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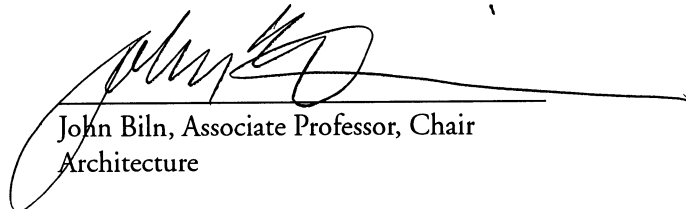
The end of a Lighthouse

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture


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Abstract

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The lighthouse is a structure and figure that reveals the possibility of a discourse on seeing. Once projected, the lighthouse is erected to show the way towards the shore. Soon worshiped as an object of idolatry, the lighthouse is consumed by our gaze. From ruin and into death, the lighthouse is emptied out of its original purpose.

In the place of inevitable loss, an introspection into the myth of the lighthouse and seeing would move us away from the consumptive gaze of the optical and towards the creative light of the passionate. Through this movement is a looking in depth that hopes to reconcile the separated 'I' of the distinct individual with the perceived 'eye' of an other at the end of the lighthouse.

Regarding architecture in the light of this engaged sight expands the frame of the discipline from a mere process of building objects into the wonders of omniscient Being.

Acknowledgements

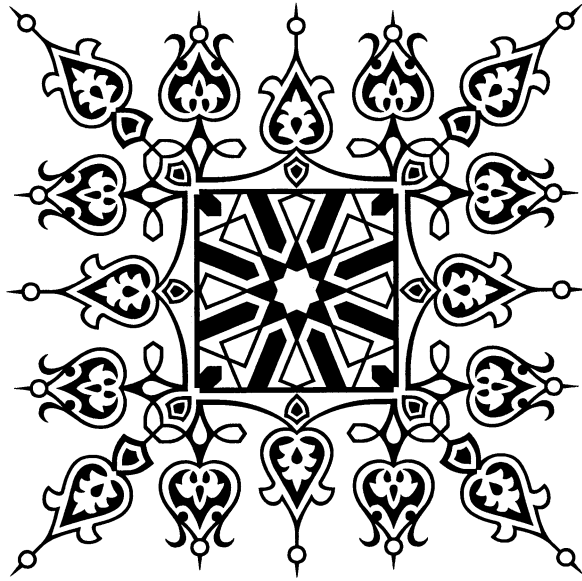
A big thank you to John, your work indeed exceeds all shadows, David, thank you for your careful reading, Farès, for incisive outbursts, Lars, for continuous passionate vision, Marwan, tenderly there, and Mirjana, lovingly listening.

Overseas: Samar with a flower, Christelle with a big smile, and Assem le Tannir... Zeina, John and Jo, deepest blessings to you. Locally: Ziad on the phone line, Fadi, the anthropological grounds need a shake, also Ralph and Johnny. In Rice, Kristen, this is my last manifesto! Eric, infinite caring support, Sven, never-ending challenge, Paul, 'I am now sorry, Montag, every topic indeed matters, Adele, the labyrinth lives on. Also Kayte, Dave, Laurie, Chris, Adam, Dan, Ozge, Ken, and Dan-Victor, thank you for food and thoughts, special to Sara, my very married friend.

Deepest to Mom and Dad, carefully caring from a distance, and never the hint of a doubt.

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Actuality is when the lighthouse is dark between flashes: it is the instant between the ticks of the watch: it is a void interval slipping forever through time: the rupture between the past and the future: the gaps at the poles of the revolving magnetic field, infinitesimally small but ultimately real.

George Kubler, The Shape of Time, 1962.

Preface

Discursive Positioning.

*To know you don't know is best.
Not to know you don't know is a flaw.
Therefore, the Sage's not being flawed
Stems from his recognizing a flaw as a flaw.
Therefore he is flawless.
Lao-Tzu, Te-Tao Ching.*

Jean Nouvel -recently in Beirut to present his landmark project in the central district, asserted that “the essential [about the work] is invisible.” (L'essentiel est invisible.) This was not the first time for Nouvel to quote Saint-Exupéry. Already in his first *El-Croquis* monograph, Nouvel used the famous “Snake digesting an elephant” picture in order to bring the discussion along the same line: that there must have been something that we have overlooked. The snake as it is, shown in profile while it digests the elephant, takes the shape of a hat. ‘Grown-ups’ as Saint-Exupéry would call them, would tell you that there is nothing frightening about the image of a hat. Indeed. They needed to realize that the picture was that of a snake, and that the frightening aspect (that the snake could have been digesting a whole elephant) was invisible. A few years later in his exhibition at the Pompidou center (2002), Nouvel reasserted the necessity of a poetic practice of architecture. His exhibition did not deny the image though. It was actually all images -and text. He had been saying once more, like Artaud, that the use of representation is a ‘fatality’ (inevitability, but also a deadly procedure) but that it was necessary that within this fatality, for representation to continue.

Nouvel's assertion is not new. It just says, once more, and after Saint-Exupéry, that there must be a promise in this ‘essentially unseen’ that has been haunting architecture for centuries. For lack of space and knowledge, I will not dwell on the historical recurrence of this absence. On the other hand, I will insist on a contemporary description of this absence and on a suggested way towards seeing the invisible. The question that stems directly from the previous discovery (discovering that one is blind to the essential) is: “what is it then that has been foreclosed?” This is obviously a worthless question, for trying to enframe this unseen, once again, in the act of defining what it is that has been absented from the field of vision, is a useless endeavor. Useless because it would become named -though by negation, made visible to say that it is absent. For example: “This elephant is not seen in the picture” says though by negation, that the elephant is not there. Such a procedure unfortunately, but probably hopefully, cannot apply to the essentially unseen. Such a procedure remains in the domain of a binary opposition, positing that the essentially invisible is standing in opposition to what is seen.

*Western metaphysics reflect a worldly vision of truth which sees only sharp boundaries and divisions, the opposition permanently fixed in duality... But this is a vision of truth which occludes our experience with shadows and shades [of meaning]; the enchantment of the sunset hour, the uncanny light of the twilight.
David Michael Levin, *The Opening of Vision*.*

Remaining in opposition to the project would be missing the point again. If it is invisible then it is invisible, unseen and unnamable, unspeakable and always escaping. Hence, this thesis does not dwell much on the nature of this unseen. It simply posits that there must be something of value in dwelling to see the invisible. The main question becomes about finding a way to see.

To live is to see.

Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity.

After Colomina, I project that such a seeing is enlivening, that it is seeing, truly. Going back to 500 BC, Lao-Tzu already asserts the existence of a primordial condition -essential, that he terms 'the Way.' He does so while always noting that it is for a lack of a better term, or more radically, for the absence of a term to naming it at all. He says:

The Way gave birth to the One;

The One gave birth to the Two;

The Two gave birth to the Three;

And the Three gave birth to the ten thousand things.

The ten thousand things carry Yin on their backs and wrap their arms around the Yang.

Lao-Tzu, Te-Tao Ching.

Ten thousand things as a multitude of manifestations, (objects, subjects, landscapes etc.) remain created by the three which stems from the two which stems from the one. But the one is not even the essence. The one is one, it is already bound as one. It is what he calls the way that gives birth to the one. The male/female opposition (Yin/Yang) is included in every one of the ten thousand things. If living is to see, if the essential is invisible, after Nouvel, after Saint-Exupéry, then seeing the essentially invisible would be experiencing Lao-Tzu's way. But since the way is at the source of every-thing, then one could see the way in any-thing.

Human beings enframe themselves in architecture in order to open themselves to spirit.

An opening onto exteriority.

David Farrel Krell, Architecture, Ecstasies of Space, Time and the Human Body.

Both Saint-Exupéry and Lao-Tzu end up locating this work in an epistemology that reverses the conventional tradition of projecting. The architectural work -for once, is not aspiring towards the closure of the object, but rather aspiring towards transcending (in order to open themselves to spirit) the object and seeing the essence (an opening onto exteriority). Still, the work does not exclude the object, Artaud constantly reminding us of the fatality and necessity of representation. The 'architectural' in this thesis refers then to the human activity of dwelling in the aspiration towards seeing the invisible. In dwelling one makes buildings in order to satisfy the need for shelter. In dwelling, one is also in the process of looking for ultimate seeing. The object in this case is text, it is writing on architecture. But, it is not writing as a reading of existing object(s). It is a type of writing that is itself architecture by being an open spatial experience. This experience hopefully voices a possible suggestion of a process that is directed towards complete experience.

Language is a place for a semiotic play, an indeterminate field of infinite slippages and substitutions.

Jacques Derrida, Poststructuralism.

Initially projected as an opus, I come to realize that it will be a longer time before I come to terms with this project. I wanted it to be about seeing, I also wanted it to be effective in bringing about an awareness into the way of seeing -by looking at this project, and by looking at seeing as a human activity in a broader sense. I realize that it is about seeing, but I am not sure how effective it will be in bringing this awareness that I am after. The initial difficulty in the making of this project is that of finding a language that can at the same time produce two extremes of the discourse: maximum precision concomitant with maximum poetry. The need for such a stretch arises from a desire for opening the boundaries of language to the unseen, unexpected, unknown, unmarked, invisible while maintaining a crisp awareness of the subject at hand. It is also about realizing the limitations of language itself. That it will be inevitably, as Derrida points out, the place of a semiotic play. Even if one does not abide that text needs to be written to encourage dissemination, (what Derrida does all the time) one needs to start by realizing that it does disseminate anyway. In this sense, the act of maximizing poetry that I am here referring to, is not there at all for the sake of maximizing confusion. Located at the middle line between closure and opening, I want this text to actually be a determinate field of substitution, one that I am in control of, but also one that has the capacity to touch the subject (topic and reader) in many ways. Such an ambition necessitates poetry, otherwise one would be locked in the closure of one image, and no 'essentially invisible' would ever be hinted at or touched upon.

The lighthouse in this project is used at many levels of depth. This project is not a reading of a particular lighthouse, but features many manifestations of the lighthouse. First of all, it is an architectural typology. Used by mariners, the lighthouse serves a purpose: seeing the shore and having a reference as one moves in the seemingly limitless space of the sea. Second, it is an icon, a monument that becomes a referent to stand for the city it is placed in, also a monument like the marvel in Alexandria. Third, the lighthouse is a symbol, it is a phallic representation of a visible structure of control. Like in the panopticon, the lighthouse stands there, present, but the operator is invisible. The vertical structure is a male symbol of power. Fourth the lighthouse is a metaphor, it is a trope as a vehicle to bring about the discourse on seeing, it is also an instrument that serves in this purpose. Using the lighthouse in order to talk about seeing is the moment of transferal through metaphor. Fifth, the lighthouse is a personification, it is the representation of the individual as Cyclops, a one eyed-half-human half-monster that is doomed to see in a pre-designed panoramic cast. Once seen as a human body, the lighthouse starts to be more than an object, it is a subject in an object, and an object as subject/person. Sixth, the lighthouse is an incarnation, the made into flesh of a spirit that suffers through the body that he was born into, and in his deep seeing strives towards exceeding the limits of the "cadaveric" body.

The story of the lighthouse is then a story of change, emancipation, transgression, transcendence. It is a movement from an initial moment of Architecture rendered impure by the gaze and back to the initial moment, through the cycle of recurring circular human activity. The difference between the beginning and the end is a difference of awareness of the experience in and of time. The emancipation is about coming to terms with the problem of time, by experiencing the 'actuality' of the continuous present. A diagram was produced in order illustrate this process, also as a structure for the text as it unfolds. In it, four quadrants articulate the movement. Before Quadrant I, an introduction paces the way into the discussion of subjects and objects, and a conclusion after Quadrant IV suggests the possibility of an end as resolution.

Pictures are fixations within the metaphoric flux of possible experiences.
Robin Evans, The Projective Cast.

The initial problem is a problem of separation of the subject from the object. This separation is set up in the perceptual field. When looked at, objects produce a sense of boundary, an opaque surface

that does not allow to look past them. From the static position of the perceiver, they will never be able to see what is behind the object and panic in the act of seeing the object as binding, as the maker of closure, as the enabler of limitation. The object has become a hindrance to seeing. It flattens in the perceptual field into a two-dimensional picture and produces a 'fixation' of the possibilities of experience that is perceived as closure: this is an end, or at least a limitation to the process of becoming. This perception of separation is perceived as irrecoverable and the subject seems to be doomed in dwelling in a world that he will never be able to perceive fully.

Architecture needs to be read in terms of desire. Or at least aspiration. Aspiration might be the word for architecture, and it would need to be understood as repeating the structure of desire.

David Wills, Designs on the Body: Film/Architecture/Writing.

The introduction is at work in setting up the problem of the inside and the outside, and the line in between. The making of this separation, a necessary act for the drawing of the diagram, is also the representation of this problematic moment of Architecture as it disciplines space. In its building of walls and objects again, architecture surely caters for the necessity of shelter and comfort, it also constantly reiterates the problem I have identified, that I will not be able to see past the wall once I build it. The intense frustration that such a perceived limitation produces is at the source of Nouvel's assertion, that the image which Derrida would want to "have the last word," has actually had the last word, but that the last word, was nothing of a closure. It was just a word. The aspiration for this essentially invisible is a desire for omniscience in the wonderful promise of seeing everything from everywhere at once.

"Time," especially on the horizon of the common understanding of it, has changed to acquire this "obvious" ontological function "of itself," as it were, and has retained it to the present day.

In contrast, we must show, on the basis of the question of the meaning of Being [...] that -and in that way- the central range of problems of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time correctly viewed and correctly explained.

Martin Heidegger, Being in Time.

Understanding experience cannot happen in a frozen moment, time has to enter the discussion, it is putatively at the center of the problem of seeing architecture. When living in time, I can move around the object, and perceive its multiple faces. The initial separation (being unable to see past the object) can then be resolved if one thinks in a model that includes time. But it is then the time itself that brings about separation: the multiple facets of the object I am rotating around do not happen at once, they remain scattered fragments of an experience that are vanishing into the past or yet to become in the near future. In both cases, they are not continuous actuality.

In short, the wall hides and excludes certain possibilities of spatial movement and perception. Movement can compensate for the exclusion that is instated by the wall but the experience remains an experience of separation as one realizes that it happens in time. The aspiration remains to perceive a present/presence that is not hindered neither by the object nor by time.

I was faced with the following questions: "why is your work important?" "why is it useful?" "how is it important to architecture?" I am tempted to radically reply that it is not. That it is not useful in any way, and that it is not important nor necessary. But this is not completely true. There is here a catch-22: this work to exist, like any space, demands a reader, it demands a subject with a body to come and inhabit it. Thus, this work is not intrinsically important, it is just a sequence of words and

images talking about looking (at them) carefully. It only becomes important if it is seen and read by an engaged reader. I am here caught in what one could perceive as solipsism: that it can only be important if the reader is willing to look at it in depth. Solipsism of another kind also, that the thesis itself is about seeing in depth, that it can be reduced to these few words, and that in this sense if the exercise of looking itself is not of interest to the spectator, then it is of course useless to read it, because it is easily reducible into a singular sentence that contains its gist as intention.

On the other hand, and strangely enough, the matter that I try to talk about in this project is the only thing that matters to me at this point in my education and experience as an architect and human. Lighthouses do not matter to me at all in fact, but the possibility of genuine communication that this project could suggest, or at least the possibility of creating the desire for a seeing in depth is something that is of paramount importance to me. It is in short an experience that I feel the urge to passionately share. In this sense, it is not destined to a wide public, meant here as a passive audience: a mass. Without wanting to be elitist at all, it is only destined to the ones who personally show interest in it. It does not try to follow fashion nor trend. At its core is a centennial old idea on human blindness, and what remains to be contemporary about is the instantaneous act of me writing it at the present moment, through my body, in the words I know, in the language I know, in the discipline I am working in, in the Art I have a passion for.

Going past the core idea of this project, (that what matters is a seeing in depth, and not the fetishization of objects) I would like for the text to be a pleasant experience. I would like it to be a poetic journey into what I intended but also into the manifold potential openings that a poetic language can allow. In this sense, I would like it to remain an open-work while simultaneously being a precise work. I realize that it is incomplete at this stage in its attempt to effectively do so, this is why I would repeatedly label it as an attempt of sorts.

As a process, writing, drawing and talking about it is and was an exercise in concentration and precision. The type of writing that I was trying to achieve is a writing in the blind, at the same time precise but almost asleep. Like a piano player, I have to play the right note, with the right finger at the right moment, and it has to sound musical. But the pianist cannot be aware of doing so while doing it, because he would be interrupted by his thought before he hits the key. It has to happen in the blind, in a process that I would paradoxically describe as some sort of hyper awareness of doing that short-circuits doing past consciousness, past the thinking process, directly from the eye to the tip of the finger.

When it comes to architecture, the intention is twofold: on the one hand is a meditation on the glory and ruin of the object in and by our perception of it, on the other is a reflection on design process, and the nature of the Project.

The desire for the lighthouse seems to the reflection of an almost natural need. That if one is in the sea in the night, in his blindness, he cannot know the right direction. By natural I hear mean that inasmuch as one could romanticize being lost in the sea and not wanting to instrumentalize movement, navigation is going to be invented anyway at least under the auspice of more efficient (i.e. faster) movement. If one wants to get the catch back in time for the morning market, the lighthouse is needed. Once present, the light in its cast truly transforms the experience of the mariners, the visual marker is the representation of direction: the shore is this way, also a marker of time in its recurrence.

