

Towards a (non-)theory of the architectural palimpsests

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Abstract

Palimpsest is extensively explored metaphorically but not eroded much theoretically. Gérard Genette, in his outstanding *Palimpsests* (1982) has unintentionally broadened the architectural vocab. What kind of a diagram could be drawn if the revolutionary communications technologies would be expressed vertically? I tried to work out another playful scheme of history as a stratified model, beginning from *Non-Interactive Hierarchical Layering Model* to *Non-Layering/Hypertrophic Now*. Huyssen's *Present Pasts* examines palimpsestousness; in *Pseudo-Science of Layers* I followed that path in a ludic way. Coming back to Genette, *hypertext* implies the original text. However, each hypogram is in fact a hypergraph, a re-write. In architecture, then, every "real name" is nothing but a pseudonym. (*Mimotect* instead of *Architect*.) The word *pastiche* finds a position with respect to its parallels with modernity. Then follows a palimpsestous literary project; the *Lost in Translation* experiment: A story is put in a perpetual translation process; all steps become more and more apocryphal. What is lost in translation is found in the parody. Then I foresaw the collapse of my *Pseudo-Theory of Palimpsests* in various steps, beginning from *Techno-palimpsests* to *Anti-palimpsests*. Calvino's *If on A Winter Night a Traveler* is a palimpsestous hypertext, a novel that includes only beginnings. I just mentioned some characters like the *Native American*, The type called *Irnerio* and finally the most provoking *Ermes Manara*. I did not refer to concrete examples of Istanbul (or Berlin or another metropolis), I wanted to expand textual tracks, thus indicating other creative channels in architecture.

Keywords

Gérard genette, Architectural palimpsest, Palimpsestous, Pastiche, Oulipo.



It doesn't take me more than about five minutes a day to do it, but I do it every day. Rain or shine, sleet or snow. Sort of like the postman. That's what people see, but that ain't necessarily what I am. More than four thousand pictures of the same place. (...) Four thousand straight days in all kinds of weather. That's why I can never take a vacation. I've got to be in my spot every morning. Every morning in the same spot at the same time. It's my project. What you'd call my life's work. (...) Sometimes the same people, sometimes different ones. And sometimes the different ones become the same, and the same ones disappear. The earth revolves around the sun, and every day the light from the sun hits the earth at a different angle. Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, time creeps on its petty pace.

Augustus "Auggie" Wren, *Smoke*. (Auster, 1995)

1. Introduction

Without a doubt, the palimpsest in *Smoke* is related to cities, places, and the space. If Auggie were not to spend the last ten years of his life "rewriting" the same frame, we would be deprived of a palimpsestous image. Being the synonymous of scraping off in terms of etymological roots of writing is not the only reason that palimpsest could not be considered apart from writing. The palimpsest, which exactly means "re-scraping off", engages Andreas Huyssen in terms of its possibilities as much as Gérard Genette. Genette (Genette, 1992) adopts this concept on for a playful linguistic journey and Huyssen (Huyssen, 2003) for a contemporary metropolitan reading.

Before jotting down this piece, I wanted a great deal about palimpsest in a presentation on its architectural insights. (Şentürk, 2016) Yet, in this piece, I strived to combine my cohesive tendency to theorize palimpsest and my inquisitive tendency towards this appetizing categorization.

Palimpsest is a concept that is extensively explored metaphorically but not eroded much theoretically. Evangelina Iliopoulou remarked the importance of manipulation emphasis in metaphor. (Iliopoulou, 2014) Once this share of manipulation is disregarded, while palimpsest is being linked with contin-

gency, everything that is written and erased by itself falls within the scope and offers the concept a transcendence that it never possessed.

1.1. Palimpsestous vocabulary: Towards an inventory

In her book *The Palimpsest*, Sarah Dillon makes some basic emphases. First among these emphases is her supposition that palimpsest lands could not be converted into a possession of a discipline. It is the property of everyone who writes on it. Moreover, it is not easy to mention palimpsest's own lands, these suppositions coincide with the condition of the modern non-belongingness. Dillon, who makes an inventory of disciplines that the word palimpsest spread, mentions fields such as architecture, geography, geology, paleontology, astrophysics, glaciology, biochemistry, genetics, neuroscience, neurobiology, neurosoftware, information technology. (Dillon, 2007)

Once the current concept vocab of architecture is reviewed, a palimpsestous multiperspective that justifies Dillon becomes visible: *Open-endedness* constantly facilitates the possibility for studio debates. Every word of criticism on cities and buildings lead to the reader. An architectural concept is addressed and it becomes the focus of the debates on polysemy.

It does not go unnoticed that some prefixes lead to an ever-expanding vocab: For instance, 'trans-', 're-', 'poly-'. Derived from the prefix 're-', post-modern expansions such as re-reading, re-production (recreation), concepts of the environmental discourse such as recycle, reuse, and changing meanings of the conservation discourse (restoration, renovation) are the first instances that come to mind. Subsequent to the concepts of the post-digital era, remake, remix, and replica, others such as derivative, version, copy, clone, erroneous production, twinning, model, overprinting, original or independent copying, fictional dates emerge. The heterotopia in urban discussions is also important. Surrealism, Oulipo, synesthesia, conceptual writing, Situationism, deconstruction/decay could be mentioned as the richest elements in terms of palimpsestous ends, within

the art/philosophy context.

