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Theorizing Zero Degree from Junkspace to Running Room: Rem Koolhaas vs Hal Foster

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Abstract. Every time an author arranges words, the very existence of the text becomes debatable. According to Barthes, contemporary writing proliferates to the point of forcing the author to make choices, transforming form into behavior and leading to a literary ethics. Writing becomes an independent organ that forms a double existence, placing secondary histories and opaque signs upon words. Rem Koolhaas refers to his architectural discourse, containing disciplinary critiques, as "zero degree architecture." Here, he highlights the epistemic fragilities of traditional urbanism and architectural regimes that restrict life. Zero degree architecture proposes resetting traditional architecture, which allows "nothing" beyond its own fiction, and instead generating possibilities by defining "nothing" and "void" through the "typical" and "generic". This study takes Koolhaas's concept of junkspace as the zero point, focusing on the trio of translating, renaming, and rethinking. As research material, the book *Junkspace with Running Room* by Rem Koolhaas and Hal Foster is examined. The book juxtaposes Koolhaas's concept of junkspace with Hal Foster's notion of the running room, a critical response to junkspace. Junkspace, the term with the highest frequency in the book (227 times), is central in defining the "zero degree" of architectural discourse. First introduced by Koolhaas in 2001, junkspace describes the uncontrolled, fragmented condition of metropolitan environments where conventional architecture loses its form and mathematical order. Claiming a new architecture without a design philosophy, junkspace signifies a reset of conventional architecture. Through textual fragmentation, this study's translating step analyzes the theoretical sections of Koolhaas and Foster using AntConc software. The renaming step focuses on 28 concepts Foster introduces in response to junkspace. Finally, the rethinking step reinterprets the relationship between junkspace and running room through the lens of "zero degree".

Keywords: Zero degree architecture; junkspace; running room; Koolhaas; hal foster.

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INTRODUCTION

This study engages in a critical examination of the intersecting discourses of contemporary architecture and literary theory by exploring the conceptual thresholds articulated by Rem Koolhaas and Hal Foster. Building upon Roland Barthes's assertion that every textual act provokes an ontological inquiry into the very existence of writing [1], the research positions junkspace as a paradigmatic "zero degree"—a spatial condition in which conventional architectural signifiers dissolve into indeterminate configurations.

Rem Koolhaas's notion of "zero degree architecture" [2] [3] emerges as a critique of the epistemic fragility and disciplinary constraints of traditional urbanism. Rather than designing spaces limited by inherited typologies, "zero

degree architecture" calls for a conceptual reset, using "void" and "nothingness" as generative forces. By contrast, Hal Foster's concept of the Running Room responds to junkspace by reclaiming architectural agency against environments dominated by consumerism and spectacle.

This research applies a three-step methodological framework—translating, renaming, and rethinking—while deconstructing *Junkspace with Running Room* [4]. Concepts such as autonomy, typology, and spectacle form a critical lexicon to examine the architectural condition of late modernity.

The "zero degree" metaphor functions as a threshold across both literary and architectural discourses. Barthes's [5] seminal Writing Degree Zero (1953) defines a style stripped of ideological or stylistic excess, offering a neutral and transparent mode of articulation. This approach transforms writing into an ethical and existential stance rather than mere ornamentation. In a similar vein, Koolhaas reinterprets the "zero degree" concept to expose the exhaustion of architectural meaning within contemporary urbanization. Junkspace, as described by Koolhaas [6], exemplifies this condition—a proliferation of spaces such as malls and airports, characterized by repetition, banality, and the erosion of distinct form [7] [8]

When examined through this lens, junkspace is not merely a physical construct but also a theoretical challenge. It suggests a state where architecture becomes a behavioral script rather than a deliberate practice. Foster's Running Room [9] confronts this narrative by advocating for design strategies that resist consumerist homogeneity and open new pathways for spatial experimentation.

Ultimately, this study highlights how the dialogue between Koolhaas's and Foster's concepts redefines architectural discourse at its "zero degree," creating a space for critical reconstitution beyond traditional paradigms.

THE CONCEPT OF ZERO DEGREE IN ARCHITECTURE

The idea of "zero degree," first introduced by Roland Barthes in Writing Degree Zero [5], is rooted in the pursuit of linguistic neutrality—writing stripped of personal style, ideology, and historical weight. In architecture, this notion was adapted by critics such as Bruno Zevi during the 1970s and 1980s, who argued that the discipline faced a stylistic deadlock that required resetting the architectural language by abandoning historicist references [10]. This conceptual reset opened a theoretical space for innovation, autonomy, and critical detachment in design.

