Diagram, the machine abstraite of contemporary architecture

The diagram, *machine abstraite*, following Deleuze, « does not work to represent, even something real, but build a real to come, a new type of reality » (1). This capacity of abstraction that constitutes the diagram, in his capacity to create a form of visual thinking, has been used, in the architectural history to summarize a process, to illustrate an idea, such as the DOM-INO system of Le Corbusier, but has served as a way of analysing architecture for he architects. Peter Eisenman, head of wire, used the diagram as a visual abstraction to understand the process of the composition of Terragni in his thesis *Formal basis of Modern Architecture* (2). Later, some publications have focused their interest on the diagram : for example, OASE n°48 or ANY 23. Both insist on the fact that the diagram play a double role in architecture. It works as an analytical abstraction and representation (3), but is also a model of thought, generative. It is often argued tha the diagram is postrepresentational form of explanations and analysis. It represents in a different way from a sketch or a plan building. Regarding the contemporary production of architecture, the diagram is a model a representation but is also generative of the architecture, or as Somol said in *Diagram Diaries* (4), the diagram is the matter of the architecture. It is in that, that the diagram has fuscised our attention, in the change of paradigm that it represents. Eisenman theoretisized the use of diagram in *Diagram Diaries*. He gave us up a dichotomy of its use in three approaches : anteriority, interiority and exteriority. The anteriority, insparable of interiority of the architecture, of the language of architecture, its composition, its formal grammar, tries to establish an historical continuity of architecture in order to be used in the design process to produce new arrangment, new spatial complexity. Eisenman's use of diagram, analytical in first instance and thus generative, has a potential to create new arrangement int the stratum of architecture. It is exactly what Koolhaas did when he focused his attention at the beginning of his carreer, in *Delirious New York* (5), on the skycraper. The section of the Downtown athletic club has become, by a process of abstraction, diagrammatic in essence, the generator of the competition entry for La Villette, in 1989. Sou Fujimoto in his book *Primitive future* (6), shows a chart of 24 spaces, in which are illustrates diagrams. These have the intention to provoke spatial interractions (7). These architects, like Eisenman did in 1963, by analysing projects in a diagrammatic method, representation, shows us that the diagram, through its capacity to conceptualize and to produce new spacial arrangements, have gone further than the tendenza typological model. The clear process of the *machine abstraite* in architecture, as a tool of the architect, has increased its role from analytical to generator of the contemporary architecture.


(3) OASE architectural journal, n°48, 1998