Dillon, furthermore, points out a predecessor: Apparently, Gérard Genette, is the first person who used the concept of palimpsestous (see, *Palimpsests*, 1982). (Genette, 1997a)

2. Layered history and discourse schemes

What else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain? (...) Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet, in reality, not one has been extinguished. Thomas de Quincey. 1845. (De Quincey, 2011)

There is nothing that contradicts more with the materiality of a book than reuse, given the fact that the function of a printing press is reproduction. Becoming palimpsest once more emerged as a possibility through e-books, kindles, tablet computers and smartphones. Quincey, in his text accepted as the predecessor of palimpsest problem, refers to the life of the text with its ups and downs, to the text that dies and gets resurrected, and its cyclical lifetime. Palimpsest obliterates the previous, offers a new story canvas suitable to the desire of the authority. Hence, current understanding of history dives deeper, resurrects erased layers, recalls their souls. Quincey claims that random encounters, accidents, grotesque consecutive collisions in a real palimpsest, in short, the artificial connections, do not occur "in our brains, the wonderful palimpsest", instead everything is preserved in a perfect memory order; the invisible palimpsest of the brain would only be revealed at times of dream, madness or death. He assumes the activities in the human brain are palimpsestous through creating an *internal* metaphor from an *external* medium as palimpsest. It is a similar metaphor as considering the operation of a computer palimpsestous. Today palimpsest became spatial and urban. Today, it is more plausible to externalize the image and use it for the city, instead of adopting an adaptation rhetoric through *Quinceyism*.

What kind of a diagram could be drawn if the revolutionary communications technologies modern cities faced during the last two centuries would be expressed vertically similar to the layers of history? An appropriate (sufficiently complex) diagram could be established through a cascade of respective seven layers, with the latter on top, namely, telegraph (i), radio (ii), telephone (iii), television (iv), video (v), mobile phone (vi) and internet (vii).

In drawing such diagram, there exists the basic assumption that each layer spreads continuously horizontally in complete domination of "now" in their own time. The horizontality of the diagram represents the spatiotemporal continuity as well as the chronological continuity, yet, the simultaneous existence of the layers in which the latter does not bury the former should be taken into consideration. (De Quincey, 2011) It is essential to place innumerable intermediates, such as telex, fax, etc., on the right layers. The case of the radio transmitter is thought-provoking: for instance, it is both old and current. This indicates that the radio transmitter should be routed and spread in the spatiotemporal cradle of communication technologies, through being thinned downed, broken, and granulated from time to time in a large vertical section.

There would be definite temporal divisions in the diagram: nobody today would claim that we exist in the telegraphy era; thus, the telegraph might bear ends that would cling only up to the third layer (telephone age). Yet, this is not the case for the deepest second layer, the radio. It is one of the most influential vessels ever existed since the day it was found (telephone age, television age, video age, mobile phone and internet age), that explodes with big lobes in the face of the "now" we step on. Video, on the other hand, does not even go back to the telephone age in the section dominated by the second layer; it is paramount to locate it in the fifth layer (television age); climbs up to today, continuing to pulverize the thickening now of the internet.

3. Intermezzo I: Towards a pseudo-science of layers

Once the horizontal and vertical layer diagrams are accepted as the palimpsest model, it might be possible to create such dramatization:

3.1. Non-interactive hierarchical layering model

It is the idealization of a layering (stratification) that is critically referenced to describe a solid, impermeable and immobile state. It is a model that geologic, sequential occurrences are believed to exist through completing their cycle, and that could become functional through generalizations that spread over time.

3.2. Threshold layering model

An essentially rhetorical model based on the ambiguity of the boundary line between layers. Fuzziness allows movement in the field of discursive uncertainty that aids to avoid a. However, this is nothing more than the 'symptomatic' addition that facilitates the digestion of the hierarchical model when administered together with some uncertainty. It is the characteristic of the narratives that renders an effective swallowing of the hierarchical layering through the use of the metaphor.

3.3. Interpenetrating layering model

A progressive, interpenetrating rhetorical model of narratives that suggests transition zones, cindery hybrid layers, and maniere categories while preserving the periodicities. Buffer zones are meticulously embedded within the narrative. It secures the fixed layers and renders the hierarchy semi-palimpsestous. It is observed that they represent an important linear narrative region in terms of representing the beginning of the melt entities that expand and attain identity/belonging among the layers.

3.4. Melt layering model

This model creates hypertrophies, (Huyssen, 2003) transactional surfaces that expand over the previous without deteriorating the order of the layers. This is a movement that shakes the whole hierarchy; it composes a pre-phase that could easily be evolved to

