

# PRAGMATISMS













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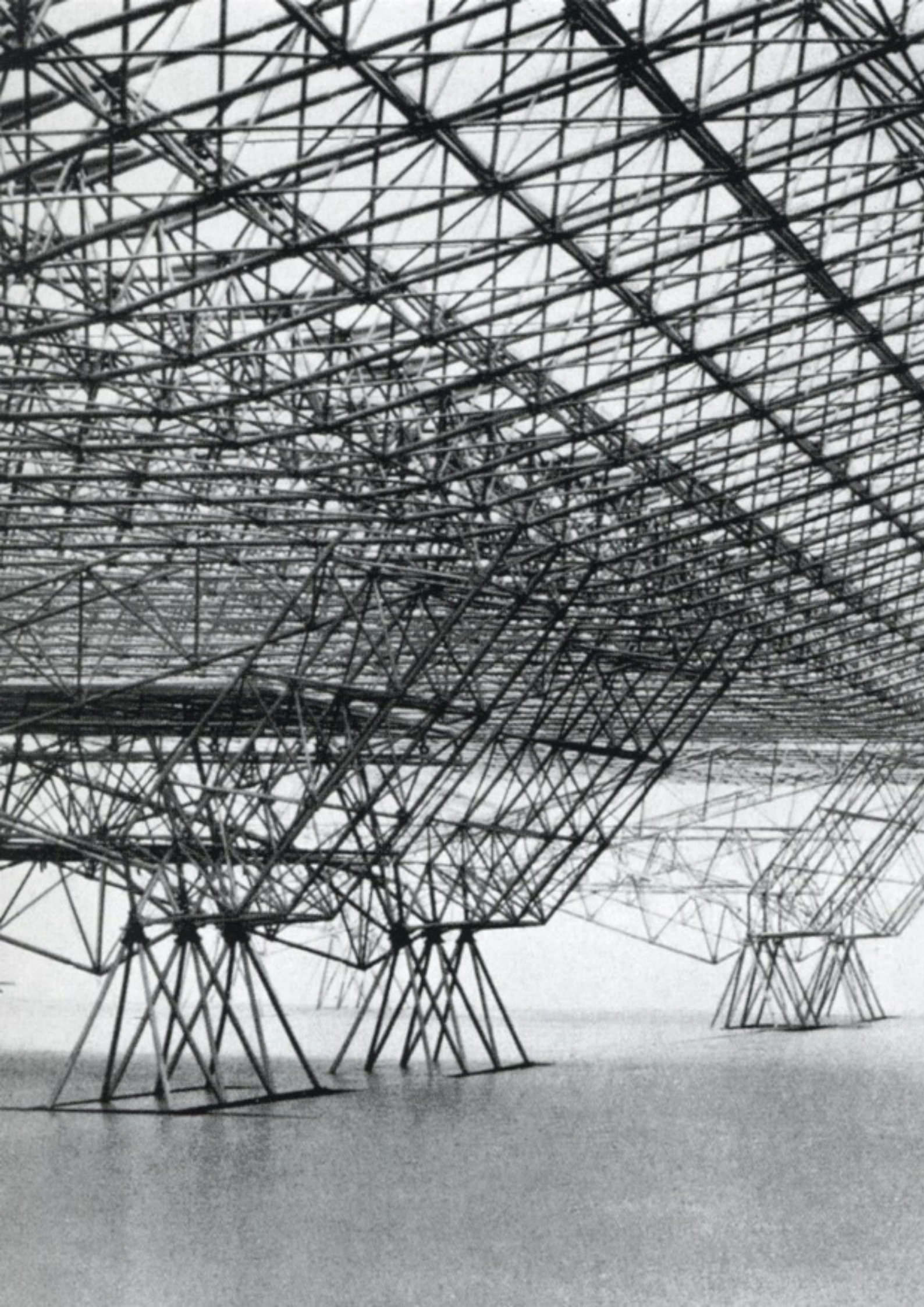
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