From the homely house to the haunted house there is a single passage where what is contained and safe is therefore secret, obscure and inaccessible, dangerous and full of terrors.

Sigmund Freud in Anthony Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny.

In Quadrant I and II, the object as a separation is a source of angst, *unheimlich*, (unhomely or uncanny) and that at the source of this separation is a perceptual phenomenon. The subject sits at a distance from the lighthouse and realizes that it is present there, as an autonomous thing. Rather than reading hope in this presence, the subject creates pain, the pain of seeing in this object once again the sign of an impossible smoothness/continuity to his perception: the field of vision is interrupted by presence, here is the paradox!

The monument no longer concerns living, it is a house for the dead to continue living in.
David Wills, *Designs on the Body: Film/Architecture/Writing*.

It is along these lines that quadrant I and II move from the construction of the object to its ruin, and its death. At every moment of the subject's relationship with the object is a possibility of realization, but never is it achieved simply because of the distance that the gaze imposes. Consumption by the gaze is the problem of the image, when one looks at something from a distance, the flattened image comes to stand for the object, and in this process is deception, another postponement of the simple direct experience that could have been possible was not it for the self-imposed distanciation. The object thus monumentalized acquires suddenly more and less value than its 'actuality.' It is more, because as a monument it comes to play roles that it was not originally designed for. The monument can start to stand for a place as a 'sign' the monument can come to be adored -fetishized, as an object with supernatural powers. It is also less because in this monumentalization is another exclusion, the exclusion of the simple direct experience of the object: that it is that high, that wide, made of this stone, in this way, that there is so much light inside the space, that it is painted with this material, etc. etc. Both of these phenomena are losses, they are losses for the object, but more importantly they are losses for the subject who comes to experience a world that he has scarred in foreclosure.

The object is then stranded, and this is where it is described as beheaded: a trunk with no face.

The connection of loss to death, later, is manifold. Loss is a sign of potential death if anything, but it is also the beginning of the way to death through decay. Other losses can activate the loss of the object. Technology can replace the object and produce obsolescence. Time and the elements can wear the object out, and with no maintenance, ruin is bound to happen. Disinterest can also produce decay. The object that is seen as a potential source of 'interest' -meant here as simultaneously economical and perceptual, is bound to be forgotten at the moment where another object, in its originality, comes to replace it with a fresher image that is easier to consume. The process of interest/disinterest here at work is that of a lazy eye that allows itself to drift from one object to the other without maintaining the attention on the presence of any of the objects. Once the attention has moved from one to the other object, the previous object is left to go astray, and eventually dies.

The transitional piece, subtitled 'make belief' suggests the necessity of a constant intertwining of subject and object in order to avoid the problematic consumption by the gaze. This is the moment of acknowledging circular recurrence and the only way out of this recurrence is through passionate engagement. The recurrence here presented is a recurrence in time:

Loss > Desire for an object > Erection of an object > Deception (the object does not fulfill the expectations) > Disinterest with the existing object > Lack as _loss (back to zero).

This cycle is drawn around the circle of destruction and construction, at its center is the phenomenon of death and the mourning of the loss. In short, there is no escape from the death of the object neither as an end (ruin), nor as an initial condition (absence).

*In anxiety I realize that I have been thrown into the world and that my life and death,
my being-as-such is an issue I must face.
Martin Heidegger, Building, Dwelling, Thinking.*

This is where belief enters the discussion. This is also where recurrence can hopefully end. Without belief, one is doomed to experience recurrence, to move endlessly on the surface of this recurring pattern from one object to the other, never truly experiencing completeness. There will be no fulfillment of the lack at any point, it will be constantly postponed, projected into the desire for an object, built into an object that in its difference will not cater for the desire, disinterest will be born, the object will be stranded, and desire will be back on an even more nagging tone. Hope is the drive towards fulfillment as the acknowledgement of the possibility of fulfillment however utopic it might sound. Belief in the hope for something better is par excellence the decision of being blind to what seems to be a daunting circle with nothing fixed but death (loss) at the end. That the only thing that we can be sure of (i.e. that can be fundamental in this argument) is the fact that death looks inescapable. Belief as blindness is a moment of projection past the inescapability of death but it is actually acute awareness that is needed in order to make this projection. Rather than a reduction of the field of vision, blind belief is the promise of something more, of the ability to see more. The visionary, for instance, is the phenomenon of projecting a space that is yet to come. The visionary is also the space that is yet to produce a better (socio-political) condition. This willingness to a blind faith in a better future is not risk-free. On the contrary, it is a constant opening to absence, danger, also boredom in the banality of keeping the same object in the field of vision rather than meandering on the glossy surface of many seductive manifestations. In this process, the subject decides to keep the lighthouse even though it fails to be fulfilling, he decides to deeply indulge in its presence in order to understand it fully, to hope that inside he will find more than what he has been experiencing up to now: an external form that he does not understand in its operation. The subject in his engagement decides to become the lighthouse, truly, and never will there be from then on a separation of the object from the subject. This is where the narration moves from a looking at something: it and us or they to become that of an intertwining: I.

In quadrant III, it is as the lighthouse itself that I now look back at the world. I realize as a lighthouse that I am doomed to always look to the outside, and my scan, even if panoramic, is a scan that is limited to the position that I am built onto and to the scope of my lens/eye. I quickly realize that circularity is there happening again and no change in the outside landscape will come to satisfy the desire for the true fulfilling seeing that I have been all this time looking for. The idea of an event like the one described with the ants on the water, is that of a moment of such an intense strangeness that it is capable of transforming one's preconceived way of seeing. It is a change that happens because of the intensity of the experience that is happening in front of the lighthouse. The ants enter its core and first force it to look into itself. The cast that was once outwardly and constant in its panoptic cast, is now inward, it is the moment where the lighthouse self reflects and realizes that it can change its way of looking.

*The world is neither significant nor absurd. It is, quite simply. That, in any case, is the most remarkable thing about it. And suddenly the obviousness of this strikes with irresistible force. All at once the splendid construction collapses: opening our eyes unexpectedly. We have experienced, once too often, the shock of this stubborn reality we were pretending to have mastered. Around us, defying the noisy pack of our animalistic or protective adjectives, things are there. Their surfaces are distinct and smooth, intact, neither suspiciously brilliant nor transparent.
Alain Robbe-Grillet, A Future for the Novel.*

The confusing multiplicity of “phenomena” designated by the terms phenomenon, semblance, appearance, mere appearance, can be unraveled only if the concept of phenomenon is understood from the very beginning as the self-showing in itself.
Martin Heidegger, Being in Time.

Now intentionally looking into itself, it realizes that what matters about seeing is seeing itself, the act as a testimony of presence and of existence. The lighthouse realizes that its desire for omniscience is not a desire for an object, but rather a desire for seeing really. Now aware that it is seeing, (seeing itself seeing) it focuses its gaze at its core and awaits patiently for a deepening. Radicalization (quadrant IV) is nothing else than a further acknowledgement that this is the right thing to do. Liberated from the unfulfilling meandering on the surface it keeps its cast focused, all the time, at the same point. The wall that supports the lighthouse is then described as becoming porous, a dotted line, and this is to insist on the transformed perception of the lighthouse: it now sees its own wall as at the same time presence and absence. The wall that was once described as the maker of separation is here described as both a separation and a gate: wind passes through it. Such a focus has no other desire than the hope experiencing enlightenment. Enlightenment is here meant as mystical experience of seeing the essence (not as a the historical period, the age of Enlightenment). Enlightenment is the hope of a cessation of the meandering in time and space, the experience of ‘actuality.’ This intense work, a focused meditation, lightens the lighthouse and it can now leave its location and go back to drift on the wave in the sea. The building that was once defined by the place and function is now defined by a liberated presence. It can go anywhere and it is not bound to deliver what it was expected to deliver. Like the subject that was once lost in the sea, the lighthouse needs the light to reach shore, but this lighthouse has learnt its lesson, it knows that it can only find the light in an attentive perception of the present, not in a light that comes from the outside in the distance.

*We are too late for the gods,
 And too early for Being.
 Being’s poem, just begun, is man.*
Martin Heidegger.

Architecture has to do with humans. If architecture is not here to help humans dwell to achieve what seeing can truly be, the nature of what spatial experience and design activity will remain that of an unfulfilling experience. It will remain to be doomed to the whims of form and software, it will remain constricted by fashion, it will remain consumed by capital, and stained by our weakness not to envisage and envision a better practice.

To transcend perspectival enframing, to transcend dehumanizing technical values (often concealed in a world we think we control) through the incorporation of a critical position [...] thus making possible a truly relevant poetic practice in a postmodern world.
Alberto Perez-Gomez and Louise Pelletier, Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge.

Even if you do not see why it would matter to believe in the Ultimate seeing, I suppose that it is possible to accept the necessity of a passionate practice. This practice is self-reflective and self-aware, it is open to the other and flexible, it is plural. Embracing such a practice is a prioritizing of human betterment onto object betterment. This practice is willing to accept ugliness, it is willing to accept ruin, it is willing to accept handicap, it is willing to see a building with a scar if this building produces a better experience of space. This betterment is not the promise of a more successful seduction but quite the contrary: it does not actually matter how ugly if it is ultimately real.

The lighthouse in this text undertakes a transformation, from a purely functional erection, it

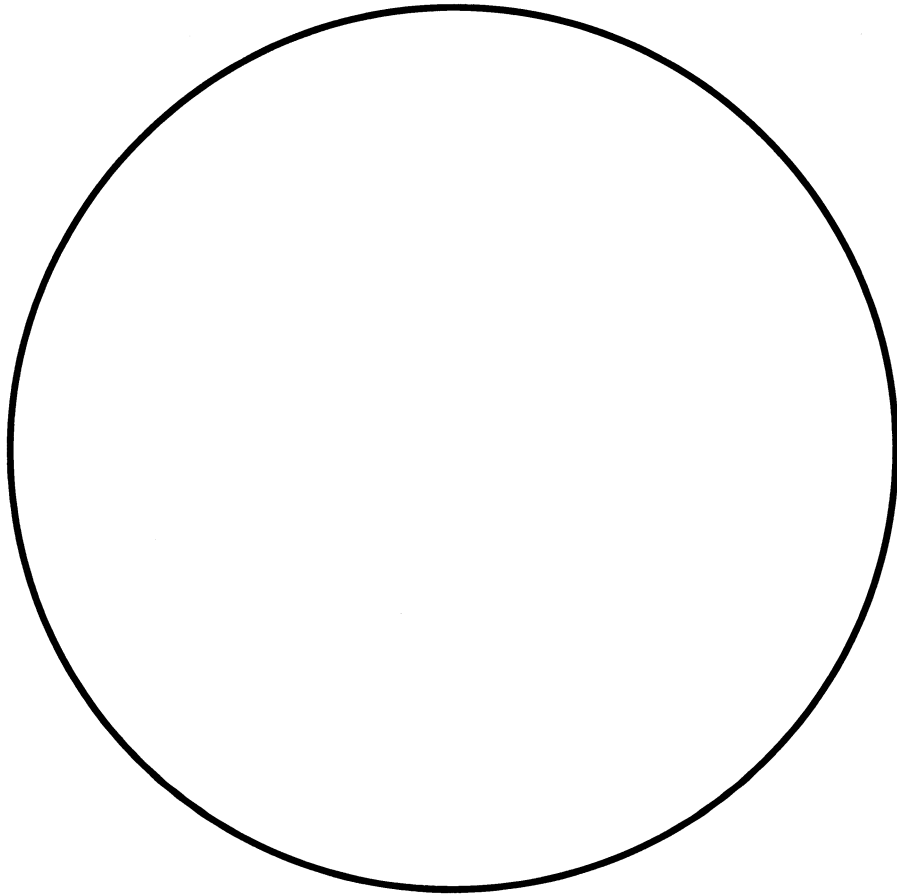
becomes a monument, this is where it becomes the seductive object par excellence. Seduction is then denounced as a mask of death and announces death itself. In introspection is the acceptance of giving up seduction (looking in rather than out towards the panorama) and the beginning of a quest into one's own self. In this dwelling in the blind the lighthouse does not really care to look outside anymore, it knows that it needs to always be looking. The italics stand for a double activity, that of the body, looking, and that of the mind, in an awareness of being in the state of looking. This looking-with-passion (possibly compassion) is past ugliness. This looking constantly acknowledges presence and in this acknowledgement raises itself above the problematic question of difference. All objects however different on the surface come to reassert Presence and no object is assigned more value than the other. It is actually the concept of value that is here rendered inconsequential. Value is just another function of the mind that prefers before it sees.

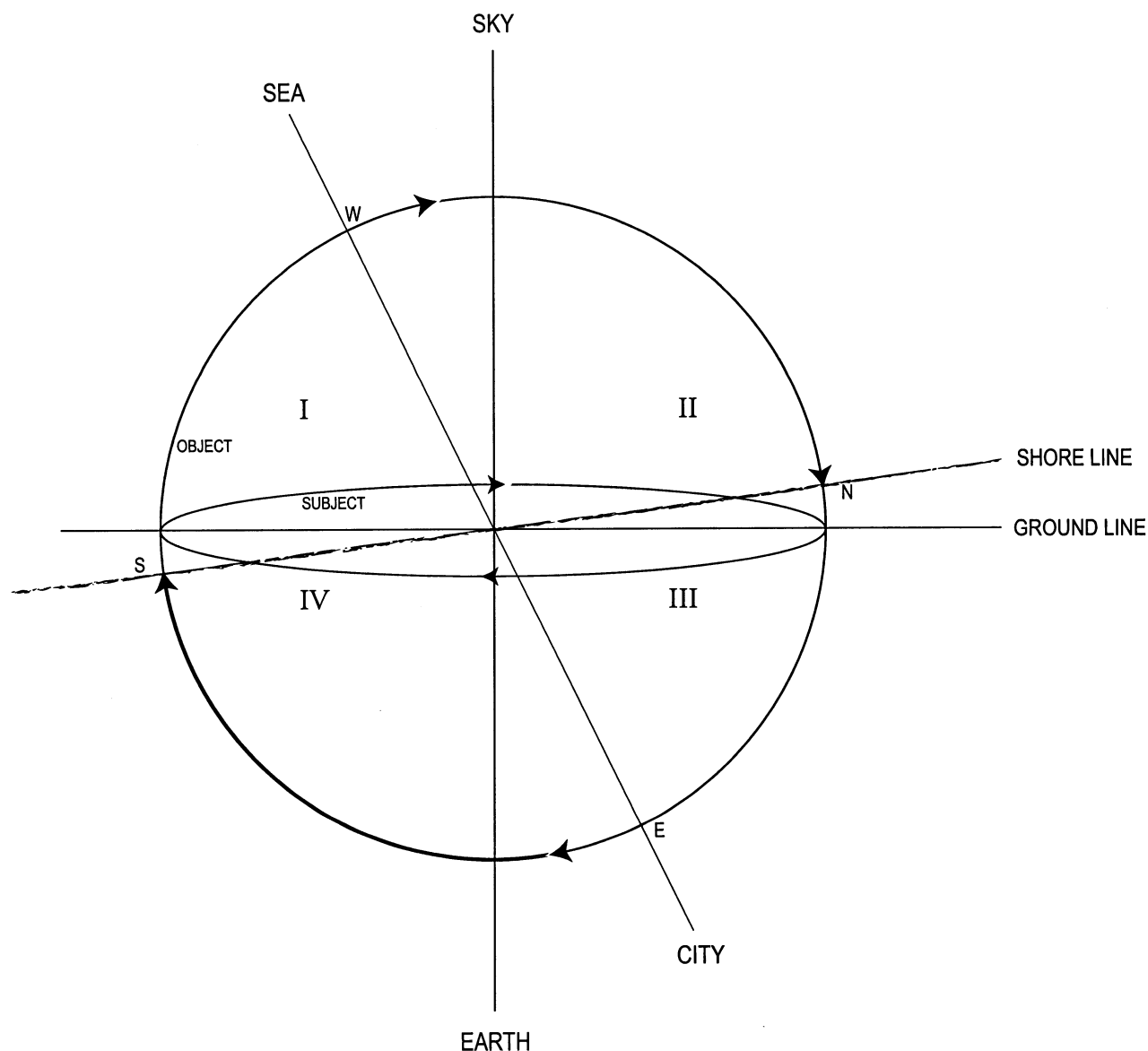
This passionate practice of architecture is an actual need. It is the only way out of cynicism. Cynicism is useless, it does not make us grow, it is an acceptance of status-quo. This practice promises happiness to its makers by fulfilling them in the act of making and giving the work to another, it promises happiness to the context it is placed in by being open to what this context actually needs. The world will soon be at war again, and architecture will be devastated again. Architecture will also be the practice that will reconstruct our cities after the war. It is first the target then the way out of ruin. If architecture will remain subservient to an economy of fear, that is an economy of violence, that is an economy of killing, architecture will be no different when targeted or when reconstructing. Only will a responsible practice reconnect architecture to compassion, and the only way towards this reconnection will be through looking. Such a looking is the sign of a care that has transcended the egotistical, it is a looking that is animated by a true feeling of love.

The essential is invisible to the eye, one cannot see rightly but with the heart.
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince.

