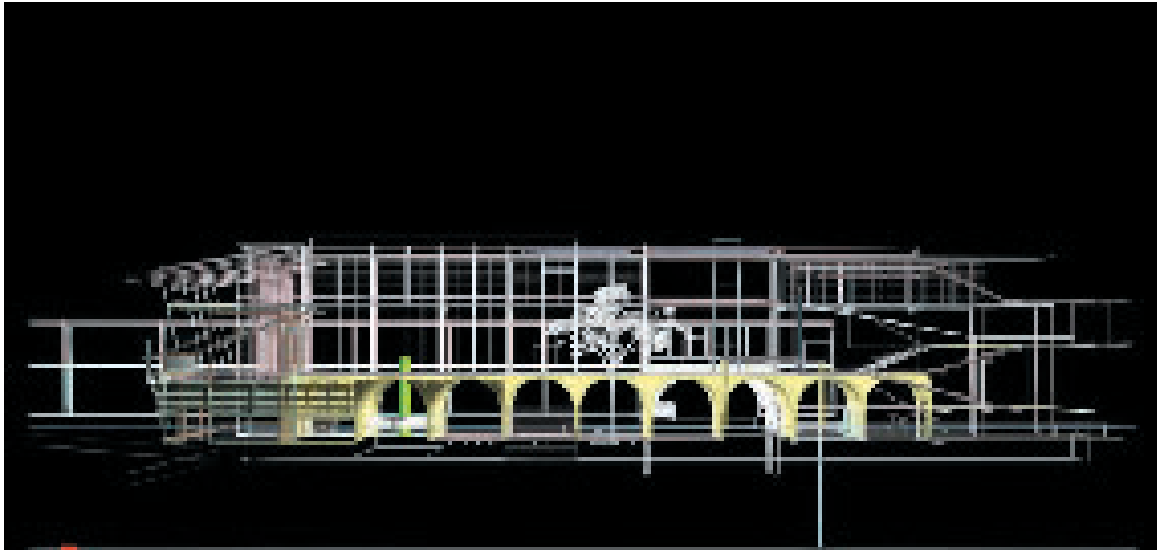


4.16 - Sanatorium 1 - Front Elevation and Site Section





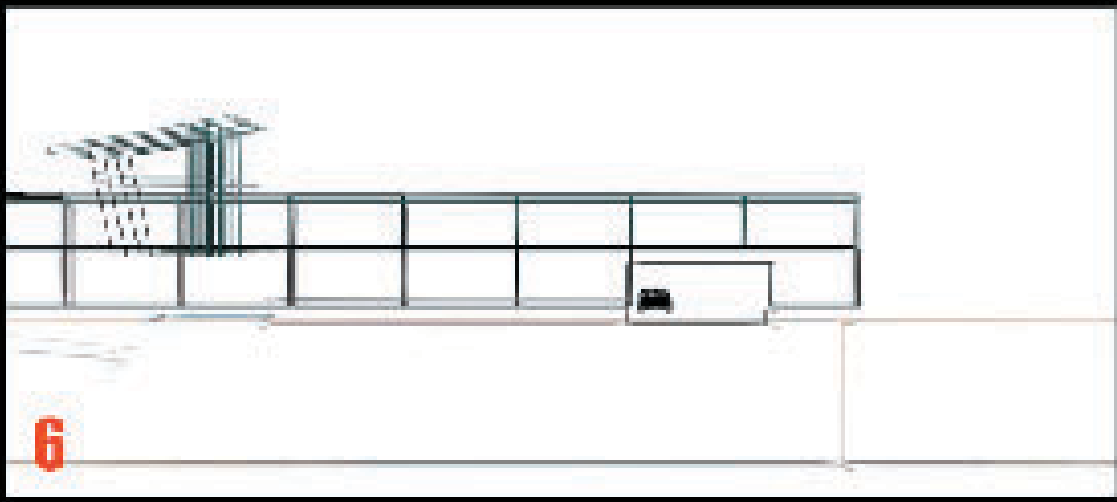
4.17 - Sanatorium 1 - Approach from West to East moving up the Earth Ramp