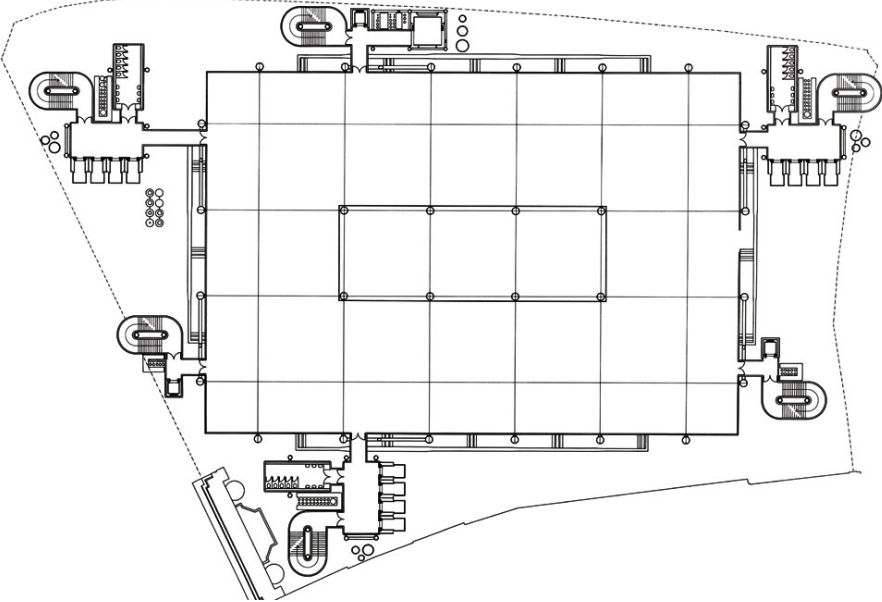
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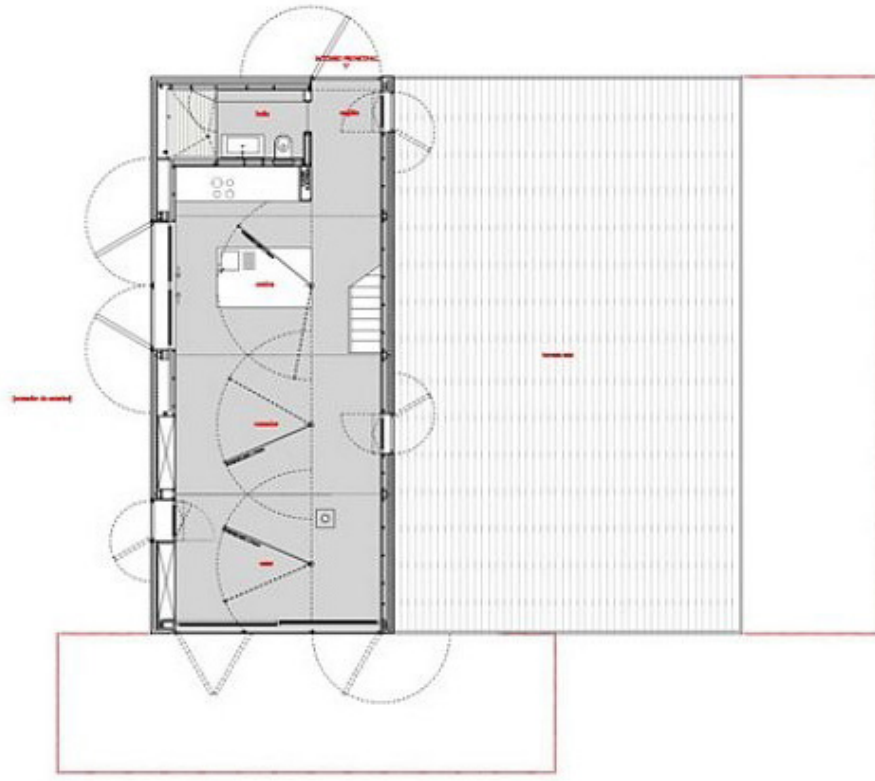