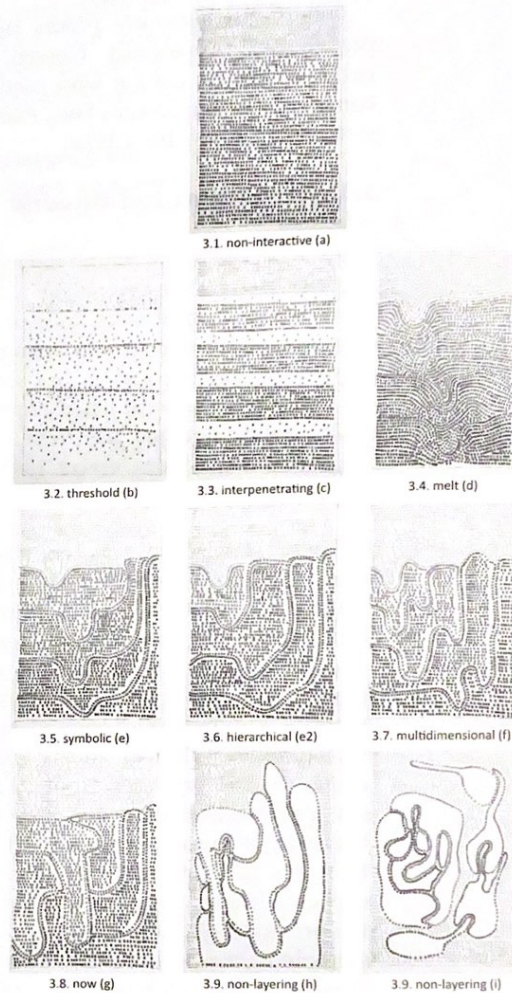


Figure 1. Towards a Pseudo-Science of layers.

a palimpsest, where all layers confined in a narrow space –even remaining at a binary level– melt.

3.5. Symbolic palimpsest

An anti-hierarchical model, in which each layer –at a minimum– excommunicates with the *now*. A moment of palimpsestous crisis that both the bottom layer and the top layer announce themselves through micro strands, vertical thrusts, and surface bounces, ending the domination of the *now*.

An additional *e2* diagram should be drawn: According to this, the projection of the hierarchical, upward thrusting layers on the *now*, the nearest layer to *now* should bear the broadest appearance; as the layer deepens, its traces on the *now* decrease. It is a hi-

erarchical layering compatible with chronological perception.

3.6. Hierarchical palimpsest

A rich, two-way palimpsest that has concentrated symbolic ends destabilized by melt layers. On one hand, layers progress as far as possible in a binary interaction, on the other hand, preserve their extensions that bounce on the surface from the other side.

3.7. Multidimensional palimpsest

The occurrence of the layer motion that represents the virtual threshold of becoming palimpsestous, the development of a permutative relationship corresponds to a moment at which each layer performs horizontal and vertical extensions. Each layer does not only stretch to now, but also demonstrates a movement towards others that are supposedly dead, and sense that its rhizomes are activated. Up and down, mutual rooting, bring the seemingly impossible-to-touch layers in history together in a single time-movement.

3.8. Now-palimpsest

As a countermeasure to the current situation baptized by Andreas Huyssen as *Present-Pasts*, it is the hollowing out of the phenomenon, the 'past', through an infinite leap of the *now* towards the past, and a siege towards the disappearance of the past. Consequently, *now* would rapidly be filled with the past and turn into a realm of rapid wear and falling off the agenda, which could be summarized as 'shortening of the shelf life.'

3.9. Non-layering / Hypertrophic now

At a phase of the Now-Palimpsest, layer parts freed from collocation that are repeatedly included in the *now* arise. These are non-plyed layers that tend to become fictitious. They are the particles that float inside the *now*. Root movement extravagantly increases among the absolutely besieged, narrowed layers; the layers also lose their primeval positions within a non-hierarchical entanglement; in an anachronistic way, they could bounce, emerge anywhere in accordance with their amphibious nature within the now.

4. Intermezzo II: Towards a pseudo-science of palimpsests

Architectural parodies are reminisced through the postmodernism of the 1980s. Genette provides a broad coverage to the parody that illuminates the phenomenon, 'rewriting', that is underlying beneath the palimpsest. (Genette, 1997a) *Para-ode* means to sing together; from another measure, it is to transform the song, to deform it. Looking at the past of the genres in literary history, parody is the common genre of all times. Caricature emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. In contrast, *travesty* is a genre of the seventeenth century. In Neoclassical writing (19th century) famous works were deliberately distorted, comedies and ridicules were penned down with the *travesty* technique. Hypertexts, on the other hand, emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Genette, 1997a)

If we consider the word palimpsest as a hypogram (original text) of a distorted lexicon, it is possible to write *x-psest* (akin to the Le Lionnais' formulation of *ou-li-po* in an open-ended form of *ou-x-po*) (Ouvroir-de littérature-potentielle: Ou-li-po: Is the acronym for the Potential-literature-atelier. Here 'li', namely the *literature* part, could be replaced by 'x', and be considered for architecture, music, kitchen, caricature etc; in short, every area might have a potential atelier; it is not limited to *literature*: *ou-x-po*.) instead of *palim-psest* [re-scrape]. In such case, there might well be a series of synonyms of palimpsest: *Re-psest* or *neo-psest*, for instance.

Bio-psest -everlasting individual museumfication- could be introduced in circulation in biographical literature, recalling Huyssen's concept of the occupation of the now by the past.

As punitive for Genette's *architext*, *arche-psest* or *ur-psest* could be considered. *Arkhe-psest* could replace the pursuit of an origin that all palimpsestous metaphors would be appropriated to.

Ur-psest would as well be an amusing yet contradictory word such as *architext* (or hypogram, root-text); where could the root of a rootless thing would be sought?