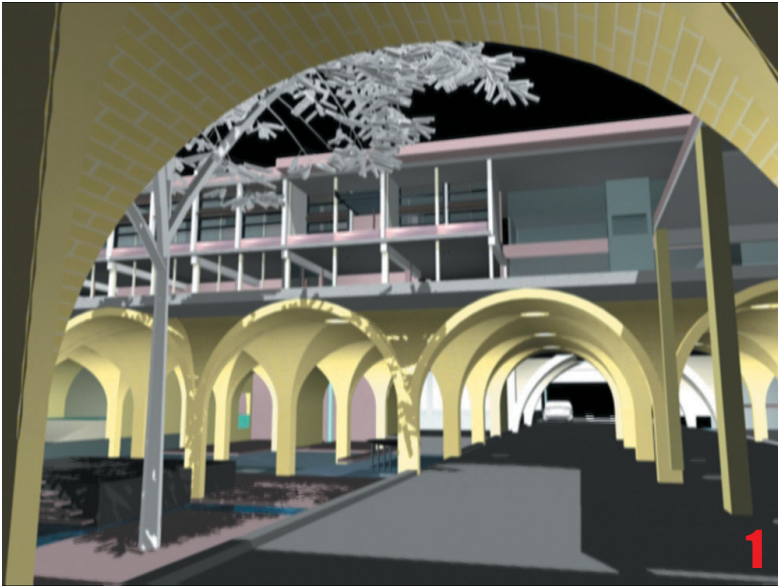
4



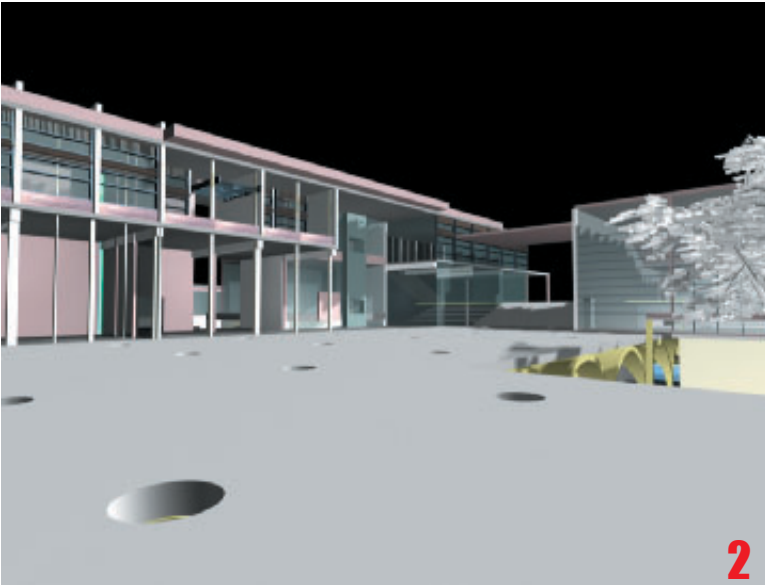
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6