Prologue

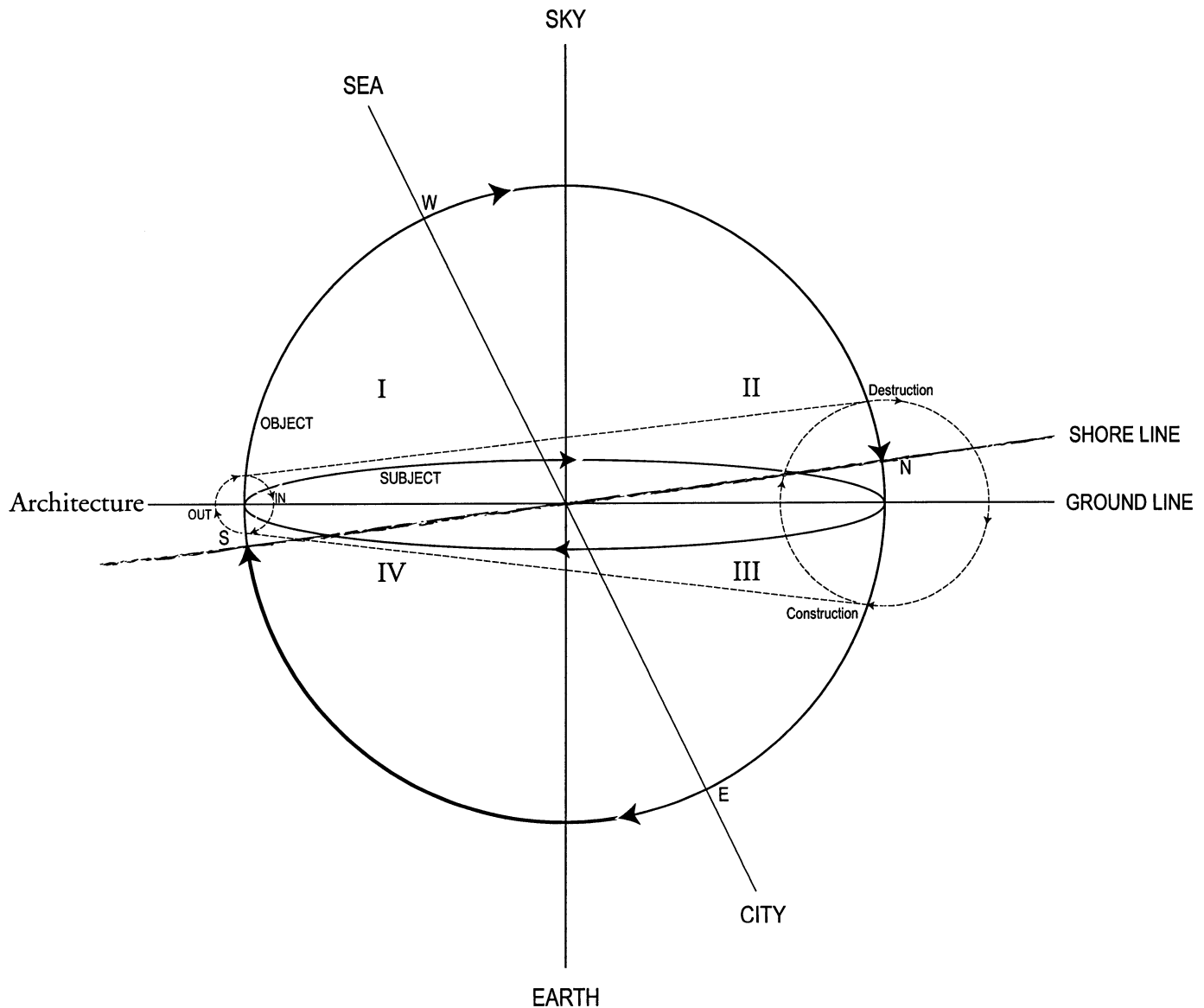
Overview.





The bigger circle, labeled 'Object' (O) is divided in four quarters, with arrowheads, pointing in the clockwise direction. A horizontal axis, labeled 'Ground' passes through the center of O. A vertical axis, labeled 'Sky' (up) and 'Earth' (down), intersects perpendicularly the horizontal axis and passes through the center. The four quadrants thus defined by the two axes, are respectively labeled I, II, III and IV. Another circle labeled 'Subject' (S), also with arrowheads pointing in the clockwise direction, is similarly divided into four quarters. S is tangent to O at two points that correspond to the intersection of O with the horizontal axis. Two oblique perpendicular axes intersect S. S is in isometric view, and its axes look askew with respect to the Ground and Sky axes in the two-dimensions of the diagram. S is seen in projection, and is represented as an ellipse. The horizontal axis is labeled Shore Line, while the vertical axis is labeled Sea (away) and City (close). The intersection of the Shore line with O defines North and South, the intersection of the Sea/City line with O defines East and West.

On the other end of the Ground Line axis, 'Architecture' is placed in such a way that if the line extends, it would cross the term right in the middle. A circle in dashed lines, with arrowheads pointing in the clockwise direction has its center at the left intersection of the S/O circles with the horizontal axis. Two words: 'Out' and 'In' are respectively place outside the S/O circles, below the horizontal, and inside the S/O circles and above the horizontal. This circle is the In/Out circle (I/Ot). Another dashed circle, wider in diameter has its center at the intersection of the horizontal line with the right side of the S/O circles. This circle intersects O at the words 'Destruction' (outside and above) and 'Construction' (inside and below). This circle is the Destruction/Construction circle (D/C). Two lines, also dashed, connect I/Ot to D/C tangentially to both I/Ot and D/C. The two tangents do not cross each other.



The intersection of the two circles is an isometric representation of a three dimensional object: the sphere of space and time that we will now dwell into.

Introduction

Towards the Quadratic.

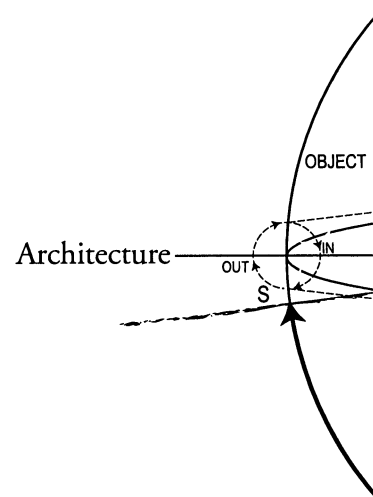
One.

Architecture —

Our trajectory starts There.
We read: Architecture.
We become Architecture.
We are Architecture.

Two.

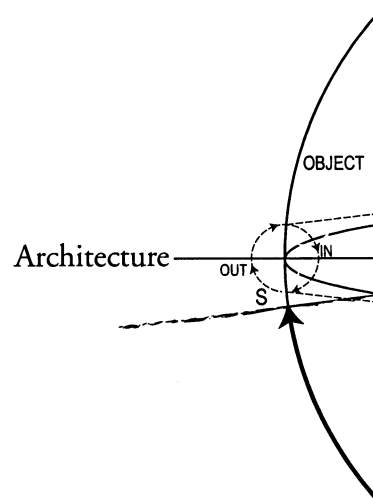
We leave Architecture and go for a walk on the line, Out is to our right, In to our left, further away. We intersect the dashed curving line at the intersection with I/Ot. We leave the line as we take a left and start walking clockwise, towards In.



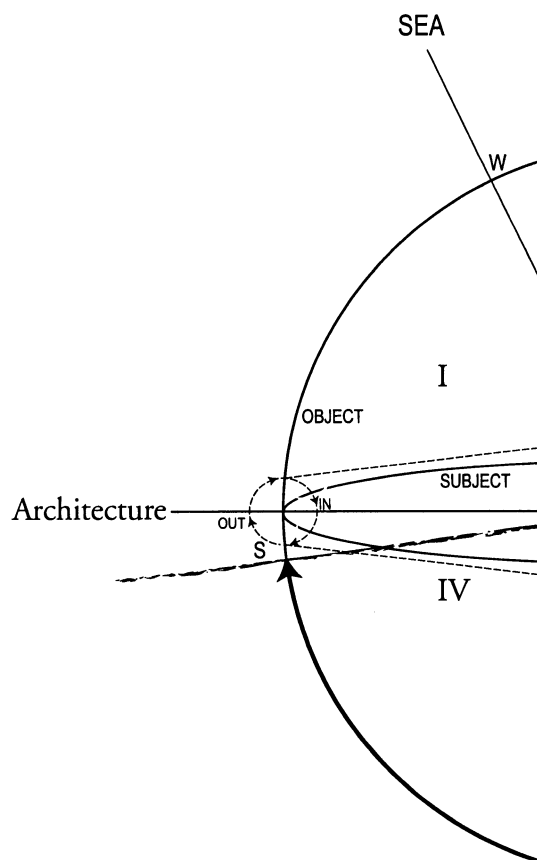
Three.

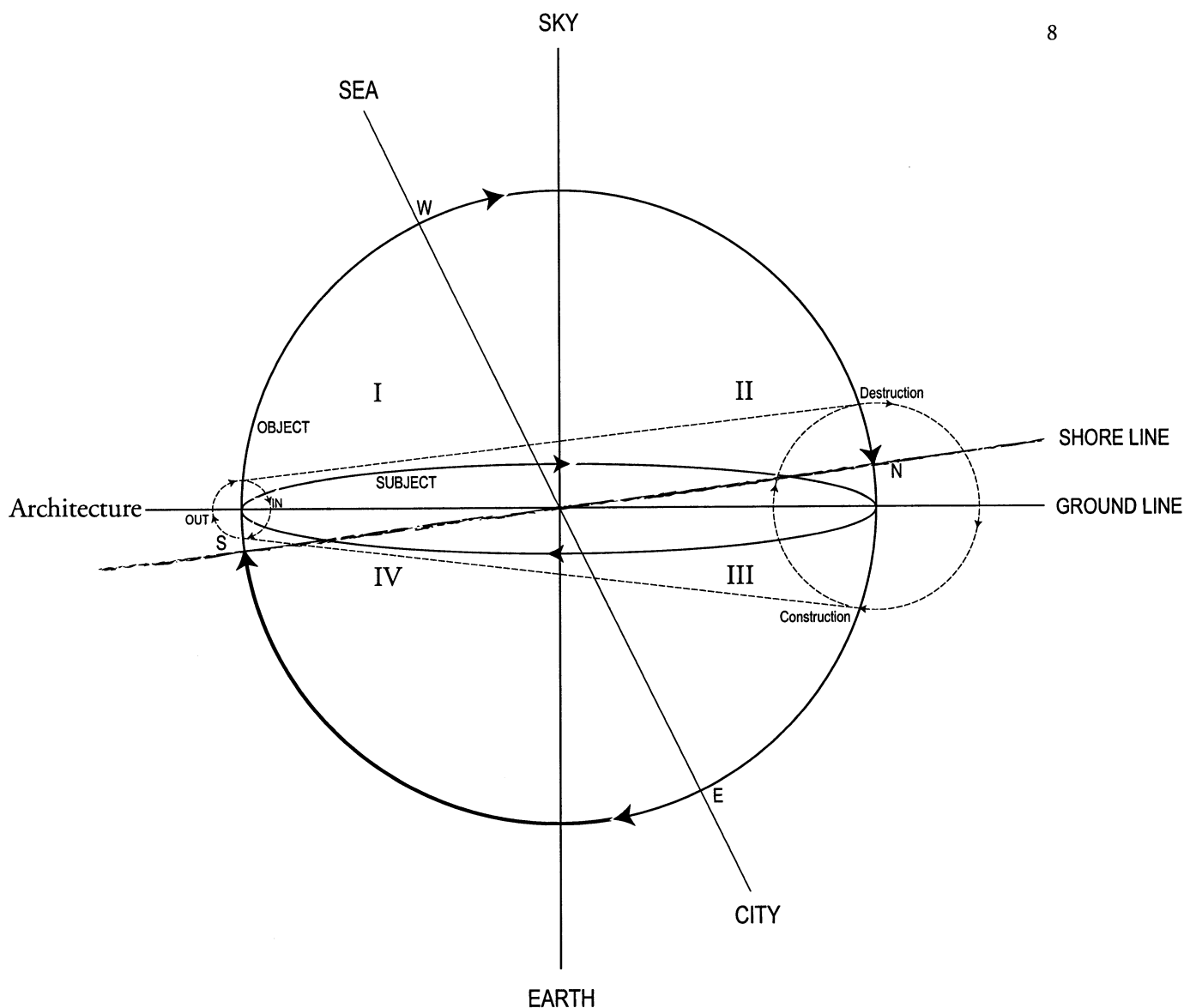
At the intersection with O, our dashed circle becomes part of the two-dimensional plane of the O circle. As we go on on our trip, we are now dwelling in the circle of the object.

We cross O, then S to now meet In to our left. We cross the horizontal and below, we cross S again and O again. Out is now to our left, we are at the horizontal for the second time, end of the first revolution.



Walking on I/Ot, we have started rotating... we have left our original stillness in the original state of architecture to now dwell in movement. In this circularity, there is recurrence, to recurrence no known end. The first turn on the dashed circle has created the memory of a past event: we now realize what we have just done.





With circularity is the invention of space in time. As we rotate and intersect S and O again and again, the two two-dimensional planes merge. A point appears at the center of both S and O, at first minuscule. It exponentially grows into a huge sphere.

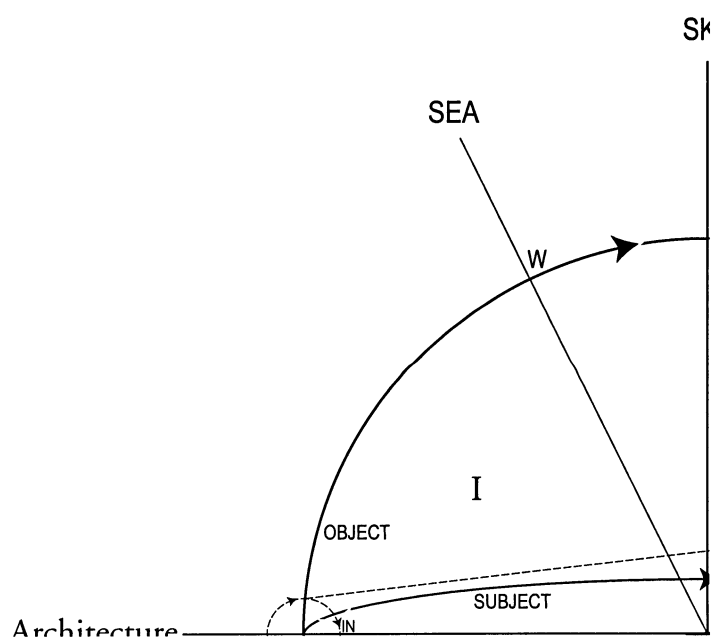
The sphere in movement expands as time passes. In its expansion, the sphere now drowns us, moving past O. It goes on expanding beyond the boundaries of the white sheet, and on its way swallows Architecture into its totalizing wave. Architecture has now become the discipline that is there created for ordering space.

Wandering in the space of the sphere. We follow the order that is now written onto the circle. The trajectory to come moves on the quadrants, from I to IV, with a transition between II and III, and the hope of an end in the form of a conclusion, past IV.

I- Erection

Towards the Monument.

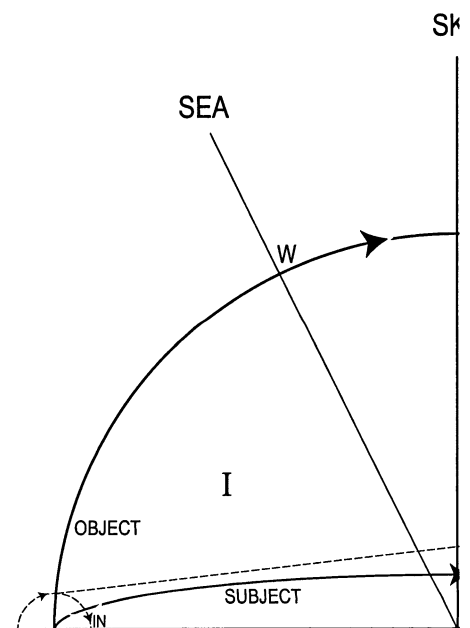
All of the space in quadrant I is in the Sea.



The subject falls in the water.

On the sea, the subject floats on its own circle, and there is no reference except for the waterline that hides the underworld of the abyss and crosses-out

the term Architecture



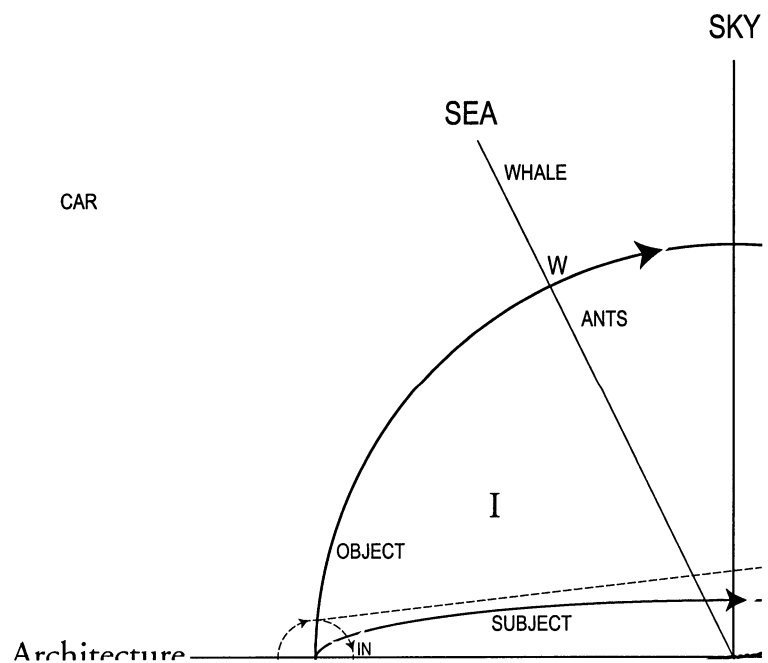
'Object' stands inside O, close to the movement of the circle.