Japanese architects like Kazuo Shinohara, Hiromi Fujii, and Kazunari Sakamoto explored this idea by emphasizing spaces devoid of symbolic meaning, focusing instead on primary, functional qualities. Similarly, theorist Peter Eisenman referenced Barthes's influence in his journal Oppositions, while Lars Lerup proposed Plan Degree Zero in the late 1980s as a radical reduction of stylistic elements in planning. These interpretations all underline the search for architectural neutrality as a ground for renewal.

Rem Koolhaas's reading of "zero degree" takes this debate into the contemporary metropolis. In his essay *Junkspace* [6], he conceptualizes the spaces of global capitalism—airports, shopping malls, and corporate lobbies—as homogenized environments that have lost architectural specificity. Junkspace signifies the erasure of narrative, coherence, and identity, functioning as a spatial residue of late capitalism.

Hal Foster, in *Running Room* [9], challenges Koolhaas's pessimistic view by suggesting that even within junkspace, architects can carve out critical and resistant zones—conceptual "rooms" for movement, agency, and design innovation. This tension between Koolhaas and Foster marks a pivotal dialogue on the future of architecture in the face of spectacle-driven urban environments.

In sum, the zero degree concept, extending from Barthes's literary theory to Zevi, Koolhaas, and Foster, offers a critical framework for interrogating the meaning, neutrality, and agency of architecture today. It illuminates how the dissolution of established structures may paradoxically enable new spatial imaginaries and critical redefinitions of design.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data: Translating

The data for this paper is the book *Junkspace with Running Room* by Rem Koolhaas and Hal Foster [4]. This paper brings together Koolhaas's seminal essay *Junkspace* and Foster's critical response *Running Room*, establishing a dialogue between two pivotal concepts in contemporary architectural discourse. Junkspace, the term with the highest frequency in the book (227 times), is central in defining the "zero degree" of architectural discourse. In his essay, Koolhaas claims that modernization has culminated not in coherent architectural production

but in a sprawling spatial residue—what he terms "junkspace." In response, Foster argues that even within this "non-qualitative space," there remains the potential for critical reflection and agency—a conceptual "running room." The book constitutes a significant intervention into the crisis of architecture, addressing both its formal and theoretical levels while critically reassessing the discipline's position in the post-critical era.

In the chapter titled *Junkspace*, Rem Koolhaas [11] characterizes junkspace as an architectural accumulation defined by superficial diversity, functional ambiguity, and spatial continuity—one that has lost its original purpose and meaning. Koolhaas argues that contemporary spaces manifest a kind of aesthetic schizophrenia, exemplified by structures such as shopping centres, airports, and themed urban environments. The chapter articulates the crisis of architecture through an ironic and provocative rhetorical style.

In the chapter titled *Running Room*, Hal Foster [9] offers a theoretical response to Koolhaas's definition of junkspace. While acknowledging the accuracy of Koolhaas's diagnosis, Foster argues that it is not inevitable; presuming the subject to be entirely passive in the face of such spaces suppresses the potential for critique. The metaphor of the "running room" marks Foster's assertion that even within junkspace, there remains a space open to critical thought, meaning-making, and the capacity for resistance. By reactivating architecture's historical legacy and theoretical traditions, he contends that space is not merely a site of consumption, but one that can be reinterpreted and transformed.

Data Analysis

The data analysis consists of three steps: translating, renaming, and rethinking (Figure 1). The *Junkspace with Running Room* book by Koolhaas and Hal Foster [4] is examined during the translating step. The renaming step involves the *Running Room* chapter and the "word list" tool from AntConc 3.4.4.0. Finally, the rethinking step focuses on the conceptual dialogue between *Junkspace* and *Running Room*.