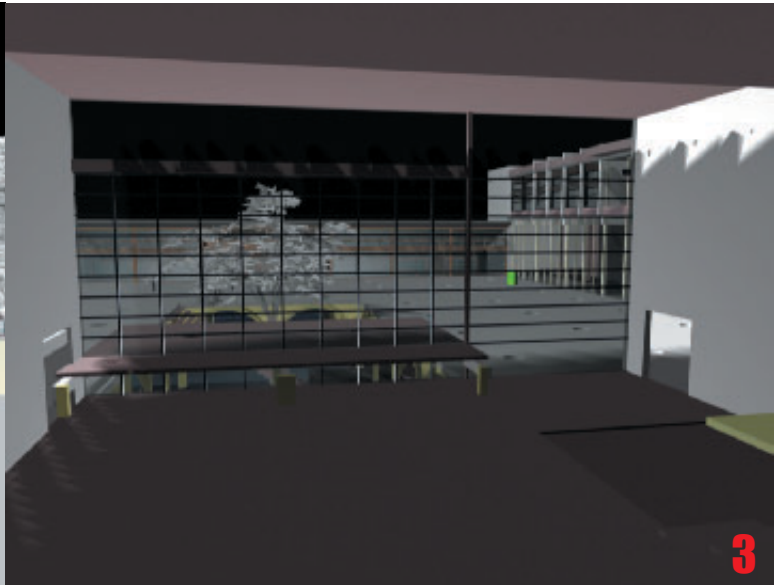


4.18 - View upwards from underground service road towards living and reading areas above



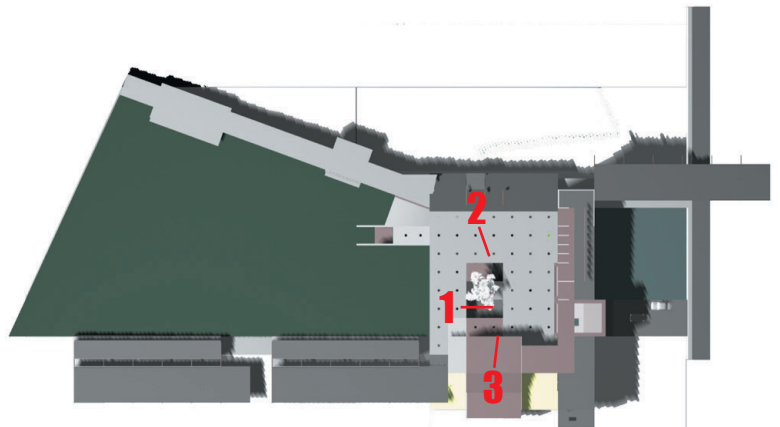
2

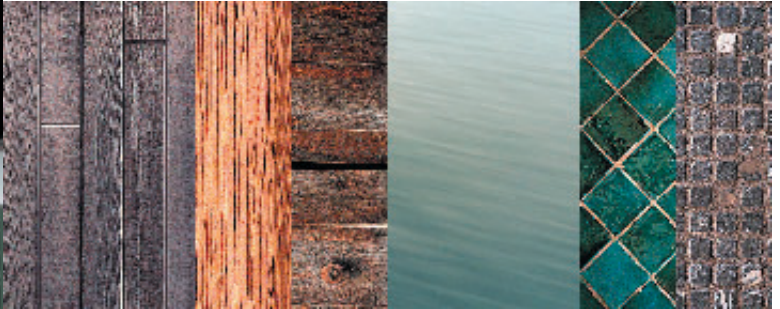
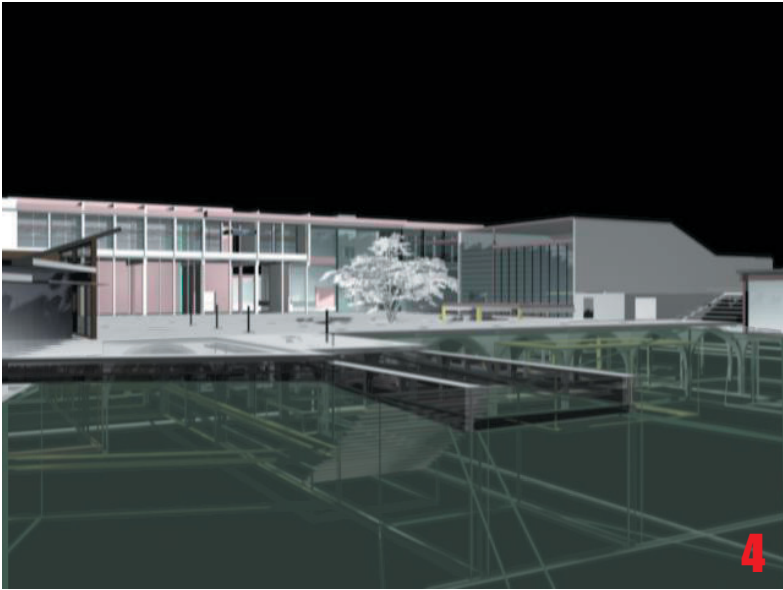
View from raised courtyard towards lecture area, main hall and reception area, and living/reading structure