'Object' is also on the sea, past S.

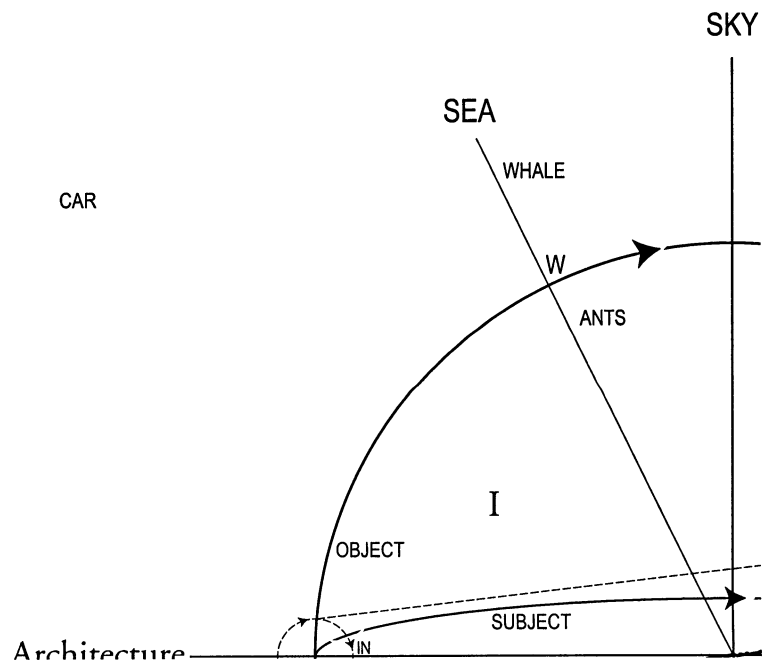
Otherwise, the emptiness of the sea is only marked by the presence of ants and, outside the quadrant, a whale, farther, a car.

Up above, the sky is equally limitless.

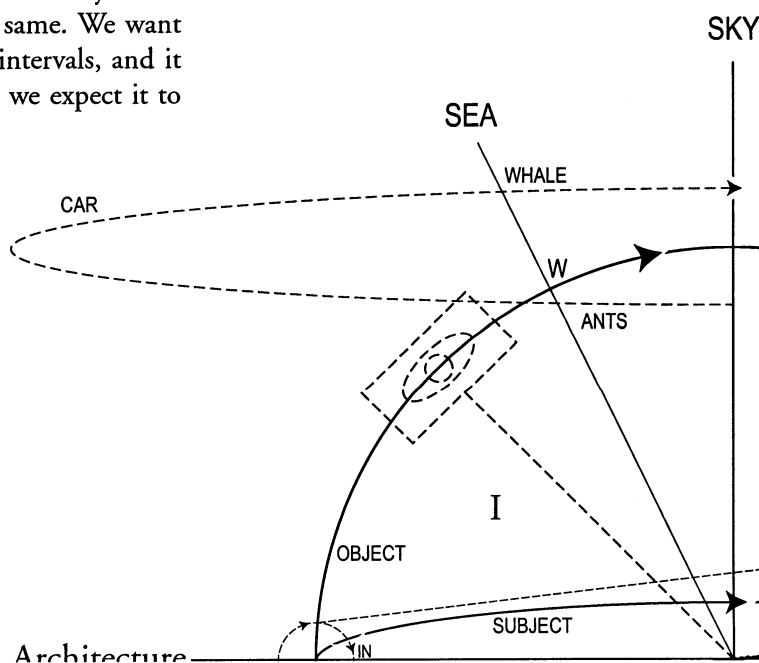
Sea and Sky are two names on the same blank space.



One is taken by the depth of the space, the blue black of a sea and sky melting seamlessly. The depth we have decided to fear, and we call ourselves 'lost,' in the sea. We create the desire for an edge to alleviate the fear. The desire for an edge is the desire for marking unnamed space. The drive towards reaching home, is the drive towards the drawing of an edge, the drawing of a boundary that will limit the expanse of the sea, separate the top from the bottom, the liquid from the solid, the wet from the dry, and create so-called stable ground. One can see, and one wants to now see something: a line.



A dashed line of light suddenly intersects the sight line and revolves as it disappears into the horizon. The line reappears for a second revolution, and it will not leave us anymore. The line of light now punctuates our trajectory. It is a reference line, the benchmark, the thing to always go back to because we are lost. Every once in a while, we cross-check our direction with the direction of the light and soon develop an attachment to the illusory feeling of warmth that the safety of the reference has enabled. The light has become a technique, a device, a seeing prosthetic. We will soon be home as the light is becoming more intense, and as other things are starting to show in the background. By now, we have transformed our sight from a Seeing in smoothness that was bathed in continuity into a regular stare, in time, towards the same. We want the light to come back at regular intervals, and it probably will, because this is what we expect it to do.

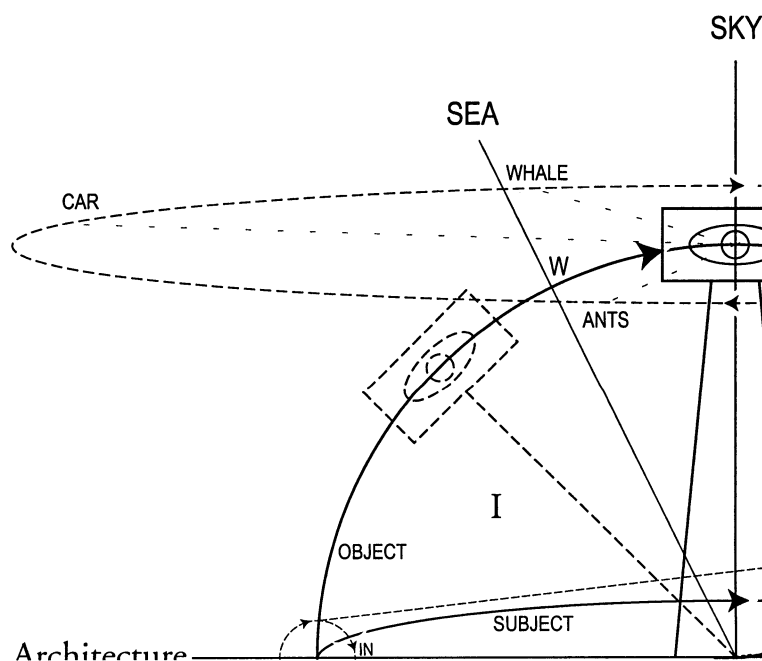


The subject, later, now at the West point of the circle.

The monument is there, on the way towards completion. It stands at the edge, at the exact intersection of the ground with the water. The sky is above, the horizon towards the West, and the shore line draws the edge. The lighthouse is based at the center that has produced the dashed eye once, at 45° , and at the same center that has produced the sphere of space and time earlier. The lighthouse is present and can be seen, its light is cast in revolving circles, representing time passing, like a watch.

The lighthouse is a tall tapering cylinder, imposing, impressing, affecting. The seamless laying of stones suggests a solidity that is ineluctable.

On the top, a cylinder, silently rotating. The elliptical eye slowly appears to the right as the clockwise motion of the cylinder directs the light in our face. We move towards the shore line and stand back. We take a distance to appreciate the majesty of the lighthouse.



Light in the Way

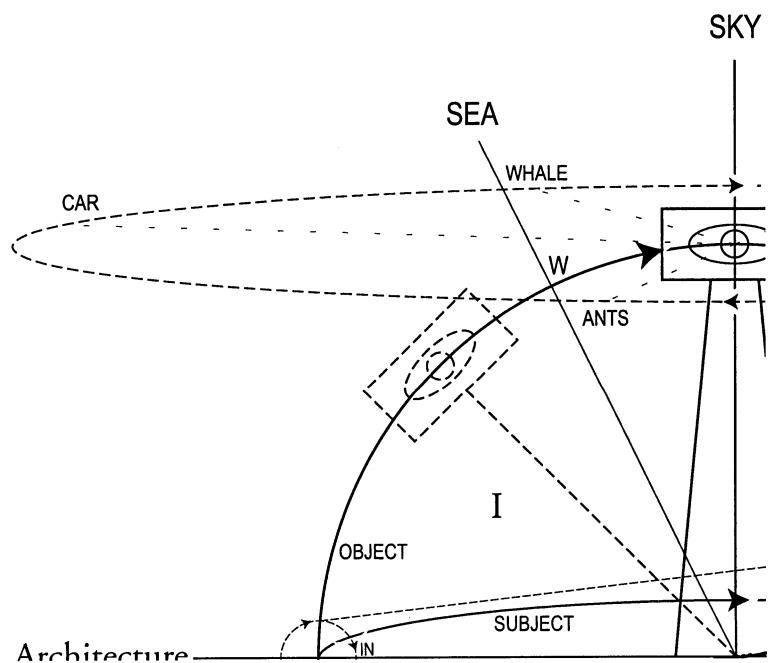
Fishermen throw the line for a catch
 Look out
 They find the way

A dog howls from afar
 It can be heard all the way

The burglar and the moving light
 No one will find him
 He is running away

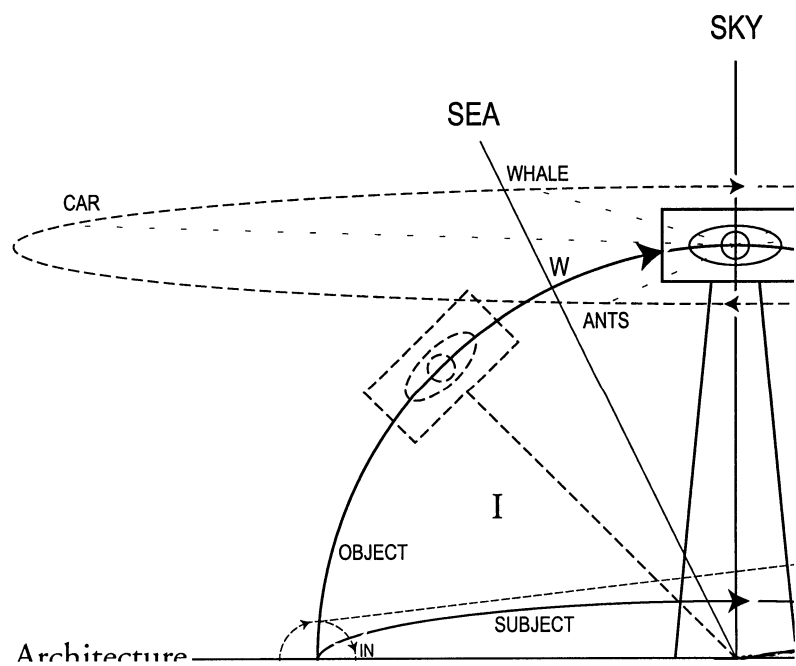
Venetian blinds at your window
 You close your eyes
 To the light on its way

The whale splashes
 Oblivious
 It does not need to see the way



The lighthouse operator is invisible. Hidden inside the tower, some say they have seen him in dreams, but nobody believes them anymore.

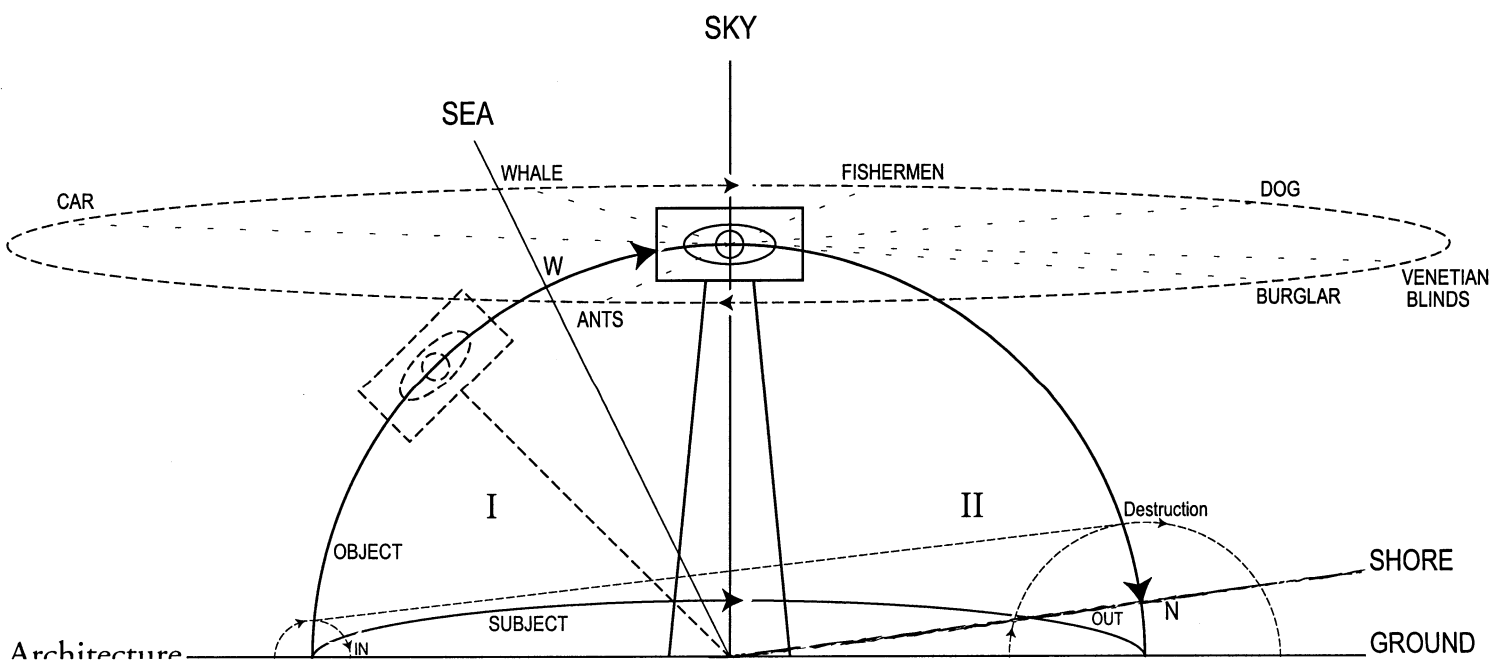
Once the superstition was lost, the path started to move downwards, clockwise but downwards, into II.



II- Abjection

Towards Death.

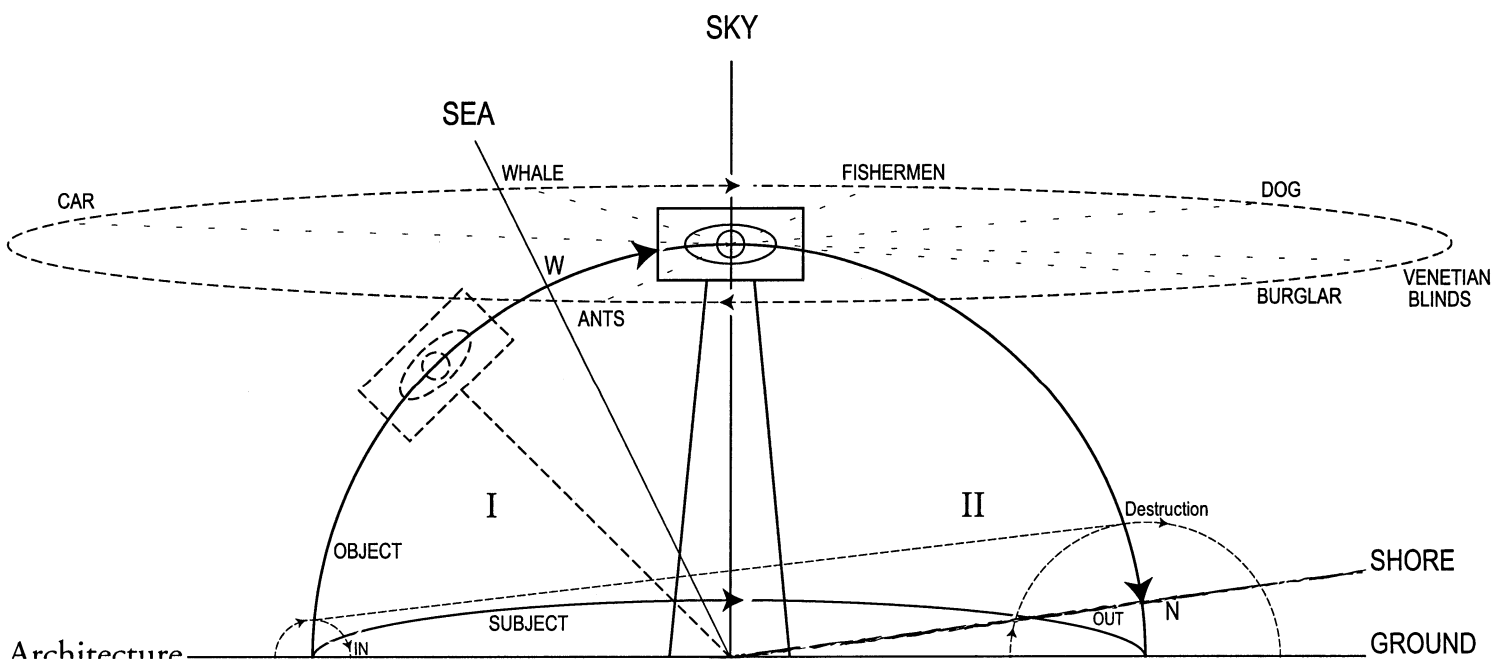
Quadrant II, the completeness of the lighthouse is striking. The other side of the object is exactly the same,
In symmetry, there is no surprise.