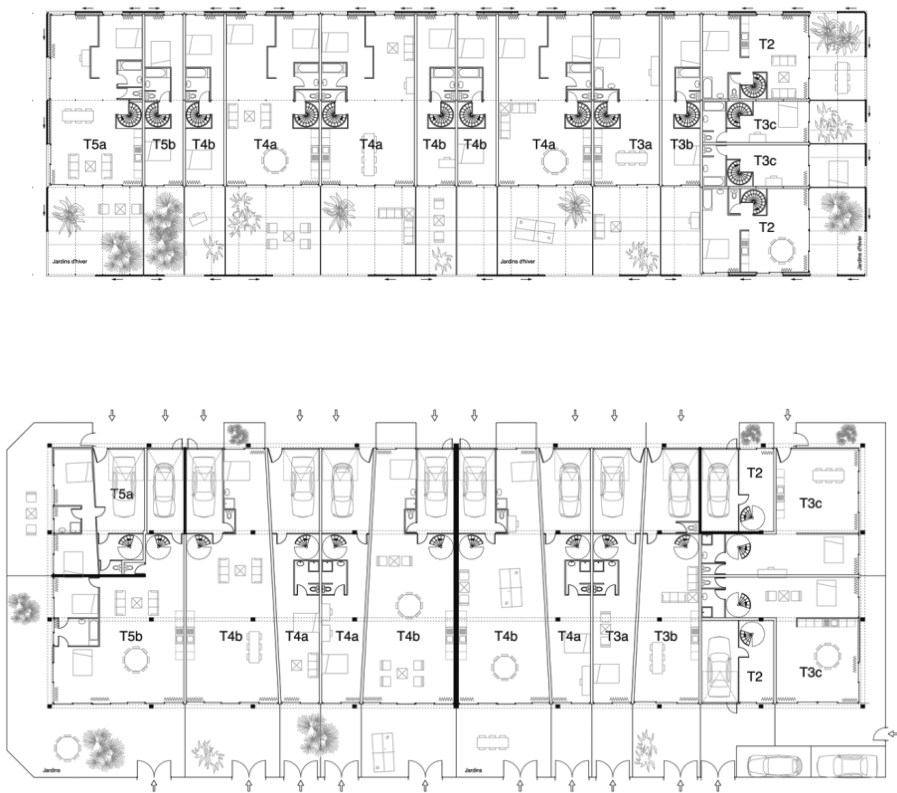




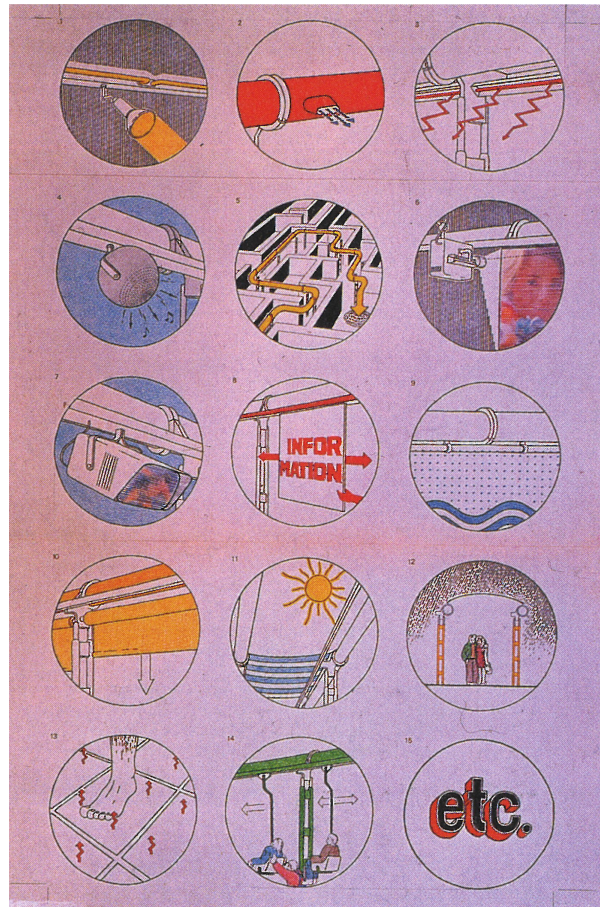












pragmatism (n.)

“matter-of-fact treatment,” 1825, from Greek *pragmat-*, stem of *pragma* “that which has been done” (see *pragmatic*) + *-ism*. As a philosophical doctrine, 1898, said to be from 1870s; probably from German *Pragmatismus*. As a name for a political theory, from 1951. Related: *Pragmatist* (1630s as “busybody;” 1892 as “adherent of a pragmatic philosophy”).

pragmatic (adj.)

1610s, “meddlesome, impertinently busy,” short for earlier *pragmatical*, or else from Middle French *pragmatique* (15c.), from Latin *pragmaticus* “skilled in business or law,” from Greek *pragmatikos* “fit for business, active, business-like; systematic,” from *pragma* (genitive *pragmatos*) “a deed, act; that which has been done; a thing, matter, affair,” especially an important one; also a euphemism for something bad or disgraceful; in plural, “circumstances, affairs” (public or private), often in a bad sense, “trouble,” literally “a thing done,” from stem of *prassein*/*prattein* “to do, act, perform” (see *practical*). Meaning “matter-of-fact” is from 1853. In some later senses from German *pragmatisch*.

practical (adj.)

early 15c., *practicale* “of or pertaining to matters of practice; applied,” with *-al* (1) + earlier *practic* (adj.) “dealing with practical matters, applied, not merely theoretical” (early 15c.), or *practic* (n.) “method, practice, use” (late 14c.). In some cases directly from Old French *pratique* (adj.) “fit for action,” earlier *pratique* (13c.) and Medieval Latin *practicalis*, from Late Latin *practicus* “practical, active,” from Greek *praktikos* “fit for action, fit for business; business-like, practical; active, effective, vigorous,” from *praktos* “done; to be done,” verbal adjective of *prassein*, *prattein* “to do, act, effect, accomplish.”

By one of the ironic perversities that often attend the course of affairs, the existence of the works of art upon which formation of an esthetic theory depends has become an obstruction to theory about them. For one reason, these works are products that exist externally and physically. In common conception, the work of art is often identified with the building, book, painting, or statue in its existence apart from human experience. Since the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience, the result is not favorable to understanding. In addition, the very perfection of some of these products, the prestige they possess because of a long history of unquestioned admiration, creates conventions that get in the way of fresh insight. When an art product once attains classic status, it somehow becomes isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience.

When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals. Art is remitted to a separate realm, where it is cut off from that association with the materials and aims of every other form of human effort, undergoing, and achievement. A primary task is thus imposed upon one who undertakes to write upon the philosophy of the fine arts. This task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience.

(...)

It is mere ignorance that leads then to the supposition that connection of art and esthetic perception with experience signifies a lowering of their significance and dignity. Experience in the degree in which it is experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. Instead of signifying surrender to caprice and disorder it affords our sole demonstration of a stability that is not stagnation but is rhythmic and developing. Because experience is the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ. Even in its rudimentary forms, it contains the promise of that delightful perception which is esthetic experience.