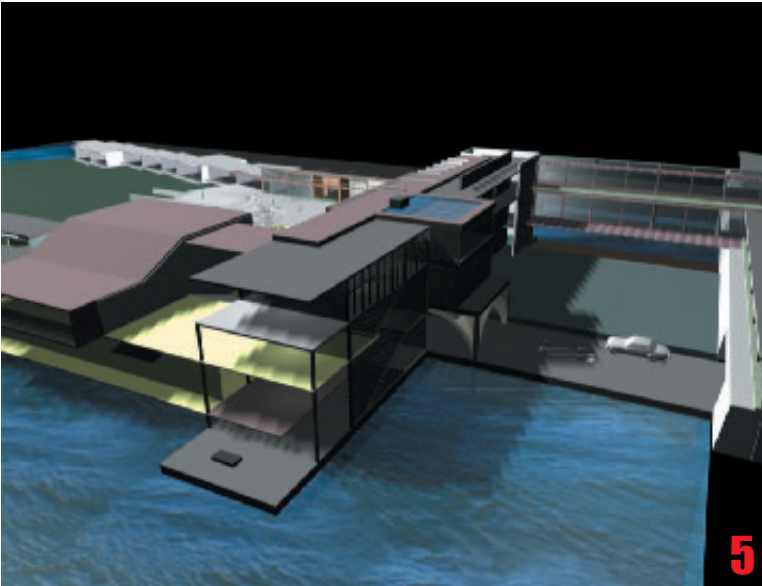
3

View from lecture area through operable wall towards daycare

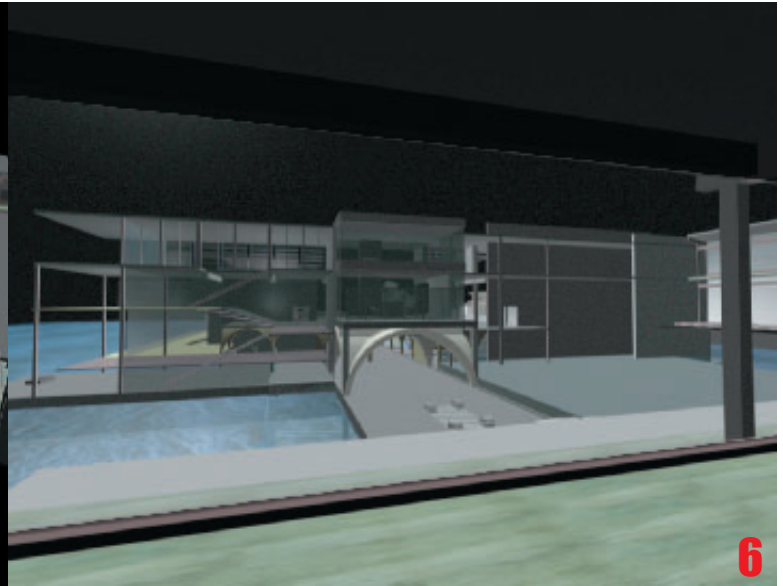




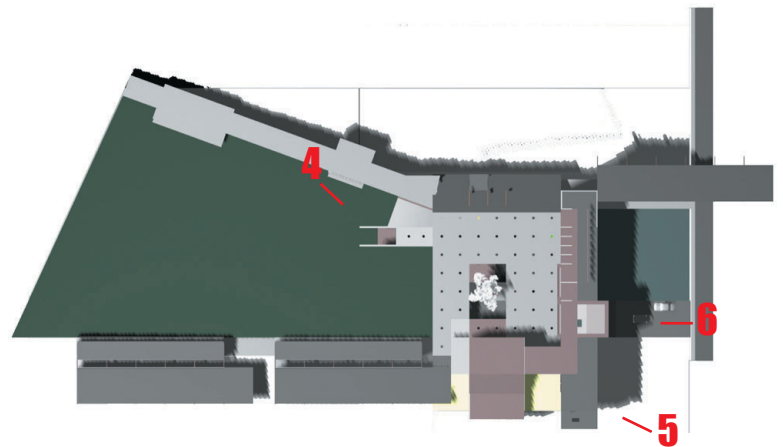
4.19 - View from earth ramp towards central courtyard also showing hidden underground

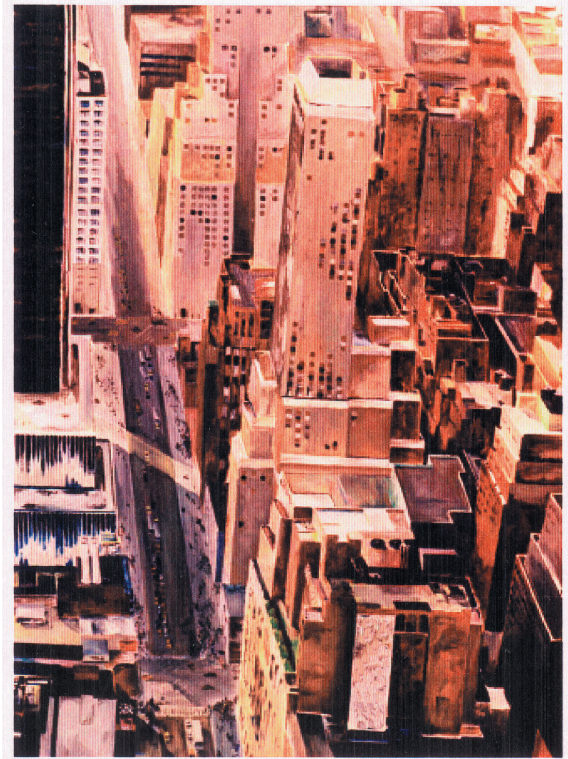


Aerial view of sanatorium



View from medical offices towards basketball court





**4.20 - Return to the City
3'x4' oil on canvas painting
by author (1995)**

Concluding Note:

The three experiences in the thesis, identified as fascination, anxiety and realism, remain ultimately collapsed in reality, to emerge depending solely upon the perspective and mood of the individual. One of the central problems remains in the similarity of appearance between the fascination of the first essay and the realism of the last. The distinction between a promise and an empty promise can slide away from even the person issuing the guarantee as individuals tire or feel an impulse towards resignation. However, the fundamental differences jump into clarity when read as experiences, with a release from the confusion and uncertainty of the contemporary world arising in parallel with a recognition and release from self-reference and our problematic need for meanings or values.

Experience, unlike images, are not flat, but multivalently layered and continually requiring reading to recognize and accept. Place remains somewhat unclear as experiences and their inherent perspectives are never transparent or defined but continue to develop and change throughout our individual lives. With every recognition, there remains a further aspect of our impulses which eludes identification and confuses our place, if we stop reading.

Reflection offers a final key property of water that is crucial to the realism explored in this thesis. The experience of being (a)part conveys not only a clean isolation, but also an intimate sense of connection and reflection based in the found world. The momentary release from self and world presents a release into existence as things can finally be seen separately from oneself and all our inherent impulses and desires. Architecture has been explored in this thesis as a means to focus arbitrary, but intimate and essential, details of the modern city, in particular the ingrained habitual experiences of fascination or anxiety. Overall, the project aims to articulate and amplify a sense of being (a)part that is found on the edge site. The city is left behind upon crossing the raisable bridge on Cherry St. but the city remains as one of the basic horizons, and references, that contain the site. The place (a)part is not a simple escape from the world, but crucially remains in reference to the city and the actual individual lives which visitors to the site are a part of.