Contingency dimension of De

Quincey's palimpsest metaphor emerged in 1845 (De Quincey, 2011) could be explored through different means in natural phenomena (by ignoring the manipulation of the human mind for a moment): the *hydro-psest* or *aqua-psest* of infinite flows, the *aero-psest* of the clouds, the *minero-psest* or the *terra-psest* of the earth's crust.

It is possible to mention the *gravi-psest* of the layering in the earth's crust; if gravity is responsible for everything.

Perchance, as homo sapiens, we are talking within an *anthro-psest*. In that case, it were essential to invent *zoo-psests* and even *botani-psests*, following the footsteps of Oulipians that suggest "animal languages". (Mathews, 1998: 49, 50) ("At the 1st of July 1963 meeting of Oulipo, Le Lionnais mentions to write poetry using human expressions that are only understood by some animals. Hence, poems written for dogs, cows, foxes, etc. would emerge. Simultaneously, Le Lionnais suggests that dialogues between a seal and a finch, or between a fox and grasshopper could be written. Bens advocates, "Isn't it the thing called the talk of the deaf people?" Lescure says that one of his customers who breeds race horses reads Baudelaire to them and the horses love it. Queneau claims that it is doping. Queval says that he breeds domestic crows that can understand MacOrlan's language. Lescure asks if he could teach himself to understand the crows, and Arnaud says the dogs are letterists. [Because they bark with a single letter, *Authors Note*] Finally, Lescure states that Le Lionnais could make the poets, who are about to lose readership, gain a new readership.)

Since palimpsest is interested in the dead (archeology) it is possible to mention of the *nekro-psest*.

If we were to scale palimpsests we could pass from *mikro-psests* to *makro-psests*.

If we could save the palimpsests from being a game of vertical layering, we could be stepping into the realm of the *omni-psest*.

It is necessary to seek assistance in terms such as *geo-psest* in order to define the palimpsestous nature of the digital world.

Possibly, velocity palimpsests could be named as *dromo-psests*, being inspired by Virilio. (With respect to the concept of *dromology* used by Paul Virilio regarding the problem of velocity and modernity. Today, *dronology* [flying drones] is highly fashionable.)

Sarah Dillon suggests a *palim-in-cest* or *in-psest* linked to incest in the queer version of the palimpsest.

It is possible to talk about *phono-psest* of sound, *thermo-psest* of heat, *lumino-psest* of light following Giacomo Bottá, (Bottá, 2012) who mentions the palimpsests of various feelings.

One day, palimpsest of garbology could as well be invented, perhaps it is already invented; along with the urban and metropolitan palimpsest literature. (On this matter, applies Gary Snyder's "composting" image, in the piece "Fact and/or/plus Fiction" (p. 113) by Le Guin (2004). The things that enter the imagination of the author turn into soils of creativity that rots and provides the environment for the formation of a new idea.)

5. Hypogram, architext

In his playful masterpiece, *Palimpsests*, consisting of eighty parts, Genette (1997a) objectifies the difference between the original text and the text derived from the original through the duality of *hypogram/hypertext*. *Hypogram*, *Hypotext*, *Hypertext*, whatever it is called, imply the original text. (Genette, 1997a) Sarah Dillon, on the other hand, refers to a *genotext/phenotext* concept pair that resembles genotype/phenotype distinction, referring to the genetic terminology of HD. (Dillon, 2007) *Architext* is more originality based, it is a model; the author defines it as "the totality of general or transcendental categories that each text comes out of". (Dillon, 2007) and (Genette, 1999) What if there is no hypogram, what if it never existed? In such case, a hypertext carries itself in the root text, its "arche" is intrinsic.

Genette classifies Raymond Queneau's famous book, *10¹⁴ Poems*, within the category he calls "autograph hypertext": the book itself is secondary, being unable to master originality (!). Another rootless hypertext is Michel Butor's book of variations, *6,810,000 Liters of*

Water per Second. Butor explains his book as: "The text seems to be overlapped on itself. The shock created by the two words divided by many empty lines in Chateaubriand's text lead new and increasing weird and fantastic images." moted into regulations. ("The text appears to be superimposed upon itself. The shock of two words which, in Chateaubriand's text, are separated by numerous lines, yields new and increasingly strange and fantastic images." Genette, 1999)

According to Genette, the subject of aesthetics is *transtextuality* or textual transcendence, in brief, it is "the thing that establishes an apparent or implicit relationship between a text and other texts". Genette sets out five levels of transtextual relations, from citation to plagiarism, from implication to imitation and to *paratext* (any textual side elements, such as titles or epigraphs). (On the latter, he also has a book.) (Genette, 1997b) Transtextualism promises more than a linear reading. Yet, linear reading only produces meaning, and transtextualism reveals the mechanism that functions. (The author refers here to another theorist of transtextuality, Michael Riffaterre. The issue Riffaterre deals, according to Genette, is micro-structural; similar to the detailing process, rather than an image. (Genette, 1997b))

However, since each text is derived/produced from other texts, and since the "original" is lost or it is practically impossible to find the original, each hypogram is in fact a hypergraph: a derivative, a re-write. Accepting that every text, whether literary or not, is a hypertext, it becomes evident that some literary texts exceed in being hypertextual, thus they become increasingly palimpsestious. In his preface to the English translation, Gerald Prince accepts Genette's research (again through Genette's definition) as an excellent example of "open structuralism": an intertextual insight, rather than insisting on the text itself, its closure, and insisting on the internal relations of its constituent elements. Explicitly, how texts reread and rewrite each other, an infinite transformation or a paratextual combination create Genette's critical activity. (Genette, 1997b)