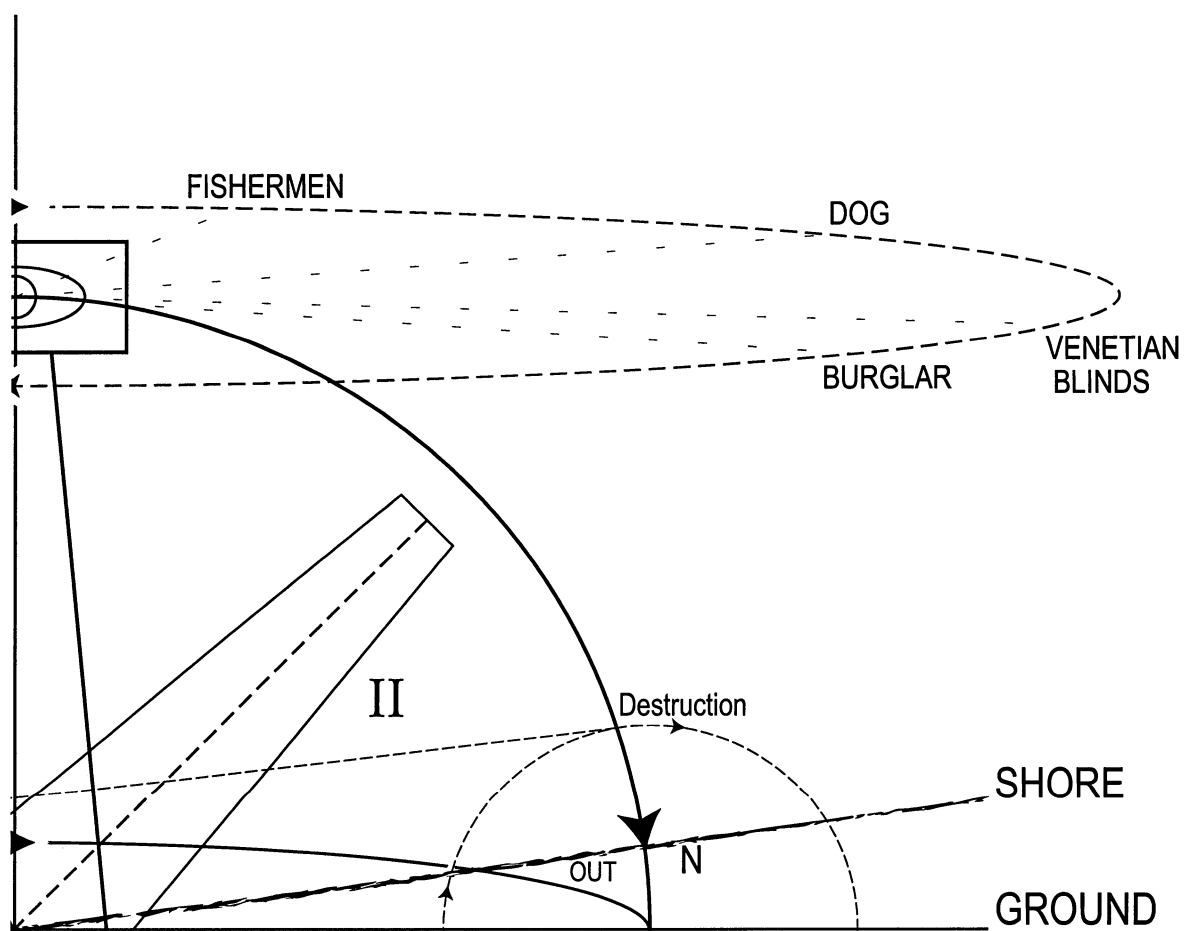


The spectators of the lighthouse -fishermen in the sea, you at your window with your blinds drawn, or the burglar moving around, they all use the lighthouse as a reference in the night.

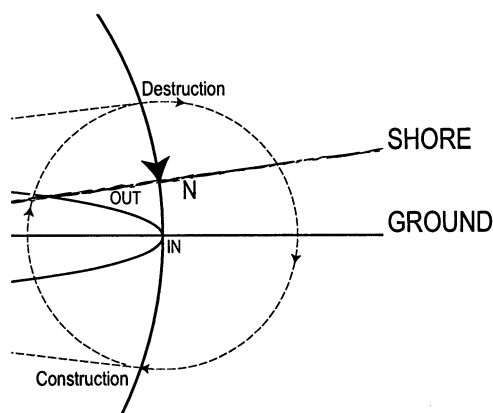
During the day, the light is turned off. But they go on staring. In its rotation, the light counts time like the hand on a watch. As it punctuates the unfolding of life, it remains present.

Habit builds up and the spectators soon take the light for granted. They forget that they are seeing and use the lighthouse to stand for them seeing. More than just a marker, the lighthouse is now adored as an icon. Fetishization is corrosion by representation: the moment they start to give value to the external object and forget about its own existence and their own being. At this moment of transferal, the limited object starts to be associated with fiction -an idea of the lighthouse, that will gradually come to stand for the object, a fiction in which they project an empowered version of the lighthouse that can do much more than what it is actually doing. It is perceived to be seeing, when it is them who are seeing it.



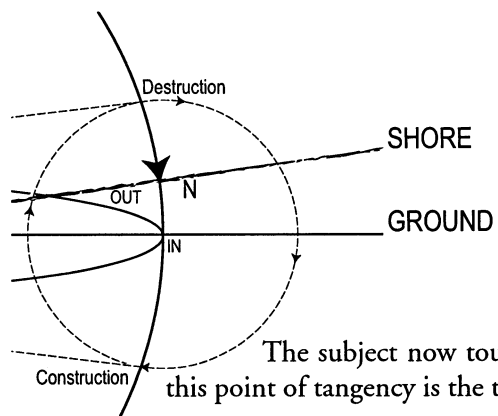


As destruction occurs, buildings are thrown down, subjects die, landscapes are redrawn. All move, sooner or later, in one inevitable direction: back to the earth.



Post-Destruction: tons of stones pile up to produce an artificial landscape that accumulates on top of the last layer of sedimented ruins. These stones speak the absence of building, they hint at death by symbolization: they are fragments as traces of building. Ruins are significant building: they are stones that have realized the limits of their own field of action, and transformed the inevitable sight of loss into a possible vision of recovery. Only a return of the subject into the field, now circling back towards a second tangency point, will enliven the ruins to deplore loss and express hope in the place of death.

The intersection of the subject with the ruins, another seeing, but closer, is the source of a powerful vision. As the building is reconstructed by the imaginary reassembly of the dispersed fragments, the ruins become source of inspiration. The drive is back, and the building is ready to incarnate. At the intersection of the subject-with-a-vision with O, there is hopefully the planning of an alternative version of the lighthouse, one that will not separate the subject from the object in the disciplining of its panopticism. The promise of the new lighthouse is the promise of a building in movement, the constant dwelling in time that constructs and sees destructed, but also a dwelling that has the spirit to redo what has just been lost, without traumatic dwelling on loss itself.

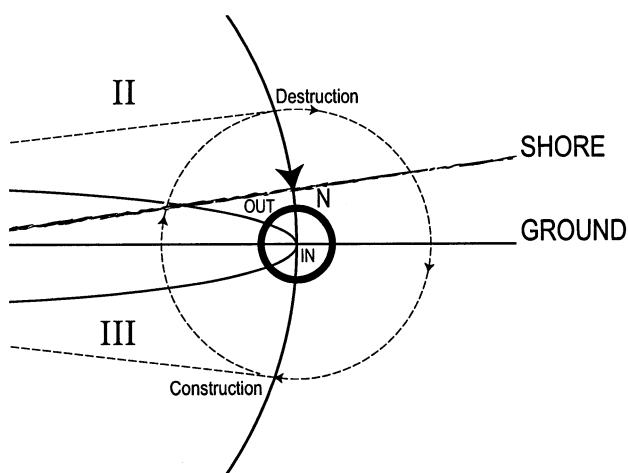


The subject now touches the object, and the object touches the subject. At this point of tangency is the time to move and to be *moved*.

Transition

Make Belief.

You come out of the subject ellipse and sit on the grounds, right at the center of the interior space of the absent lighthouse.

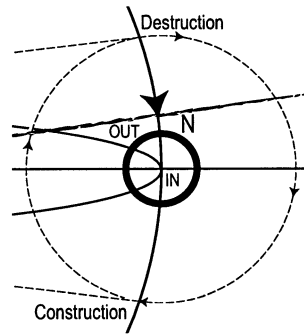


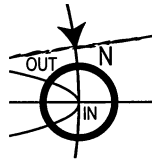
You draw on the grounds a black circle around your body to suggest a new wall. You start walking on the circle while trying to imagine what it would be like to look around from a higher point on this circle. You move on the limit between the inside and the outside and the movement of your body draws the line of a virtual circular wall that is centered at the point where you were just sitting.

Around you, a wider circle (D/C), moving in time, from the past to the future, then from the future towards the past, retraces an endless recurrence of destruction and construction, loss and recovery, erection and abjection, burying and unearthing, life and death.

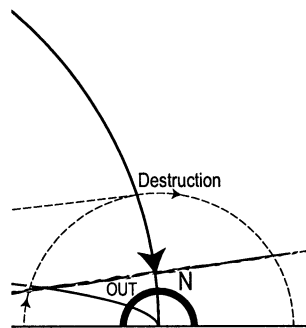
Another circle to express the cyclical pattern of history. You look at the circle, and recurrence makes you nervous, you have no way out.

Nervousness builds up depression, in hopelessness you drown.

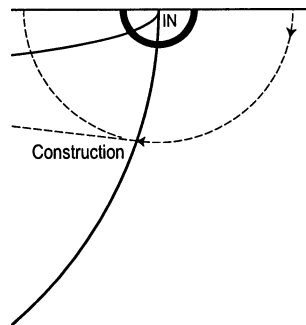




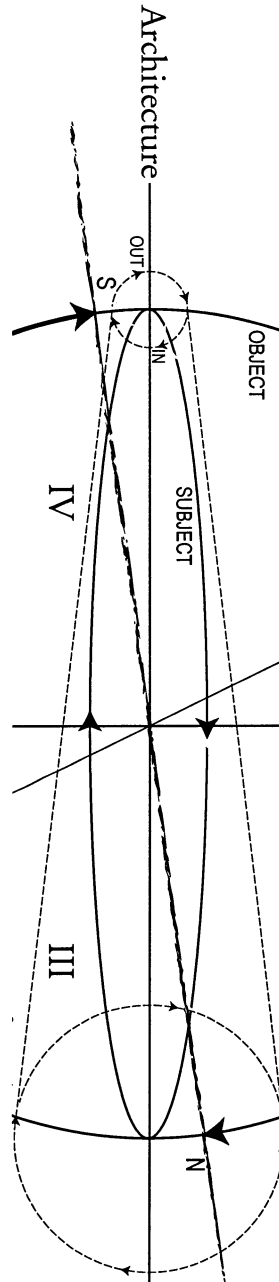
You sit on the grounds. You deplore and cry the loss of the lighthouse. Your tears are trickling down on your cheeks, and the sky is getting covered with thick clouds. Lightning strikes and thunder blasts. Rain pours on your head as you remain in stillness in the center. A huge wave rushes across the shore, covers you to make of your hill an island. As the water runs back towards the sea, your tears mix with sea water and rainwater in an uncontrollable rush of emotion.



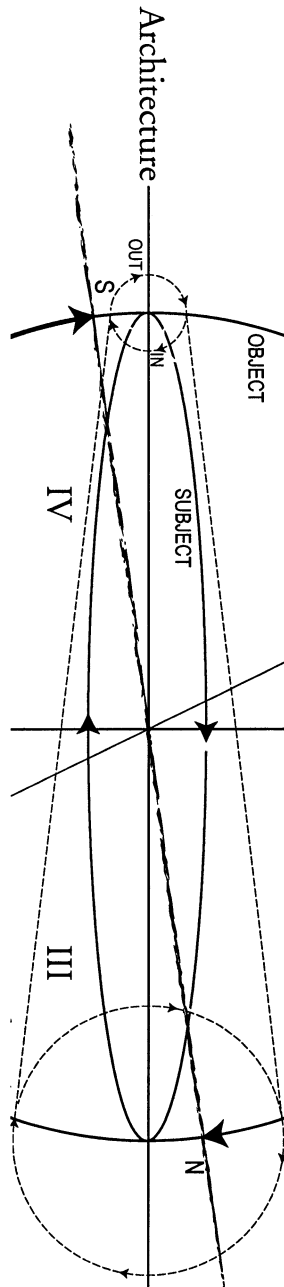
Rain pours no more.
The sun draws a rainbow and you are right
at the bottom.



“At the bottom of the rainbow you will find the treasure,” says the old myth.

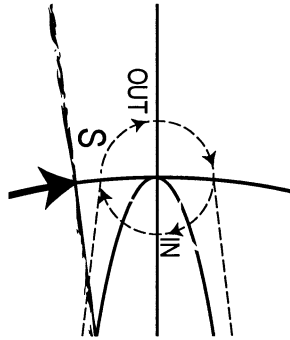



Around you the circle of history (D/C) is the base.
 High above you the circle of architecture (I/Ot) is the tip.
 The two tangents complete the oblique representation of a
 dashed lighthouse with architecture at its end.

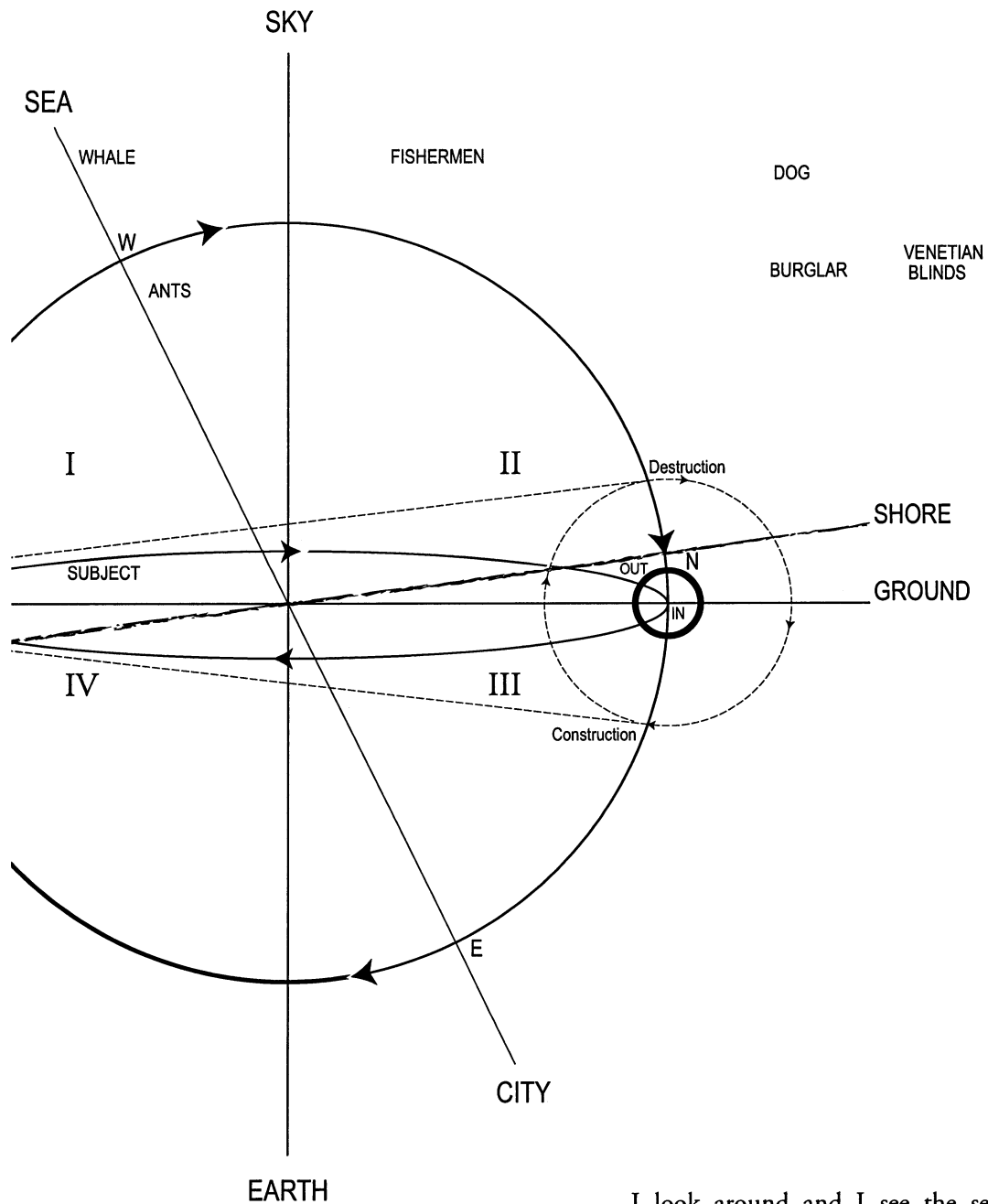


Dusk. The moon appears, winds blow gently, the temperature drops. Satellites flicker, stars shine, one shoots across a cloud. You fall asleep, exhausted. Black space. A staircase. The bottom of a spiral, upwards. So little light, am I blind? I stand up to go up the steps. Step after step, in the dark, dumbly, but upwards, a vertical progression. I use my hand to feel the wall, cross check my direction in the circle. A texture on the wall, cryptic inscriptions. I feel alien to the space. I cannot make sense of it. I move. Who am I? Where am I going? Where do I come from? More steps, a very soft light coming from the center, not sure what the source is, in doubt, I go on. Half way, a window, the source of light. Could this be the Source? I doubt it. I look through the window, I see fishermen walking by and towards their boat for a night fishing, I wave a goodbye, and the sun disappears completely into the sea. Is this a dream? I am unsure of my own sight. I resume my trajectory. More steps upwards. Even less light. My head hits a ceiling.