The project aims towards a return to the city, but in contrast to the hollow meanings and frozen values engaged in fascination, the project hopes to produce a shift towards the clear and empty understanding of realism. The architecture attempts to focus a possibility of return to the city, a vital return in which love and hate still exist, but at long last, free from ourselves and instead felt and understood to be immediate. Water is water, the city is the city and, finally, everything be everything.

End Notes:

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¹ Benjamin, Walter. Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. (New York: Schocken Books, 1978) 333.

² Buck-Morss, Susan. The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project. (London: The MIT Press, 1989) 268.

³ Auerbach, Erich. Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature. Trans. Willard Trask. (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1953) 14.

⁴ Yourcenar, Marguerite. Memoirs of Hadrian: And Reflections on the Composition of Memoirs of Hadrian. Trans. Grace Frick. (London: Penguin Books, 1951) 146.

⁵ Ortega y Gasset, Jose. Man and Crisis. Trans. Mildred Adams. (London: W.W.Norton & Company, 1958) 135.

⁶ Auerbach, 490

⁷ Salinger, J.D. The Catcher in the Rye. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945.

⁸ Ortega y Gasset, Man and Crisis 141.

⁹ Darwin, Charles. Darwin: A Norton Critical Edition. ed. Philip Appleman. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979) 551.

¹⁰ Camus, Albert. The Fall. Trans. Justin O'Brien. (New York: Vintage International, 1984).

¹² Hegel, Georg W.F. The Philosophy of History. Trans. J. Sibree. (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1991)

¹² Ortega y Gasset, Jose. The Revolt of the Masses. Trans. Anon. (London: W.W.Norton & Company, 1932)

¹³ Nietzsche, Friedrich. Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. (London: Penguin Books, 1990.)

¹⁴ Mann, Thomas. The Magic Mountain. Trans. John E. Woods. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995.)

¹⁵ Hays, Michael, ed. Architecture Theory since 1968. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998)

¹⁶ Richard Levene and Fernando Marquez Cecilia, ed. El Croquis: 1987-1998 OMA/Rem Koolhaas. (Barcelona: El Croquis, 1998)

¹⁷ Auerbach, 10.

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¹⁸ Ortega y Gasset, Man and Crisis 76.

¹⁹ Frisch, Max. I'm Not Stiller. Trans. Michael Bullock (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1954).

²⁰ Frisch, I'm Not Stiller 282.

²¹ Frisch, I'm Not Stiller 181.

²² Freud, Sigmund. 1. Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. Trans. James Strachey (New York: Penguin Books, 1962)

²³ Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and Its Discontents. Trans. Joan Riviere. (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1994)

²⁴ Svevo, Italo. Confessions of Zeno. Trans. Beryl de Zoete. (New York: Vintage Books, 1930)

²⁵ Svevo, 161.

²⁶ Svevo, 146.

²⁷ Svevo, 413.

²⁸ Sacks, Oliver. Migraine. (New York: Vintage Books, 1992)

²⁹ Sacks, 205.

³⁰ Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents 43.

³¹ Sacks, 226.

³² Kepes, Gyorgy. The New Landscape: in Art and Science. (Chicago: Paul Theobald and Co., 1956)

³³ Frisch, I'm Not Stiller. 358.

³⁴ Svevo, 413.

On Water:

³⁵ Auerbach, 485

³⁶ Auerbach, 488

³⁷ Thompson, Hunter S. The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales From a Strange Time. Gonzo Papers, Vol. 1. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979) 371.

³⁸ Harrison, Charles and Paul Wood ed. Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) 1116.

³⁹ Mann, 46.

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