6. Pastiche

According to Genette, Perec's novel, *A Void*, (Perec, 2005) is an example of "autonomus oulipism". (Throughout the book, Genette uses the suffix "-ism" in a sense of humorous mimicry and produces many new terms. "X-ism" means "Pseudo-X.") Genette says that Perec's first version of *A Void* might not be lipogramatic, it could be likely to be rewritten so that it does not contain the letter 'e'. *Lipogram* (writing a text without using one or several letters) is a palimpsest technique; a lipogramatic text could be applied further lipogram constraints. (It means that *A Void* could be rewritten to lipogram 'a', since lipogram is an open-ended technique where the cycle can be extended forever). (Genette, 1997a) *Oulipism* is derived from the *Exquisite Corpse Game* of Surrealism. According to Genette, it is a roulette-like, luck-based game, bears a mechanical playability, it is not semantic but is methodical; then, is it possible to try an asemic method? (Genette, 1997a)

"Imitation is generalization": Genette says that it is impossible to imitate a text, only a style or genre could be imitated. Imitation is a specific performance, it is the ability to produce the right performances ceaselessly. Therefore, it is impossible to directly imitate a text, the text could only be imitated *indirectly*. Genette names pastiches and all kinds of pseudo-text as *mimotext*, Genette. (In such case, imitation literature becomes mimologics.) (Genette, 1997a) According to the author, *forgery* is the most naïve and simple one among the mimotexts; forgery should stay as transparent as possible without attracting attention to the text homogenization process, could look no more or no less original than the original. (Genette, 1997a)

I suppose there is no other object that cannot be known by the name of its architect than an architectural structure: a structure belonging to the architect in pure state, so that he could sign his name underneath, is a complete paradox. It could as well be called *mimotect* instead of *Architect*. Everyone who has been mobilized with a great effort in constructing the structure, especially the architect him/herself, produce an

anonymous building of a non-existent architect, an *autopost*, an *omnipastiche*.

In this case, we should write the death of the architect, beside Roland Barthes' concept, the death of the author, without hesitation (Barthes, 2013). Barthes, who takes the death of the author back to Mallarmé's mode of production, cracked an immense gap in functioning of the text in supremacy of the supra-personal, supra-individual dimensions; we can put all architects, their names, texts about them, their buildings, countless mythologies and industries produced around their buildings, again without hesitation. They would fit a single drawer –even if this drawer is rather large.

The legendary names of the architectural history appear to be produced as a *posteriori*, hence become the scapegoat of historical writing. However, this process is *synchronous*, that is, the architect's name is something that produced by oneself while designing. In this regard, Le Corbusier's "is the right way"; to accept a pseudonym in advance. [Le Corbusier, *Phallotect*.] Because every "real name" is nothing but a pseudonym. In this respect, the word pastiche finds a position with respect to its parallels with modernity, although it emerged late in the eighteenth century in France, and its root, paste, means to paste in Italian. (Genette, 1997a)

Genette detects that there are pies in many parts of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, and explores them extensively. While Proust wrote like Flaubert on purpose, the formula becomes "Flaubert as read by Proust," or "Flaubert as written by Proust," or even –maybe the most significant– "Flaubert as read by Proust through us / as mediated by us." Binary and triple formulas come into play. (Genette, 1997a)

Architectural languages are the radical alternates of the "animal language" proposed by the oulipians; architects are creatures that speak through the artificial languages they created or previously created by others. What if we were to translate these languages into palimpsestous pastiches? Let's have a look at Genette's formula "C writes A in B": A wide perspective that represents an advanced stage of pastiche art in ar-

chitecture opens: "A Brian Cantley emulating Kahn like Ando" style could be developed. "A Rural Studio that builds Libeskind in Diether Roth style". Architectural versions of the *Exquisite Corpse Game*, a layered pastiche studio.

There is no doubt that the contribution of pastiche academy to our intellectual life would be much less ridiculous and much more scientific than the contributions of many existing institutions. Serial imitation or "trans-stylization" does not have to be just a variation of the kind of *Style Studies*: it could also be "A writes A in A": The mirrors seem to be positioned face to face. "The broth of the broth of the broth of the rabbit [a distant relation]" is a similar formula. A formula that could be adapted to most of the outcome of the commercial architecture.

If we go back to Genette's ironic "X-ism=Pseudo-X" formula, its architectural equivalent could be written as "Le Corbusierism = Pseudo-Le Corbusier". Hadidisms, Gehrisms, Corbusisms, and so on. These can be addressed in the context of architectural transcendentalism. Peter Zumthor's late period Zumthorism can be interpreted especially in the context of the Meelfabric project, an autoposting and an auto-Zumthorism example. Genette touched on the strength of the authors to detect autopilot; The same thing is detectable in the context of architecture.

Palimpsestism (Pseudo-Palimpsest) could also be considered as a personal passion and obsessive writing experience. It might be the case that *copy-paste* civilization considers palimpsest not merely a scraping surface, but also considers it as a direction to set the course on. *Smartphone* applications, as scraping surfaces, provide the opportunity to sweep the medium. All contents of the e-mail boxes could be deleted and the trash bins (recycle bins) of the computers could be emptied. You could delete all your tweets. All chats in *Whatsapp* could be deleted. These are small-scale formatings. It is possible to consider them as micro-palimpsests of everyday life.