I'll be pragmatic for once. Art as Experience of John Dewey. A work of art, a building, a book, a painting, a statue which an esthetic theory has been defined seems to be difficult to theory about them. We can not separate these works from the conditions from it was brought to. We can not separate these works from its experience capacity. Actions which are normally driven, mostly when the product is no longer questioned. Those actions will drive to a misunderstanding of the work. We must realize its origin. We must understand its performative capacities. Then we will be able to really apprehend it. Richard Rorty Contingency, Irony and Solidarity. He puts pro-individual as Foucault in one side. He puts pro-society as Dewey on the other side. He will separate public and private. No theoretical method will be able to fuse them. Yet believing in such a privatistic and free society it seems for me neither possible at the practical level. If all action is driven by individual desires little space is left for consciousness. If consciousness is neither existent social actions seem impossible to happen. Architecture will have the duty, by authority, to perform in order to deal.

Toyo Ito's Silver Hut provides a shelter first and a series of boxes inside. Lacaton Vassal's by an economy of means is able to provide an environment which obliges the individuals to appropriate it by consumption. By systematical approaches and conscient errors in the norm Sejima is able to fuse private and public. The same coexistence is achieved in Jean Nouvel's Nemausus, but this performs in social activities with true streets in height. Richard Rogers, by the same industrial approach and so relation industry-society, is able to achieve the true purpose of the museum. Art as a public good. Yet the envelope of Norman Foster's is able to provide the perfect space for its purpose, but the limit to fall in Wachsmann engineering is quite close.

Richard Rogers provides with the minimal technological necessities Prouvé's house. The same exercise repeats in Lloyd's building, providing an envelope of services and freeing the plan. Herreros gives a minimal unit with possibilities of adaptation for further necessities. There is just need to add rooms over the platform glued to the basic unit. The same exercise is repeated in Piano's House yet this one simplifies its flexibility by movable walls. Lacaton & Vassal by a systematic position of walls and some disturbances is able to provide space for collective individuals. An in between of Lacaton & Vassal and Piano is projected in Abalos & Herreros a series of parallel structural walls will divide the house into five parts, perpendicular walls will be placed to achieve full grid room, no corridors. Hans Hollein Line is efficiency, one element in order to provide different scenarios. The stair of Villa Chardonne wouldn't expect to be used as a ventilation system.



Nightclub is pragmatic. Its beauty is in its capacity to perform. By an extreme economy of means, is able to provide different environments. Active systems provide and alter an infinite number of scenarios. It is able to fuse individual desires and strong social interactions. It accomplish its purpose. Nightclub for individual. Nightclub for society. Nightclub for delirium.

The attempt to fuse the public and the private lies behind both Plato's attempt to answer the question "Why is it in one's interest to be just?" and Christianity's claim that perfect self-realization can be attained through service to others. Such metaphysical or theological attempts to unite a striving for perfection with a sense of community require us to acknowledge a common human nature. They ask us to believe that what is most important to each of us is what we have in common with others - that the springs of private fulfillment and of human solidarity are the same. Skeptics like Nietzsche have urged that metaphysics and theology are transparent attempts to make altruism look more reasonable than it is. Yet such skeptics typically have their own theories of human nature. They, too, claim that there is something common to all human beings - for example, the will to power, or libidinal impulses. Their point is that at the "deepest" level of the self there is no sense of human solidarity, that this sense is a "mere" artifact of human socialization. So such skeptics become antisocial. They turn their backs on the very idea of a community larger than a tiny circle of initiates.