Second floor, the circular room. The fire place in the middle, a white circular wall around. An elliptical opening in the wall. The fire lights the center and the eye starts to rotate. I feel nothing.

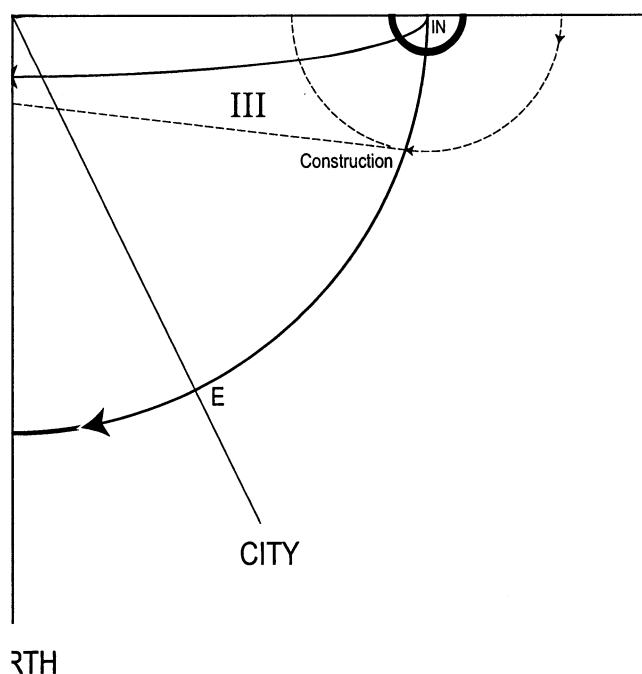


- 
- Who are you?
 - I am the lighthouse.
 - Who am I?
 - I am 'it.'



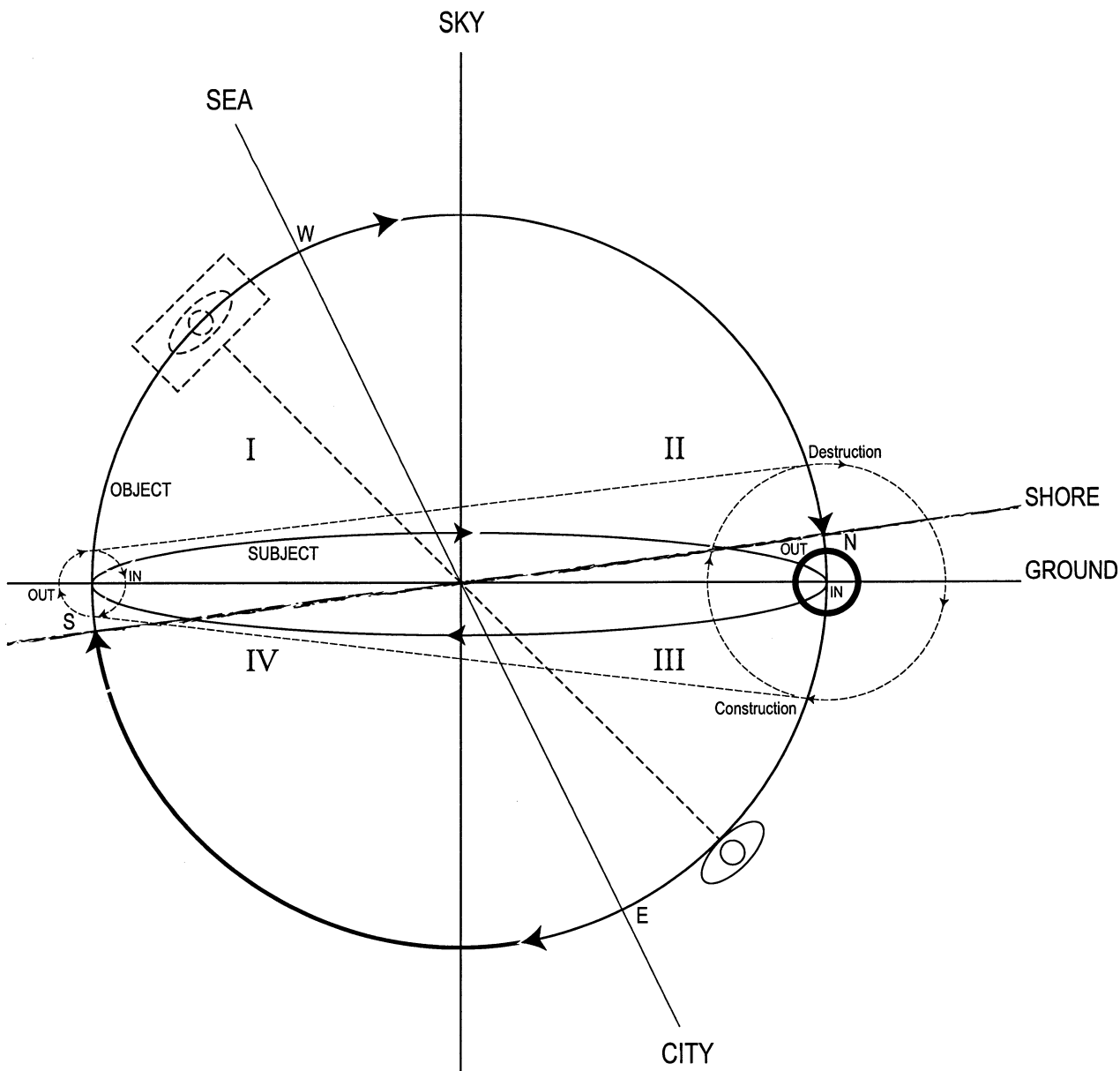
I look around and I see the sea, I see a whale splashing into the abyss, fishermen now trying to make a catch. I see the dog, howling in the distance, looking at me for the short instant of the intersection of our fields of vision, I see you in your room, and I see the burglar running around. I see the car in the distance, it turns on its headlights as it vanishes into the mountains.

Another turn. The whale has disappeared, the traces of its passage as foam on the surface. Fishermen make a catch, the dog stands still, silent on his hill. You close your Venetian blinds to leave my light out of your room, the burglar opens the door at the base of your building.



I look around night after day, I look around in the night, and I am looked at in the day. The white cast pours out of my eye like the virtual hand of a clock ticking. I count time on the space of the city, I write time on the fabric as I bring light to one point and cast huge shadows on another.

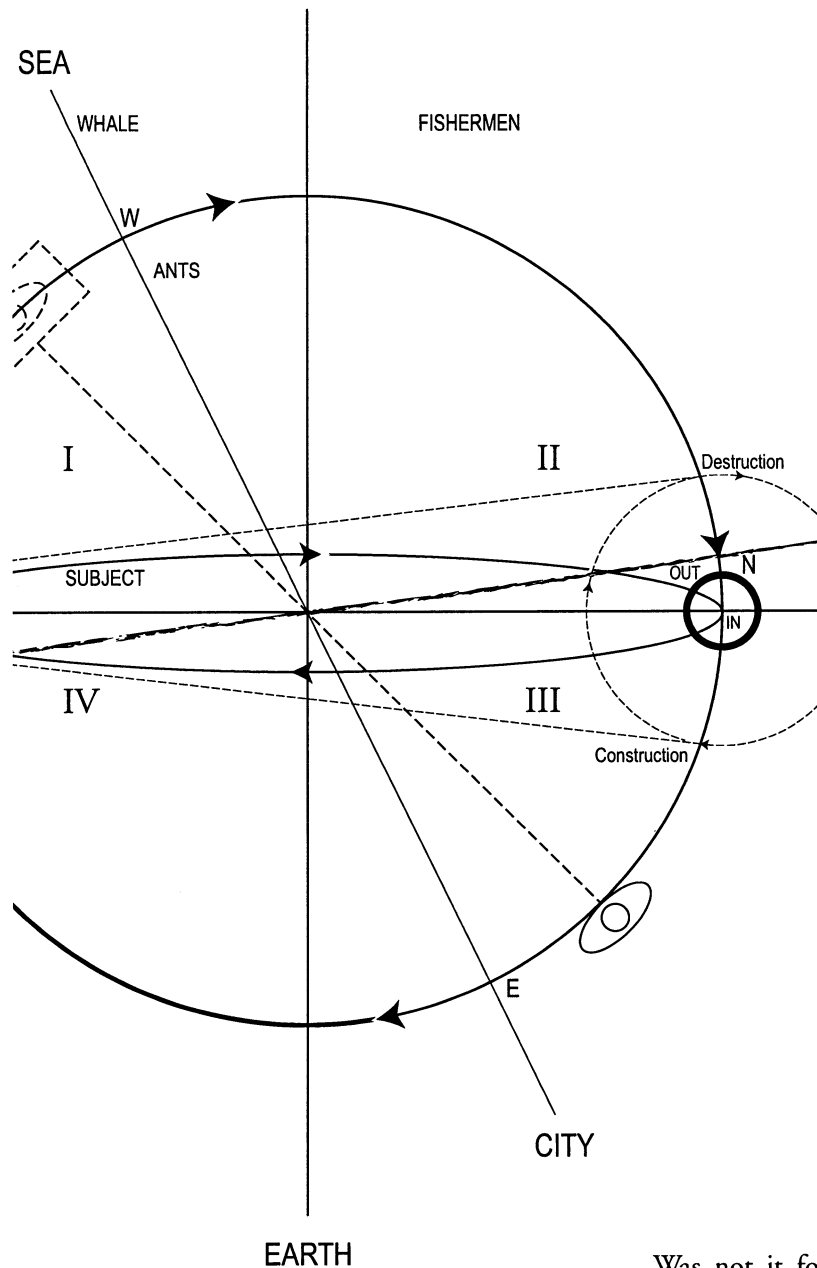
Degree after degree, I rotate. Every sixty seconds is a minute, every sixty minutes an hour. I count twenty-four hours for today, three hundred and sixty-five days for a year, and the revolution starts again, the same sequence of four seasons, in the many years to come. As my light goes on turning, and the clock goes on ticking, I remain, there.



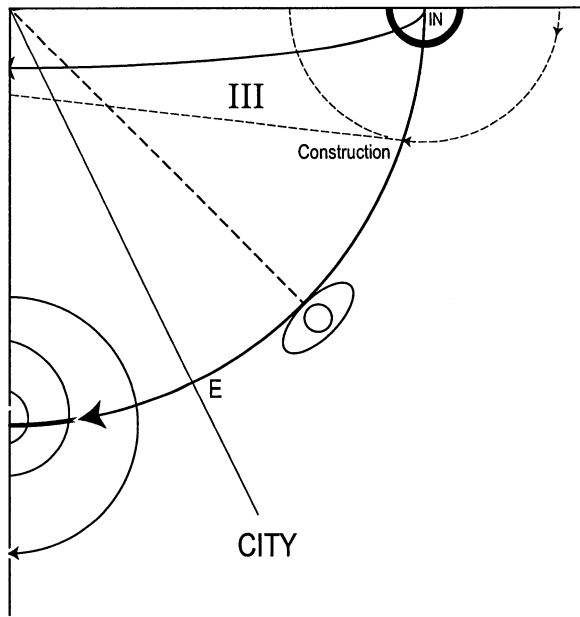
I am now diametrically opposed to the oblique moment of projection in Quadrant I. Back then, on the other end of the dashed diameter, they dreamt of a device that enabled seeing; they projected an idea and made it real. I now project my light from my end of the diameter towards the other side, past the shore, into the sea, past the ground, closer to the sky. As I project, I imagine and dream the possibility of a better world.

At this point, my eye is tangent to O. I see through my organ, I see through my body. From this point of view, I also see the wider circle, and I read in it the sign of fatality: the condition I am in is a trap and I cannot see any other way than being in the circle itself.

In the angst of this realization, I will not choose to disconnect from O, it would be suicide.



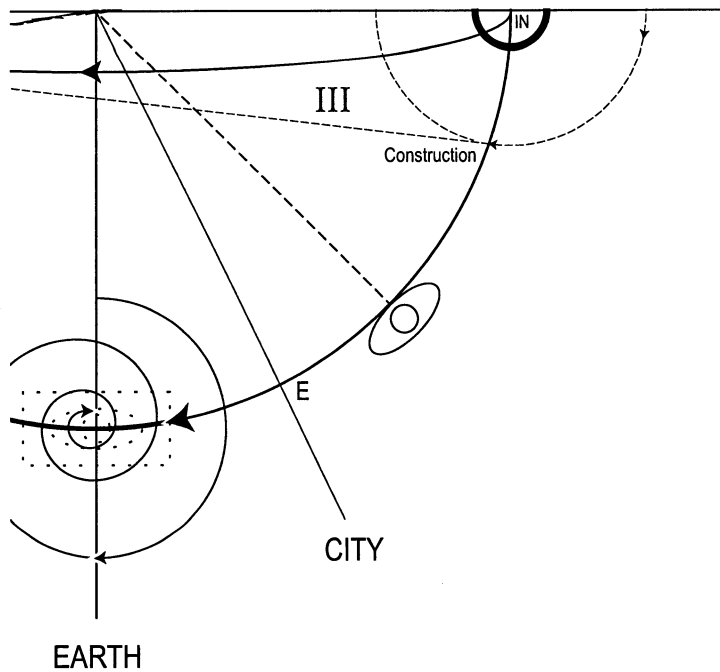
Was not it for the ants, one night, on the water, I would not be there now. They are gone fishing. I am revolving around, my usual turn, less wholeheartedly than ever. I see ants fishing on the water, and the oddity of the situation is striking. They are swimming around on the reflective surface and heading back home. I follow them towards their house, not realizing, at the moment, that I am unconsciously skewing my light from its predetermined trajectory. They are heading back home, their catch for the night courageously carried on their backs. The road towards home starts on the sea, and they use me as a reference to reach shore. Once on the edge, they carry on in their trajectory into the crack of my wall!



I am now looking into myself, for the first time. In my wall, I see the ant galleries carved into the depth of the masonry. I see a complex web of infrastructure, I see pipes, I see power lines, they connect to a much wider network of relationships. The drain pipe goes down to the sea, the electrical line connects to the plant, the plant to the ground, the ground to the sea, the sea to the drain pipe.

I look around my wall, and make a full circle in its materiality. A gap in the wall, the window! The window connects across the apparent division between in and out that the wall establishes. Outside there is space, at the window sill there is space, and inside there is still more space.

The spiral staircase in stone. Steps cantilever from the wall and towards the center. A continuous void in the volume at the center. From this one-point downward perspective, I can see myself at the core.



The line on O thickens past the arrowhead. As I move on towards the bottom point of O, I am struck by the simplicity of realization:

As I move, I am aware of myself seeing myself moving.

What I am seeing now is the spiral staircase inside my trunk, it is the way that leads towards my eye.

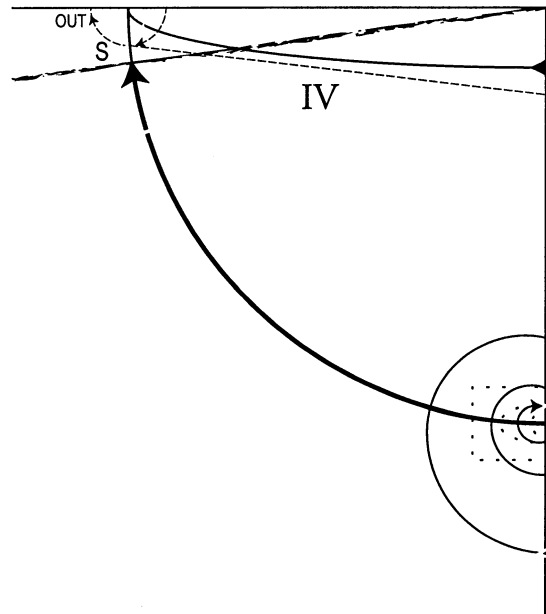
What I am seeing now is the internal structure that supports my seeing.

What I am seeing now is what enables me to see, what supports my being. In my mind, both ends of the perceptual field intersect for me to realize what actually matters about the phenomenon of seeing: not that I am seeing *something*, but that what I am seeing exists -it *is*, and that I exist -I *am*, to see it.

As I see, I am aware of myself seeing myself seeing.