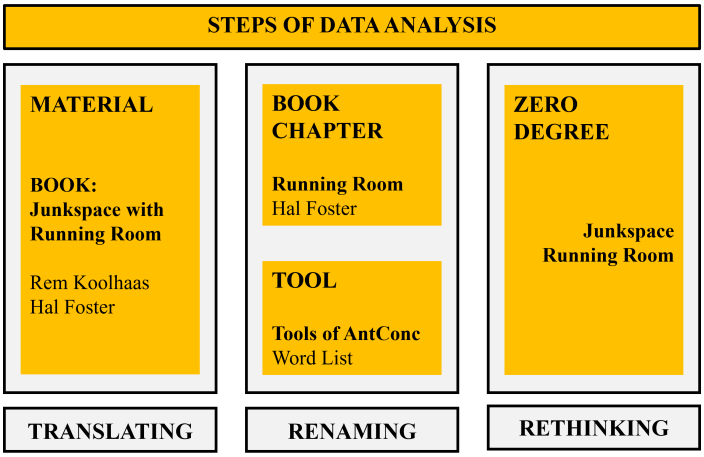


FIGURE 1. Steps of data analysis

The 28 conceptual titles presented by Hal Foster in the *Running Room* section of *Junkspace with a Running Room*, written in response to Junkspace, were analysed through word frequency using the "word list" tool in AntConc. The relationship between Foster's concept of the running room and Koolhaas's notion of junkspace was re-evaluated within the framework of the "zero degree" debate. As a result, the theoretical tensions and intellectual openings between the two texts were reconsidered within contemporary architectural discourse.

FINDINGS

Renaming

In the *renaming* step of this paper, Hal Foster's 28 conceptual titles —such as *Autonomy*, *Bigness*, *Bonaventure*, *Conditional*, *Consumerist*, *Design*, *Environment*, *Finitude*, *Gesamtkunstwerk*, *Hell*, *In/Discipline*, *Junk*, *Kool*, *Lite*, *Mimetic*, *Nobrow*, *Outmoded*, *Post-Fordism*, *Quarantine*, *Running Room*, *Spectacle*, *Typology*, *Universal*, *Virtual*,

Without Qualities, *X*, *Yes*, and *Zone*—were analysed using the "word list" tool in AntConc software in order to generate a frequency table of the most commonly used words (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Lexical Frequency Table of the Corpus from Hal Foster's Running Room

CORPUS OF THE BOOK'S SECTIONS			
SECTIONS OF THE BOOK		**SECTIONS OF THE BOOK**	
Word [Frequency]		**Word [Frequency]**	
Autonomy		**Bigness**	
autonomy [8]	postmodern [2]	bigness [12]	autonomy [1]
hybrid [2]	aesthetic [2]	koolhaas [6]	debauch [1]
illustrational [2]	ancient [1]	architecture [6]	design [1]
interdisciplinary [2]	architecture [1]	architectural [5]	detail [1]
junkspace [2]	koolhaas [1]	junkspace [5]	elevator [1]
Bonaventure		**Conditional**	
bonaventure [4]	atrium [2]	junkspace [6]	city [2]
architecture [3]	baroque [2]	conditional [3]	structures [2]
cultural [3]	buildings [2]	elevator [3]	apocalyptic [1]
architects [2]	capitalism [2]	escalator [3]	bigness [1]
architectural [2]	koolhaas [2]	space [3]	building [1]
Consumerist		**Design**	
junkspace [5]	designed [2]	design [9]	engineer [1]
space [5]	architecture [1]	designer [5]	graphic [1]
commodity [3]	baudrillard [1]	architect [2]	industrial [1]
architects [2]	buildings [1]	constructor [1]	junkspace [1]
construction [2]	capitalism [1]	culture [1]	koolhaas [1]
Environment		**Finitude**	
design [2]	identity [1]	art [7]	architect [1]
commodity [2]	modernism [1]	nouveau [4]	architecture [1]
environment [2]	political [1]	designer [3]	catastrophic [1]
algorithmic [1]	production [1]	finitude [2]	design [1]
capitalist [1]	workers [1]	ornament [2]	gesamtkunstwerk [1]
Gesamtkunstwerk		**Hell**	
art [3]	junkspace [1]	junkspace [5]	autonomy [1]
gesamtkunstwerk [2]	koolhaas [1]	hell [4]	character [1]
capitalism [1]	nouveau [1]	inferno [2]	contemporary [1]
cultural [1]	reinvigorate [1]	koolhaas [2]	empire [1]
industrial [1]	tragedy [1]	airport [1]	kindergarten [1]
In/discipline		**Junk**	
junkspace [3]	bigness [1]	junkspace [6]	autonomy [1]
architectural [2]	capitalism [1]	koolhaas [3]	big [1]
architecture [2]	culture [1]	strauss [3]	construction [1]
autonomy [2]	dialectic [1]	meaning [2]	function [1]
postmodernism [2]	form [1]	signification [2]	junk [1]
Kool		**Lite**	
koolhaas [4]	architectural [1]	lightness [4]	architectural [1]
delirious [3]	conceptual [1]	derealization [3]	capitalist [1]
architecture [2]	critical [1]	disembodiment [3]	construction [1]
junkspace [2]	delirium [1]	ideology [2]	designs [1]
urban [2]	designs [1]	junkspace [2]	materials [1]
Mimetic		**Nobrow**	
junkspace [5]	language [4]	culture [4]	megastore [2]
koolhaas [5]	mimetic [4]	junkspace [3]	architecture [1]
architecture [4]	world [4]	politics [3]	contemporary [1]
benjamin [4]	archigram [3]	shopping [3]	discourse [1]
criticism [4]	architectural [2]	democracy [2]	junkpeople [1]
Outmoded		**Post-Fordism**	
outmoded [7]	bourgeoisie [2]	architecture [6]	architect [2]
world [5]	culture [2]	junkspace [2]	analogy [1]
benjamin [4]	junk [2]	koolhaas [2]	buildings [1]
capitalist [3]	junkspace [2]	modern [2]	built [1]
surrealists [3]	architecture [1]	modernization [2]	fordism [1]
Quarantine		**Running Room**	
delirious [3]	built [1]	art [6]	culture [3]
space [3]	city [1]	chamber [6]	distinction [3]
junkspace [2]	cultural [1]	room [6]	utilitarian [3]
manhattanism [2]	culture [1]	junkspace [4]	autonomy [2]
skyscraper [2]	koolhaas [1]	running [4]	koolhaas [2]