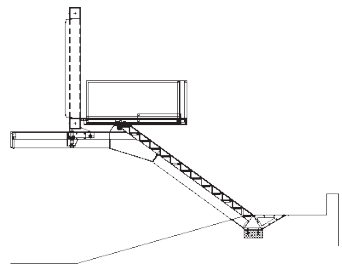
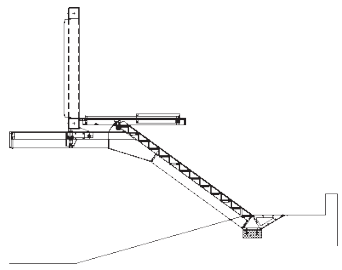
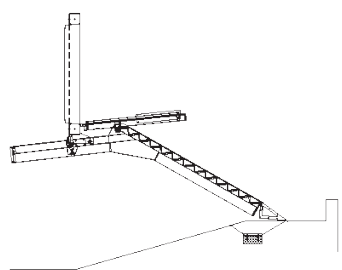
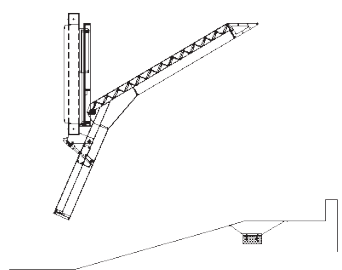
Ever since Hegel, however, historicist thinkers have tried to get beyond this familiar standoff. They have denied that there is such a thing as "human nature" or the "deepest level of the self." Their strategy has been to insist that socialization, and thus historical circumstance, goes all the way down - that there is nothing "beneath" socialization or prior to history which is definatory of the human. Such writers tell us that the question "What is it to be a human being?" should be replaced by questions like "What is it to inhabit a rich twentieth-century democratic society?" and "How can an inhabitant of such a society be more than the enactor of a role in a previously written script?" This historicist turn has helped free us, gradually but steadily, from theology and metaphysics - from the temptation to look for an escape from time and chance. It has helped us substitute Freedom for Truth as the goal of

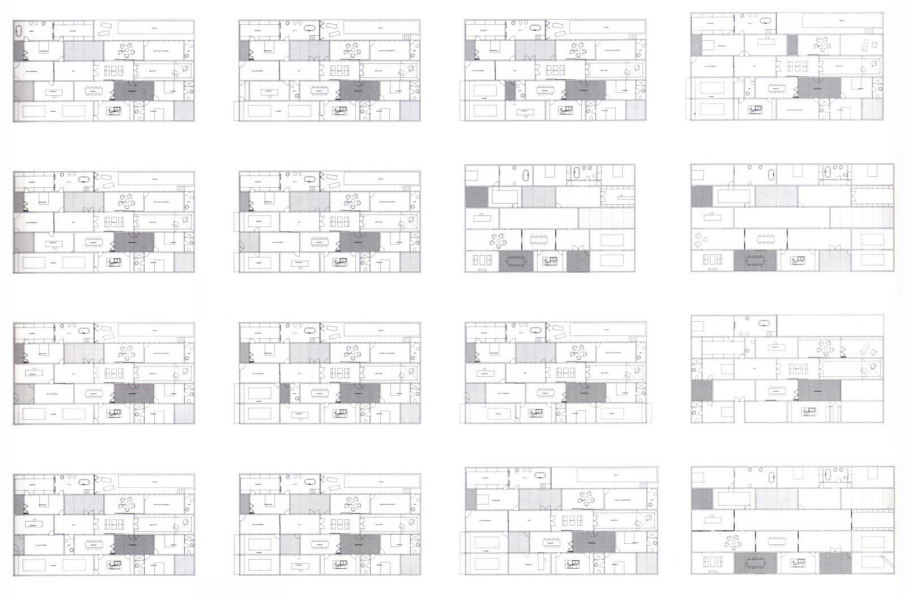
thinking and of social progress. But even after this substitution takes place, the old tension between the private and the public remains. Historicists in whom the desire for self-creation, for private autonomy, dominates (e.g., Heidegger and Foucault) still tend to see socialization as Nietzsche did - as antithetical to something deep within us. Historicists in whom the desire for a more just and free human community dominates (e.g., Dewey and Habermas) are still inclined to see the desire for private perfection as infected with "irrationalism" and "aestheticism."