IV- Radicalization

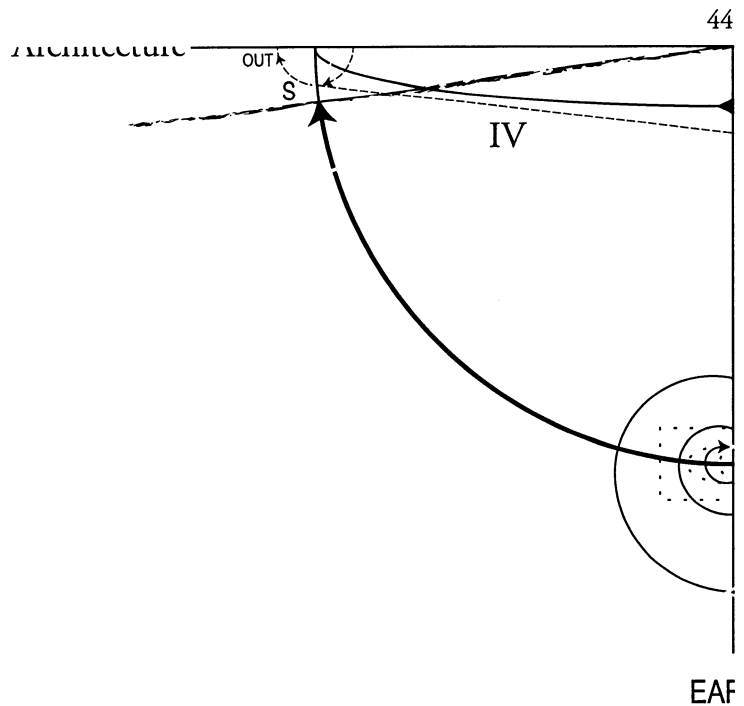
Towards Enlightenment.



On O, the way is going upward again. On S as well. I now wish to reach shore, and the shoreline is visible again at the top of this Quadrant.

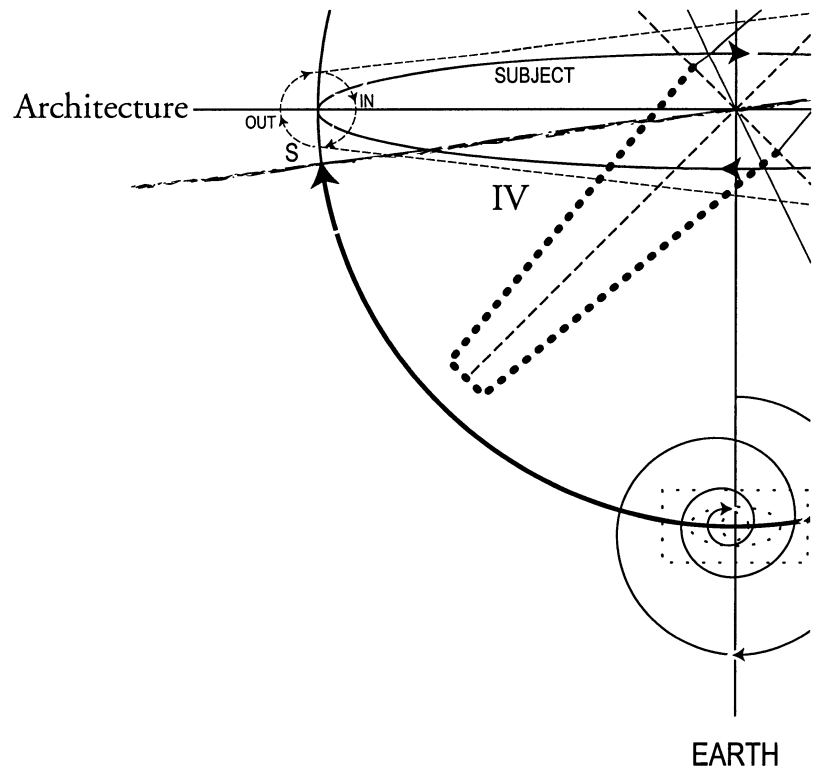
I focus on the core of my structure and I know what matters about seeing. Every moment that I experience is a moment of existence -the existence of things, and the existence of me, perceiving them. Every moment is a gradual movement towards a closer perception of the simultaneity of the present that I still perceive passing. Past or future have no meaning to me, but I am paradoxically at a distance from always being in the middle of the moment.

The line on O is now thick of my awareness, and in this thick sense of time, I now dwell in the desire to experience 'Actuality.'



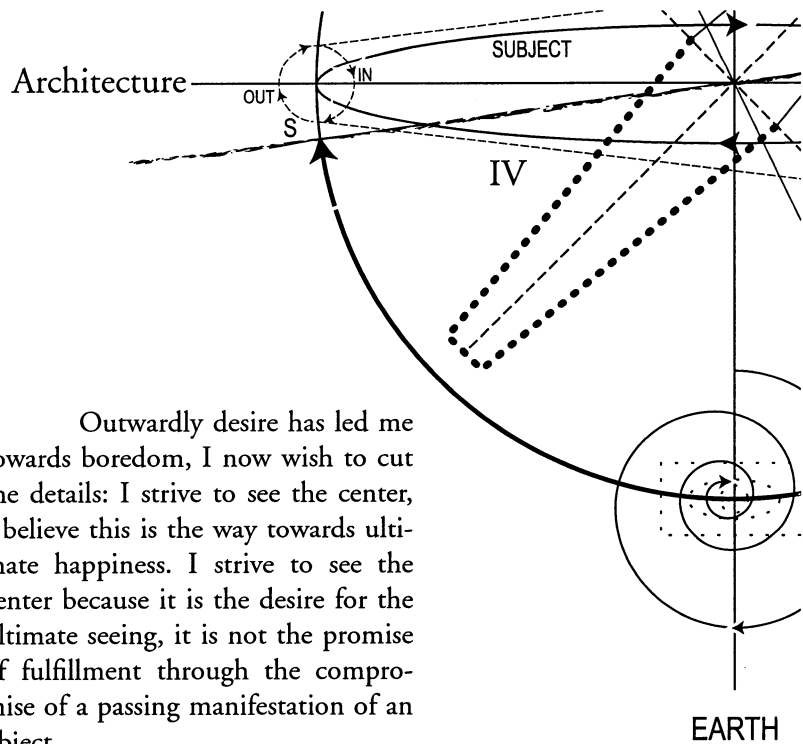
At the heart of my structure there is a hidden flame that I would like to meet. It radiates an inner light that is the essence that enables the possibility of me seeing, or projecting. Muddled by the layers of the ground, and the materials that constructs me, the flame hides itself to my conservative optical system. If I really want to be there with it, I will need to see through, I will need to see in depth, I will need to see with the heart, and towards the heart. The passionate light that animates me is a light that is not driven by an outwardly cast, it is a sight that is driven towards seeing existence itself.

Paradoxically, passionate seeing is a seeing in the blind. It is an intense focus on what is seen, yet it realizes that what it is seeing is trivial when compared to the fact that it is *actually* seen. Once the external is rendered inconsequential, one resumes his wandering, wherever, whenever, whatever, it does not matter.

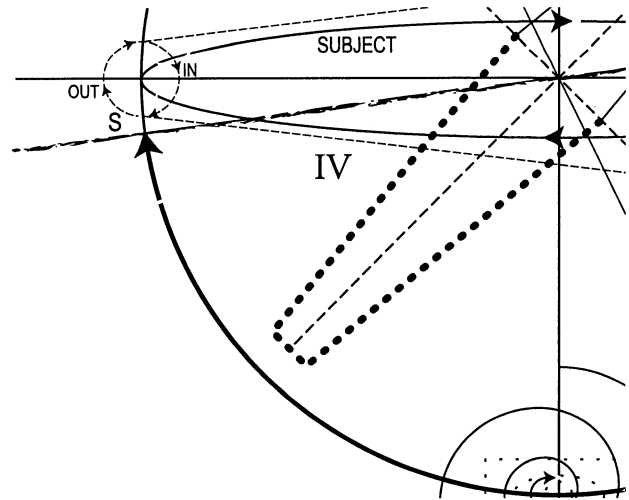


The details that make up the ornamentation on the internal side of my wall are unimportant, they are part of what is seen outwardly. Now that I realize their vanity, they peel off from the surface and are quickly aspired towards the center. The wall here left bare is the testimony of infrastructural presence, not crust as surrogate of signification.

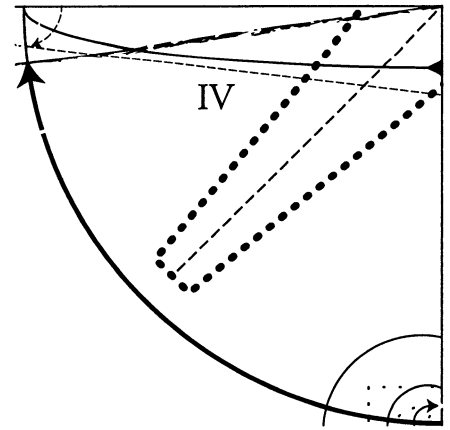
Looking in depth is looking towards Being, it is looking in the desire to really know. For a long time now, I have been site-seeing -looking endlessly at the panorama I was designed to look at, I am now free from this surface meandering that is directed towards an accumulation of facts, an approach that is directly aware of its limitation: inevitable death. I now direct my seeing towards the center of the circle, at the place where I believe I will know why all things intersect.



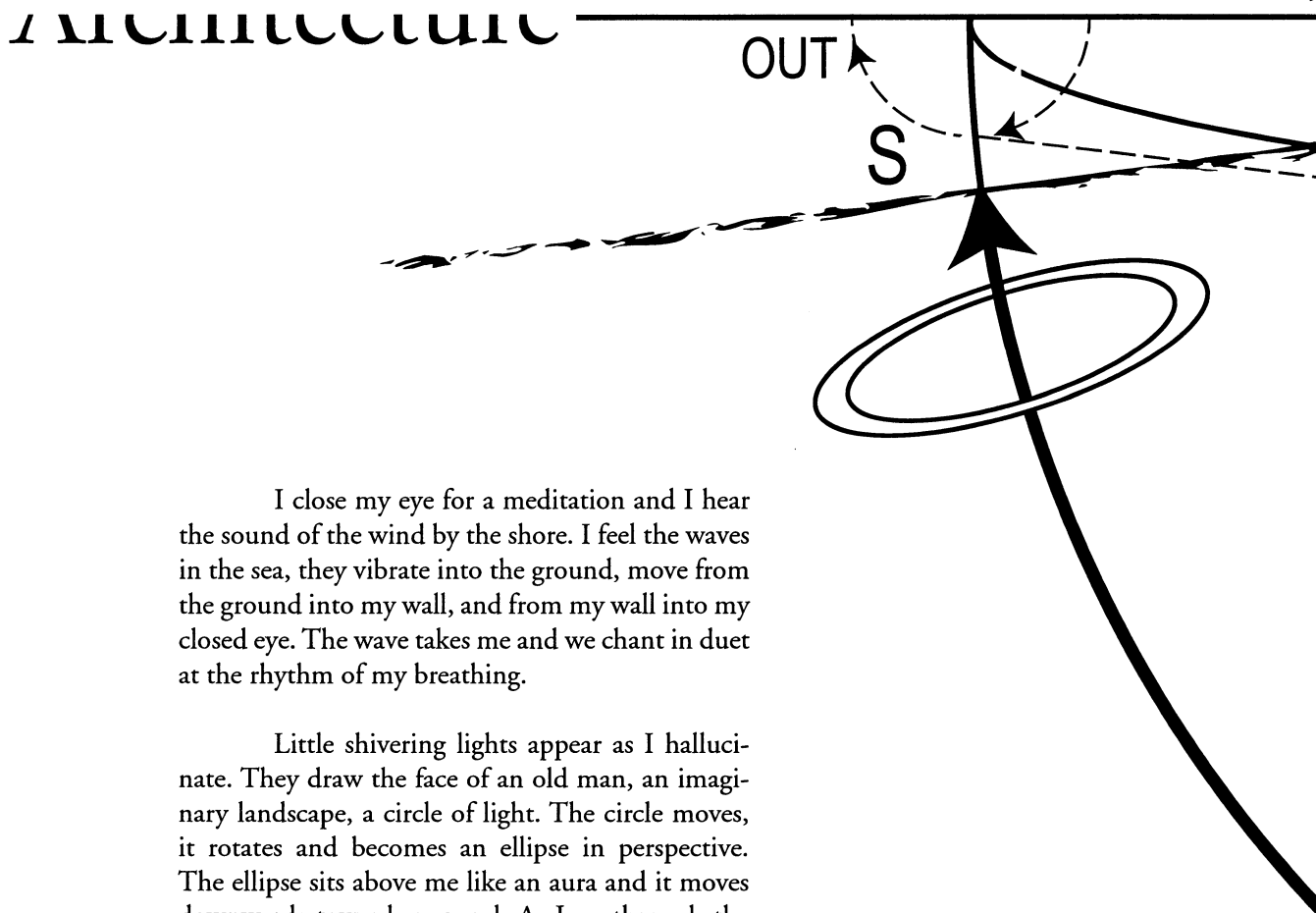
Outwardly desire has led me towards boredom, I now wish to cut the details: I strive to see the center, I believe this is the way towards ultimate happiness. I strive to see the center because it is the desire for the ultimate seeing, it is not the promise of fulfillment through the compromise of a passing manifestation of an object.



My wall is shaking, it realizes that it is an agglomeration of matter, and matter does not matter to me more than for it being there. The wall realizes it is suddenly drastically devalued, I imagine it transforming into a dotted line: an alternation of little posts that allow the wind through, the wave from the sea to flush inwards, or even bodies to go past it. Like a ghost, I imagine myself going through this wall.

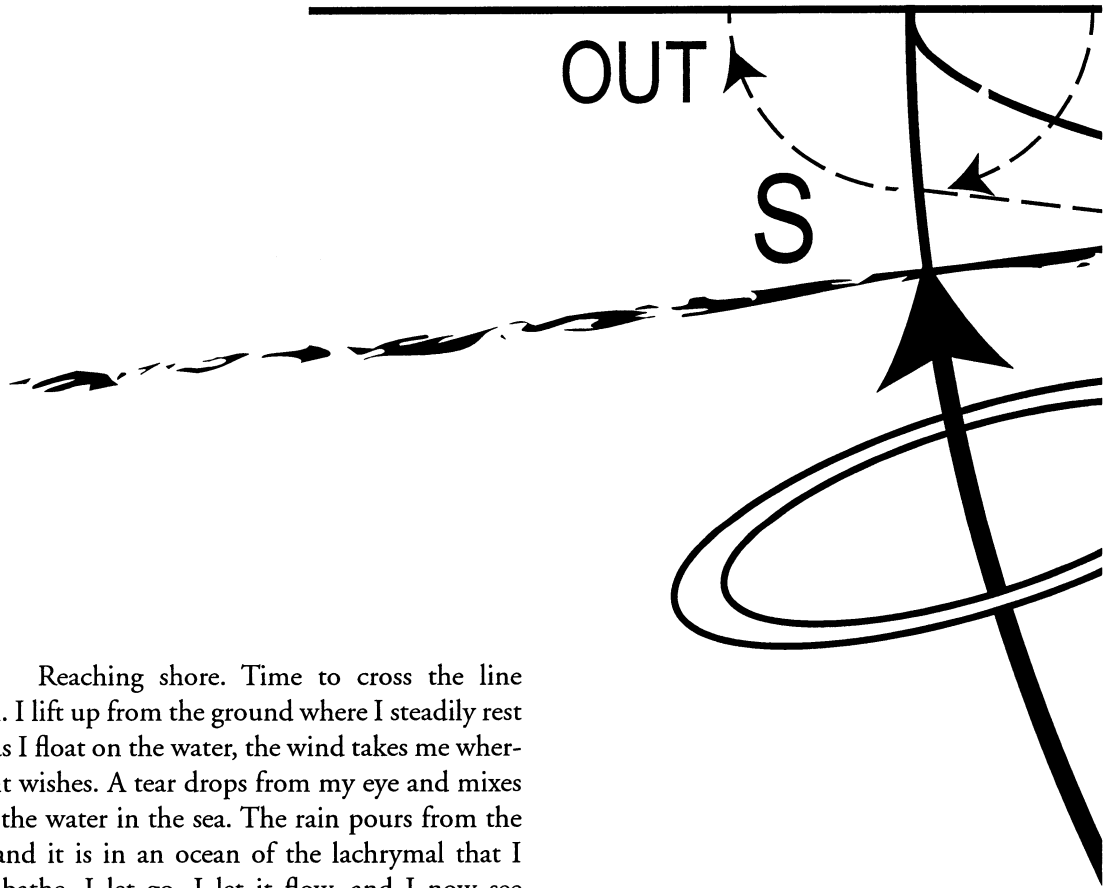


My mind is full of every moment that I now intensely experience. Past the egotistical, every moment of me breathing is a moment of discovery. The moment when I foreclose presence around me, I produce stress on my structure. The moment I produce stress I experience fear. Contrarily to what I once thought, fear is not the result of an outside aggression, it is always a systematic self-inflicted pain. I wish to liberate myself from the weight of me, everything that makes me into an 'I,' and melt into the infinity of timeless existence. The steps that clutter the central space of my core now spiral down into the ground. As they rotate downwards, they leave a bare interior. The emptied vessel of my wall is the space where I will let my spirit live on.