Applications such as location-dependent *Maps* both revolutionized the "device" concept and caused the spa-

tial perception to become more and more radarized/sensitized. In the autocatalytic form, it is transformed into a medium that produces new functions and uses everyday, instead of a set of technology that combines some pre-defined functions like a "stereo". Matching locations on maps assigned a contradictory meaning to *derivé*: The body, which became an expert without knowing any place in the world, could go from one place to another without being lost and lost at the same time. The new kingdom of mediation.

7. A palimpsestous literary project: Chinese whispers or lost in translation

Under the title of pastiche, I quoted Genette and mentioned that *lipogramme*, the writing principle of Perec's novel *A Void*, may not be valid only once. Now let us take a look at a translation initiative, following this evil predicament. Where would an individual would get if she or he would write and rewrite her or his own text in some kind of an amnesiac cycle? Changing by forgetting, and forgetting by changing would require a memory that would conduct the process deliberately.

Oulipist sub-languages enables new / unknown texts. It is also possible to think about the consequences of literary translation lineage. Let us imagine that every published book is re-translated for every reader, with a method that follows Genettist games and could be labeled as "originalism". "Translation on demand" instead of "print on demand". It could be assumed that the common ground of language would be shaken and fall into a kind of *Babylonism*. This, of course, would be the *Babylonization* of the translation field.

If there were not one but thousands of *A Void* manuscripts - countless unique translations. Then, Perec's would be *A Little Void*. Another name could be found for *A Big Void: Apocryphism*.

I attempted to conduct this experiment with my first story, *The First Oulipian*. I asked a friend of mine to translate the story into English. Then I asked another friend to translate the English text to Turkish without mentioning the

fact that the original was Turkish. The manuscript that was translated back to the original language is another hypertext. Therefore, it is a hypertext that could not become a hypotext.

The title changes in *Chinese Whispers*, in a single step, the missing knot turns into a historical reality, the phrases do not come back the same way. The parody in the *Chinese Whispers* experiment could not be found in any one of the steps. Parts are individually consistent with the rules of translation.

However, we know well that the transformations cannot be observed in any other book as historically clear. Is the manuscript we read translated well? Or is it like a ping-pong ball that resonates in *Chinese Whispers*, an already apocryphal product when it was translated back to its own language? *Palimpsestism* does not leave the translation alone. What is lost in translation is found in the parody.

When we consider palimpsest as an active deed, a writing, historicizing, transcription, we could follow the intent of the perpetrator / writer / designer. However, in several examples where palimpsest is considered as a metaphor, the reader perceives the act as a description of a spontaneous landscape or one created by fate. There is not a certain perpetrator but a series of offenders in time who are unaware of each other.

8. Intermezzo III: Towards the collapse of the pseudo-theory of palimpsests translation

Some books will remain famous but will be considered anonymous works, as for us the epic of Gilgamesh; other authors' names will still be well known, but none of their works will survive, as was the case with Socrates; or perhaps all the surviving books will be attributed to a single, mysterious author, like Homer. (Calvino, 1990)

Which issues about the day we experience through categories could be solved? We could talk about techno-psestler, ur-psests, chrono-psests, archi-psests, cyclo-psests, even anti-psests as much as we want, it is futile. While a categorizing gene in me works, the cells that are its antigens start a civil war.

8.1. Becoming techno-palimpsest

Would technology allow the production of a palimpsestous response in the life? When we try to place all analog or digital manifestations of the world of screens, it becomes immediately apparent that none of these is palimpsestous. They were produced not to leave a single trace behind, at least in appearance.

We cannot find homeostatic, regulatory, and cyclic palimpsest of the machines. It is true that they are conducted to write and rewrite, but the *modus operandi* is based on zeroing, it leaves no traces. In myriad devices, apparatus, equipment, activity, and space, in numerous spatial panels where acts, memories, processes and labor could be reprocessed, *nothing occurs* that could remind palimpsest. We continue to live in a technological universe in a repetition with infinite capacity as long as the traces are removed.

When dictated within the context of Deleuzeian becoming, palimpsest could be perceived as becoming palimpsestous.

Recycling industry, recycle economy, raw material recycling, packaging industry, etc. provide us which examples that become palimpsest? A big nothing. Historically, looking backwards, it is true that we came up with the palimpsest metaphor, which is nothing more than a deleted media itself, with the acid-erased parchment. Similarly looking at it today, where we see nothingness and pure deletion, those who suffer from the hyper-cleansing technologies of the future could argue that today was palimpsestous one day - but that does not mean much now. Household recyclers (washers, dishwashers, dryers, etc.) fight against bacterial palimpsest by hygienizing the clothes, but individuals do not stop from carrying traces to their homes from the flea markets. Flows go forward and backward, bad penny always turns up, there are bacteria that come back to homes in response to the destroyed bacteria, like beachcombers.

The production line, consecutive, synchronic, homogeneous operation of a series of machines, a factory machine consisting of a group of machines, a larger factory consisting of factories,

etc. As the scale grows and becomes complicated, still there is no trace of palimpsestous content. The machines that leave traces and erase them work in the same shift, one wipes out the traces left by the other; this is its condition of existence. All experiences are turned into (residue) and (their traces) are destroyed: *Becoming garbage*.