This book tries to do justice to both groups of historicist writers. I urge that we not try to choose between them but, rather, give them equal weight and then use them for different purposes. Authors like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Baudelaire, Proust, Heidegger, and Nabokov are useful as exemplars, as illustrations of what private perfection - a self-created, autonomous, human life - can be like. Authors such as Marx, Mill, Dewey, Habermas, and Rawls are fellow citizens rather than exemplars. They are engaged in a shared, social effort - the effort to make our institutions and practices more just and less cruel. We shall only think of these two kinds of writers as opposed if we think that a more comprehensive philosophical outlook would let us hold self-creation and justice, private perfection and human solidarity, in a single vision.

There is no way in which philosophy, or any other theoretical discipline, will ever let us do that. The closest we will come to joining these two quests is to see the aim of a just and free society as letting its citizens be as privatistic, "irrationalist," and aestheticist as they please so long as they do it on their own time - causing no harm to others and using no resources needed by those less advantaged. There are practical measures to be taken to accomplish this practical goal. But there is no way to bring self-creation together with justice at the level of theory. The vocabulary of self-creation is necessarily private, unshared, unsuited to argument. The vocabulary of justice is necessarily public and shared, a medium for argumentative exchange.

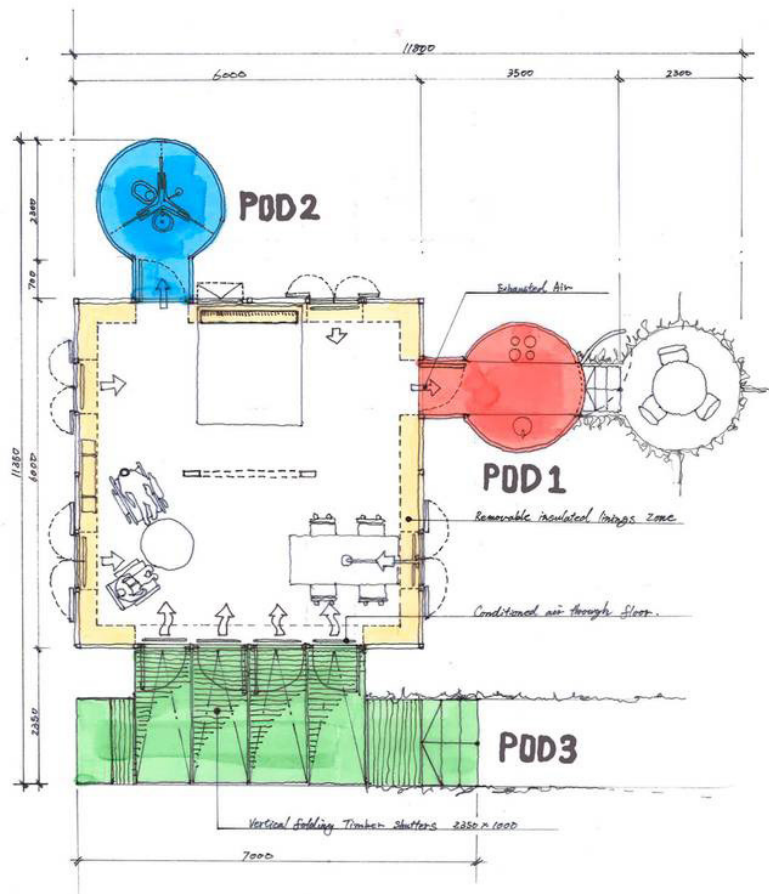
























Foster + Partners - Sainsbury Centre of Visual Arts. <http://www.fosterandpartners.com/es/projects/sainsbury-centre-for-visual-arts/>  
Abalos & Herreros - Recycling Plant. <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/40/the-missing-link-architecture-and-waste-management>  
SANAA - Gifu Kitagata Apartment Building. Image © Hisao Suzuki. <http://lookimomolasa.blogspot.ch/2013/04/edificio-de-apartamentos-gifu-kitagata.html>  
Toyo Ito - Silver Hut. Image Tomio Ohashi. <http://aibarchitecture.blogspot.ch/2013/03/premio-pritzker-2013toyo-ito.html>







# PRAGMATISM