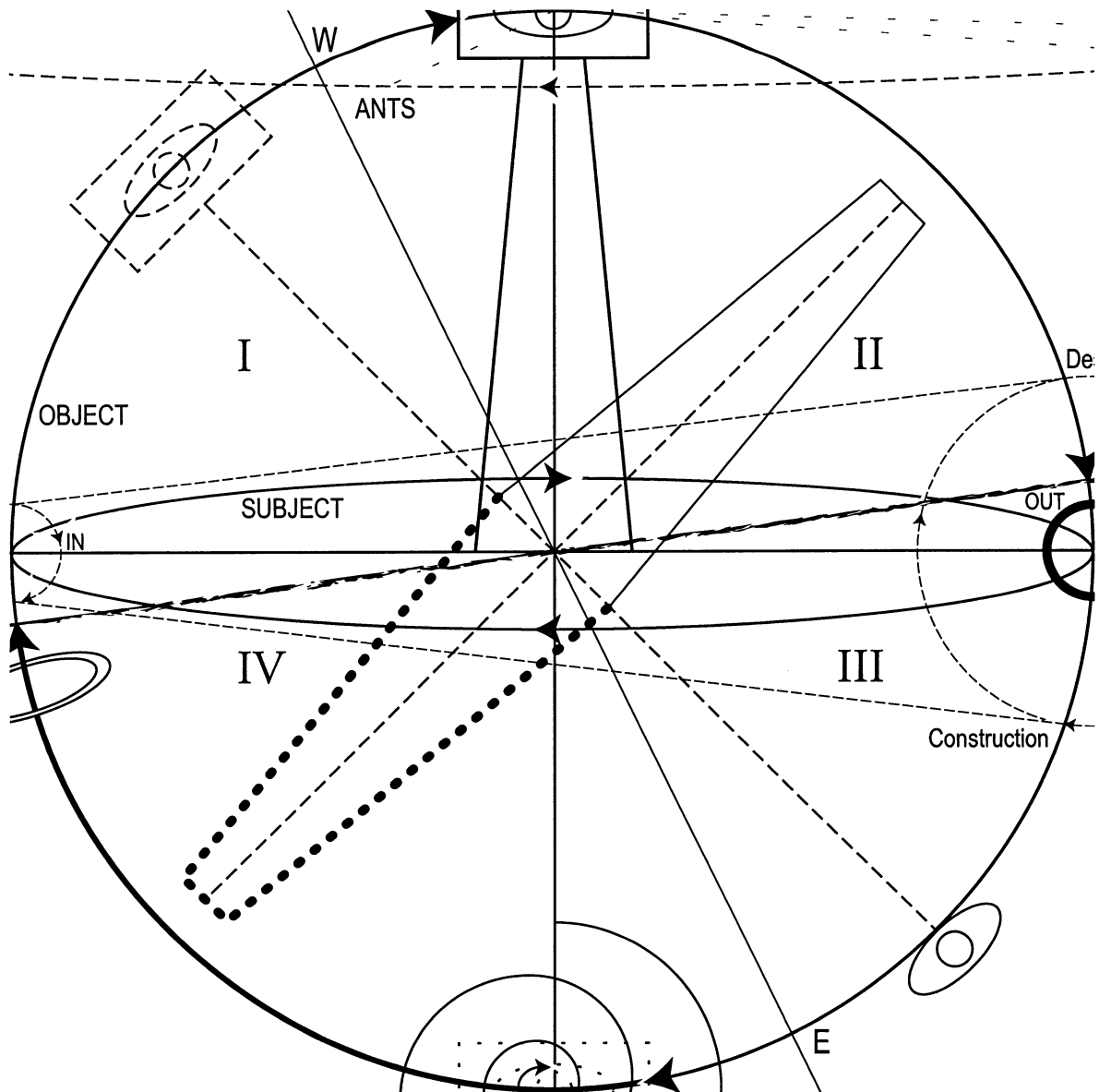


I close my eye for a meditation and I hear the sound of the wind by the shore. I feel the waves in the sea, they vibrate into the ground, move from the ground into my wall, and from my wall into my closed eye. The wave takes me and we chant in duet at the rhythm of my breathing.

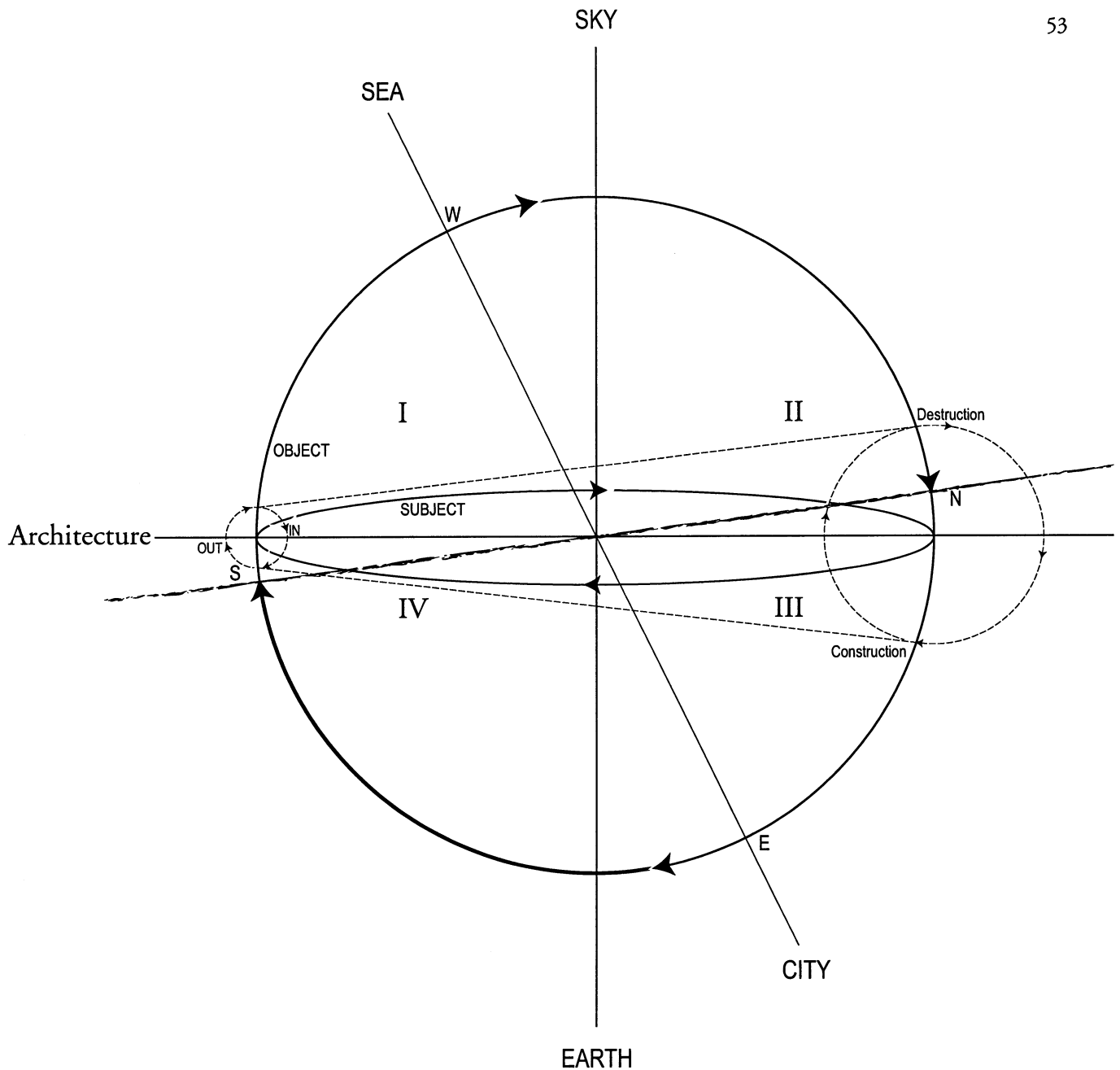
Little shivering lights appear as I hallucinate. They draw the face of an old man, an imaginary landscape, a circle of light. The circle moves, it rotates and becomes an ellipse in perspective. The ellipse sits above me like an aura and it moves downwards towards my end. As I go through the ellipse, time disconnects for an instant and, as I realize it just did, a warm wave of stillness embraces me.



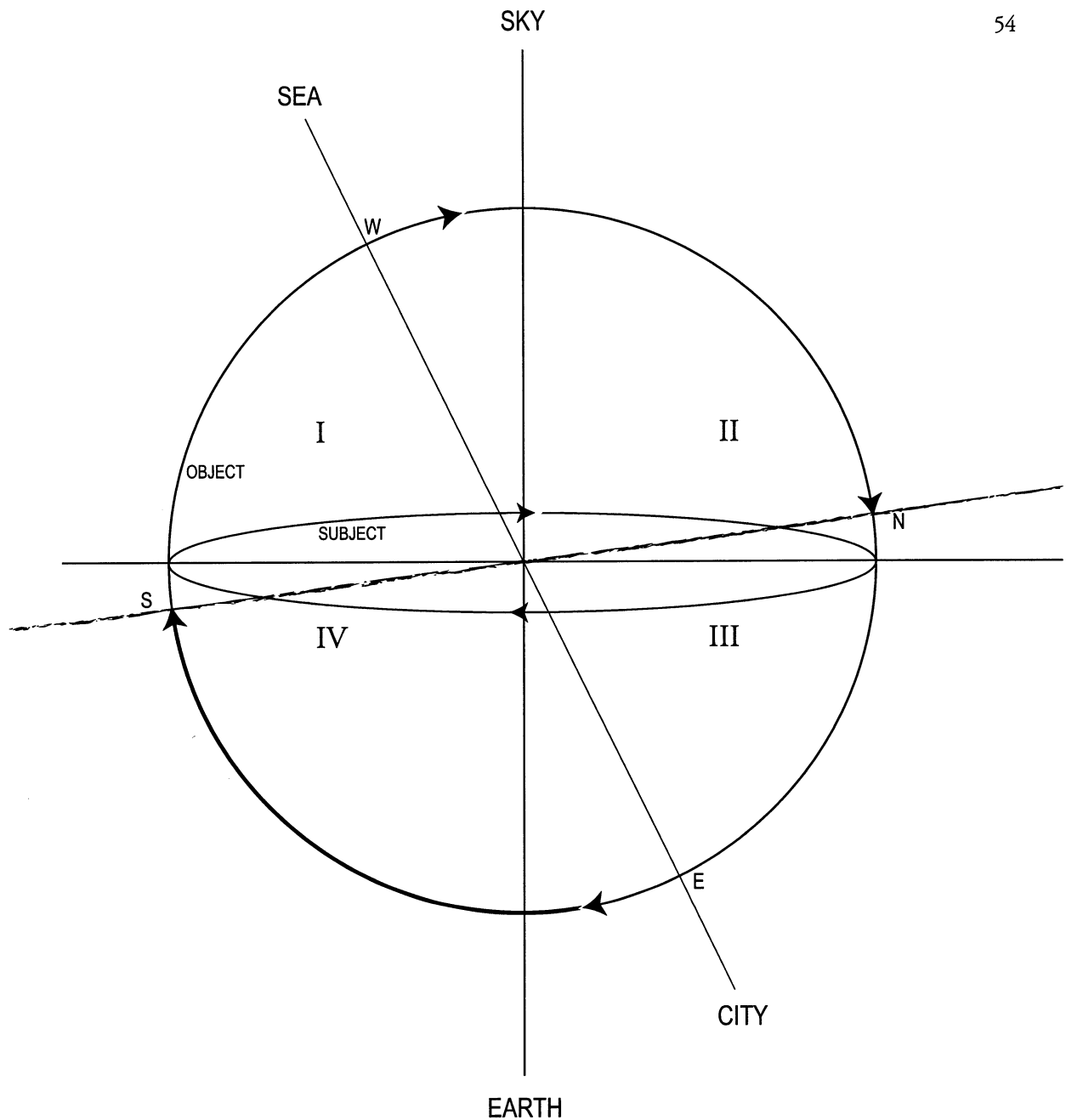
Reaching shore. Time to cross the line again. I lift up from the ground where I steadily rest and as I float on the water, the wind takes me wherever it wishes. A tear drops from my eye and mixes with the water in the sea. The rain pours from the sky, and it is in an ocean of the lachrymal that I now bathe. I let go, I let it flow, and I now see my wall built in one cast of clear glass. The vessel floats on the water. The water around gradually fills the vessel in intense emotional flows. The full vessel meanders on the universal waters, it meets other vessels, and they exchange good feelings as they wish for the good winds to move them towards experiencing the infinite clarity of omnipresent Being.



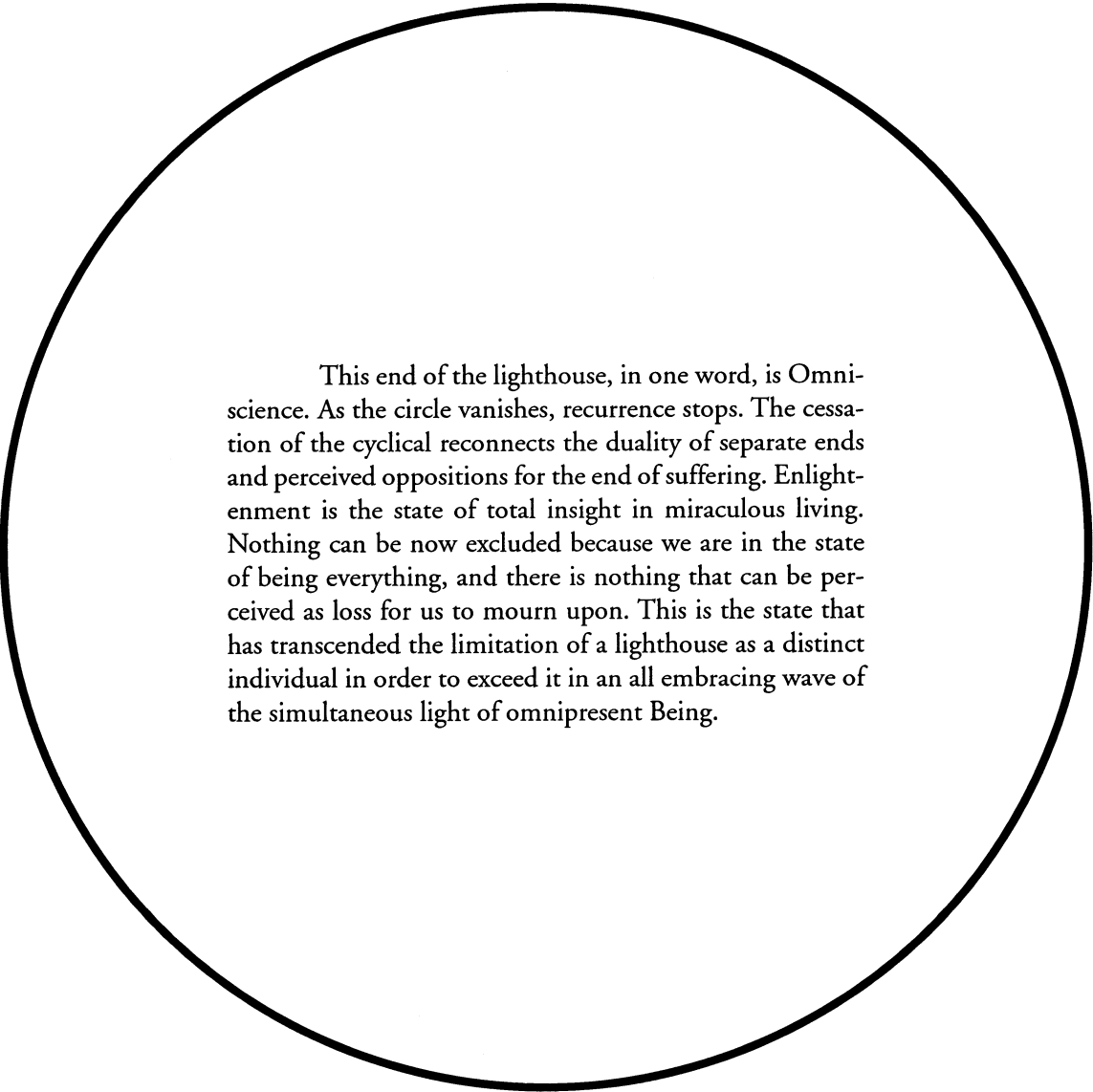
Let us now focus on the center of the picture. We see a spatial intersection at one center point. This point is a non-dimensional moment, it is a geometrical referent. Directly or indirectly, everything connects to this center. From this center all construction lines stem out, O and S radiate, and to this center all construction lines return.



There are two ends to the lighthouse. One we have experienced in the end of the Quadrant II. This end is death, it is destruction, it is loss. The pursuit of the lighthouse as a separate object, will not lead to any durable satisfaction, it is accepting impermanent happiness in our submission to the whims of our life chaotically unfolding. There is another end though, it is expressed in the desire for an ultimate resolution: an end as purpose, the aim. This end is non-compromised completeness.



The radical way suggested in the unfolding story of the lighthouse is pushing us to change our way of seeing from a traveling on the surface towards deep mindful existence. The cultivation of such a practice, everyday, every night, in every moment of us dwelling, stems from one unique aspiration: the desire to exceed the bound frames of optics, in order to finally recover from the state of suffering where we ended up secluding ourselves.



This end of the lighthouse, in one word, is Omniscience. As the circle vanishes, recurrence stops. The cessation of the cyclical reconnects the duality of separate ends and perceived oppositions for the end of suffering. Enlightenment is the state of total insight in miraculous living. Nothing can be now excluded because we are in the state of being everything, and there is nothing that can be perceived as loss for us to mourn upon. This is the state that has transcended the limitation of a lighthouse as a distinct individual in order to exceed it in an all embracing wave of the simultaneous light of omnipresent Being.

The light that once came from one source, the tip of the object -also an end, is now cast from everywhere. The lighthouse now has infinite awareness, understanding and insight. It is now truly the Source.

Architecture —

the end

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