8.2. Ur/Archaic palimpsests

There is a vast accumulation of imagination on experiences in cleansing, initiating, infinite, archaic that existence always rolls back at, pre-individual, pre-ego, even pre-memory realms, however the recording of the traces in these realms is a totally different subject. If ur/archaic palimpsests (ocean, sky, etc.) are the source-palimpsests or the hypo-palimpsests, then the source is unreachable since the source constantly transforms itself.

There is a similar situation in the palimpsest of the field that is *not authored by the individual* but where the *individual is also authored* and contains the comprehension of the language that enabled Barthes to announce the death of the author. The mirror is a heterotopic object, but it cannot be observed as one of the uncanny images of ur-palimpsest. Because, the memory of the mirror is also forbidden for the object of the mirror. Continuous earth cycles: Day and night; moon and tide, etc. Nothing is written here, thus the traces are not accessible, the irreversible physical processes are at work. Simurg was born of his ashes, not the palimpsest. Palimpsest is evil, that is, the imperfect Simurg, its destruction is inevitable.

8.3. Chrono palimpsests

As a polysemic image, the clock belongs to the being rather than the palimpsest. The grave as a heterotopic space is the space and the image where the bodies are sent to the field of both the void and remembrance. Cemeteries are the most efficient palimpsest sources.

8.4. Architectural palimpsest

There are certain achievements of the body as a result of the work by "architectural dispositive": (The reference

is to the concept of “dispositive” by Giorgio Agamben.) Some embodied functions (i.e., imaginary functions that have been imposed on the body or have been insidiously integrated with the body, thus succeeding in making the body obedient) have been made possible by architecture. The body is encircled by both devices and the desire to be encircled by devices.

The architectural tools are not different from the tools of power; they work against the palimpsest one. Powerful tools, such as the grid, could serve palimpsest only when they lose their power and are used in a *gamified / ludic* manner. The situation is not different for objects such as the go board and the chessboard. In terms of infinite possibilities, the movie *Pi* (Aronofsky, 1998) is a powerful example; as the elements are positioned, the possibilities start to run out. The game is finalized and the media is renewed. Palimpsest is not in the board but within the players.

Two capitals of the cycle of capitalist homogeneity (the mall and the touristic town) are also the strongest amnesic spaces that are linked by the airport.

8.5. Cycle-palimpsests

The cyclical ownership systems of the law is a space where writing, deleting and rewriting of property, barter, rent, credit, allocation mechanisms. Ranking mechanisms, which are cyclical body systems, carry out other cycles in the society through civil service, title and rank. The service uniform that reduces the body to ready, defined, anonymous functions is an erasing mechanism. But the palimpsest system occurs as the error, not the objective of the system.

8.6. Anti-palimpsests

In the tension between forgetting and remembering, the objects of remembrance including tokens, honor lists, diaries and mugs serve the oblivion. The archive is one of the sources of palimpsest. (The cemetery could also be considered as an archive.) The museums and libraries are also registrars.

Keeping track and not keeping track is meaningful in the tension between oblivion and remembrance. Vintage culture (wearing traces), leaving trac-

es in the public space (engraving on benches, trees, public bathroom writings, destruction of ancient ruins) are palimpsestous. Ancient spaces, objects, sculptures, and scenes provide a space for the palimpsest. On the urban scene, the line of a demolished building on the neighboring massive wall, graffiti are strong palimpsestous images. The urban scene could abet palimpsests.

9. Calvino's palimpsest

Calvino's *If on a Winter Night a Traveler* is a palimpsestous hypertext, a novel that includes only beginnings. As an encyclopedia of novels, *A Traveler* was also set up as a model that includes all possible novels, at least that is one of the main intentions. Calvino's *How I Wrote One of My Books* (Calvino, 1996) provides a rundown of the model of *A Traveler*: the step-by-step progress of the palimpsest reveals the spectacular divergence of the semiotic quadrangle of Greimas. The architectural map or the grid model formed by initially increasing and then decreasing squares is the schematic twin of the model the author built in *Invisible Cities*. Certainly, this is only a formal resemblance. Because in *A Traveler*, the plot is established by the symbols of the foundation elements of the narrative and narrative premises that relates to these symbols within each quadrangle. In *Invisible Cities*, each quadrangle includes only the name of a city; the subcategories that form the book's content are obtained with the cross-relationships between the cities on the existing grid map.

The reader, who does not know the model of *A Traveler*, would not lose her or his reading pleasure. *How I Wrote One of My Books* is not just an explanatory note for one of Oulipo masterpieces, *A Traveler*, but in my opinion, it is a theory about the mathematics of palimpsest.

The three characters in the book are the most powerful representatives of the palimpsest: the first of these is the sacred Native American who is said to recite unread books. Second is Irnerio: Irnerio prides himself on being a reader who “manages not to read” any books. As a sculptor who treats the books as raw material, he cuts them

up, combines them, freezes and recycles them. He seems determined to take becoming palimpsest to a different level: he dreams of sculpting the copies of the catalogue that would include his exhibited work in the future.

But perhaps the most powerful figure of becoming palimpsest is Ermes Marana: he is behind all kinds of gerry-mandering and cheating throughout the book; Ermes Marana, who mixed all translations, defrauded the publishers with false translations, contributed to the construction of the meandering structure of *A Traveler*. He speaks through Calvino's mouth: "What's with the name of the author on the cover? You should think about three thousand years from now. Who can say which contemporary books would live on? Who can say which authors' names would be remembered?" (Calvino, 1990)

10. Trimming

To abbreviate or extend a manuscript is inevitably to create another manuscript, according to Genette (Genette, 1997a) While expanding-collapsing something in the fields of visual representation, graphics, etc. creates no problems, it leads to a structural change in the textual field.

Trimming in architecture is a rewriting style that could have dramatic consequences similar to textual trimming; mechanical objects such as stairs, chimneys, load-bearing system cannot be trimmed, just like letters cannot be omitted from words. So, trimming works at a more total level. As a matter of fact, urban buildings could always be curretted as a whole and could be *fine* in their new form against all odds. This is what is always done to industrial buildings. Buildings are simply rewritten in the context of the "abstract" in the textual sense, whereas the content that it inherits from itself is stronger in the paradoxical sense. It is no longer just an old factory; although it is now plundered schematically to the extent that there is no longer a trace of its identity as a factory, it is now a *hyper-pastiche* up-ranked with protection, with a clear signature of an architect; it is now "better than the original", but in a highly ironic way –it is commercialized, gentle, docile, well-known.

11. Building as a hypertext

The three current versions of Marquis de Sade's story titled *Justine* resulted in its description as a palimpsest. (McMorran, 2007) It entails three original variations, each a hypertext of another; three original versions, one a hypotext / original when compared to another. Similar situations are taken for granted in the field of architectural design. If the same was true for Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim (which was indeed a conical mastaba in the early stages), it would be believed that the built one had rendered others apocryphal.

The other possibilities are considered to be disposed of by history and do not become the subject of a palimpsestous inquiry. It was firmly believed that the nature of architectural design was based on the progressive continuity of sketches. However, the palimpsest nature of projects that were yet to be built are more evident. Each ghost-design is a hypertext; the ambiguity created by the idea and its variants is considered ordinary. Whatever is in the architect's sketches, the built building will be considered "real" – although no one considers that a building is the hypertext of its own project, every building, in fact, is a hypertext as a constructional whole that refers to the ideas it was constructed with. Its hypotext does not derive only from other buildings that precede it; it is derived from other projects, other unconstructed works; it is a hypertext that contains clear references to other projects of the architect. The visual memory of the architect also has a share in the formation of hypertext.

Wittgenstein house is a palimpsest –a re-writing of Paul Engelmann's design, who also worked in Loos' firm. Wittgenstein's development of his proposal by changing an existing design is similar to the process which Genette called the unwrite process: "Unwrites, ellipses, implicit formulations, expressions disconnected with their context, contradictory details shine under the mess of confusing and intricate narrative." (Genette, 1997a) Paul Wijdeveld detailed the changes implemented by Wittgenstein on the project. (Wijdeveld, 1999) Wittgenstein implemented radical changes in the building that he supervised in every stage of construc-

tion between 1926-29, despite the fact that he started with a neoclassical Viennese palais, arrived at a radically simplified building, even compared to those by Adolf Loos.

12. In lieu of a conclusion

Talking about buildings and physicality when contemplating about context in urban discussions is taken for granted. I find the discussion of the “text” dimension of concept to be equally gratifying. In my article on Palimpsest / city / architecture, I did not want to refer to concrete examples of Istanbul (or Berlin or another metropolis), I wanted to expand textual tracks, thus indicating other creative channels and I hope that this would be appreciated. In architecture, we experience a period where textuality and new forms of expression are on the rise again. Archaeological “case studies” could also be used to focus on Istanbul within the context of palimpsest; just as Sinan Logie and Yoann Morvan did in *Istanbul 2023*, (Logie and Moryan, 2017) containing a black humor *dérive*. I have adopted the ancient method of returning to textual inspiration sources in the form of “looking at something else to understand something”. I emphasize textuality not only in the present article, but also in my own studio practice.

On the other hand, I did not mention artists such as Perry Culper or Brian Cantley (and many others in AD’s horrendous special issue titled *Drawing Architecture*) that I would like to take a close look at in this article. I will leave it for another article. In Berlin, that I lost in my childhood and discovered again after thirty years, I could not write anything about whether the people realized that they were filled with an indefinite longing, a sense of loss and alienation after the wall similar to mine.

I was not able to write an article on the photographs taken from the wall covered with manuscripts near the Delphi temple, the point where I was glued at, nor on the photographs I took of the cuneiform tablets at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara. Similarly, I could not write about the palimpsestous relationship between pastiche and a kind of “cut-up

poetry” method, which I call vertical poetry, and the mode of production I utilize in my designs based on the *Hu-mument*-type slurred literary works in the present article. Likewise, I did not have a chance to open a visual and written parenthesis about my pixel art titled *Deleted Universes*, which I later thought was a palimpsest. I was also thinking about conducting a reading through palimpsest about the project, which was one of the most significant memories of my architectural training and about fingerprinting. Again, a reading of the construction scaffolds that I have photographed everywhere I saw them for nearly twenty years might have contributed to this theoretical, urban and architectural article on palimpsest. However, it is best to leave the ends of the coil the way they are for now.

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