TABLE 1 (continued)

Spectacle		**Typology**	
spectacle [7]	junkspace [2]	typology [5]	architectural [1]
visual [3]	architects [1]	shopping [4]	architecture [1]
capital [2]	cultural [1]	junkspace [3]	design [1]
commodity [2]	society [1]	city [2]	identity [1]
culture [2]	spatial [1]	context [2]	koolhaas [1]
Universal		**Virtual**	
junkspace [5]	historical [2]	architecture [3]	design [1]
history [4]	architecture [1]	space [3]	identity [1]
koolhaas [4]	modernization [1]	deterritorializing[2]	junkspace [1]
architectural [3]	nouveau [1]	capital [1]	koolhaas [1]
cultural [2]	place [1]	deleuze [1]	postmodern [1]
Without Qualities		**X**	
design [3]	art [1]	modernism [3]	constructivism [1]
contemporary [2]	disappearance [1]	paradigm [3]	critical [1]
modern [2]	function [1]	architects [2]	deconstructivist [1]
anthropocentric[1]	nouveau [1]	postwar [2]	junkspace [1]
architecture [1]	paradoxically [1]	architecture [1]	narrative [1]
Yes		**Zone**	
koolhaas [4]	calatrava [1]	junkspace [4]	antecedents [1]
engineering [2]	cctv [1]	space [3]	data [1]
architects [1]	cyclopic [1]	zone [3]	fascism [1]
architecture [1]	junksignature [1]	disorientation [2]	room [1]
building [1]	rhetorical [1]	koolhaas [2]	running [1]

Table 1 presents a conceptual content structure based on the book's sections and the distribution of words related to architectural theory. The most frequently occurring words indicate thematic domains such as autonomy, scale, typology, consumption, representation, and technological infrastructure within architectural thinking. For instance, in the section titled *Junk*, the words "junkspace," "Koolhaas," and "Strauss" emerge as particularly prominent, whereas in the section titled the *Running Room*, "art," "chamber," and "room" are especially notable. The word frequencies in each section indicate the presence of different conceptual focuses. The following text offers a general evaluation of the book's sections in Table 1.

In the section titled ***Autonomy***, which foregrounds the independence of the subject in architecture, the notion of autonomy—one of the foundational principles of modern aesthetics—is redefined through interdisciplinary interaction with postmodern thought. Hal Foster examines the concept of autonomy through "quasi-autonomy," a term referenced in Koolhaas's *Junkspace* article. Foster underscores architecture's loss of identity and its ongoing efforts to reclaim a sense of autonomous agency.

In the section titled ***Bigness*** explores the intellectual rupture between Rem Koolhaas's texts Bigness [12] and *Junkspace* [6]. According to Foster, Junkspace emerges as the junk product of the modernist utopia envisioned in *Bigness*—a spatial condition marked by the absence of identity, context, and meaning.

In the section titled ***Bonaventure*** engages with Fredric Jameson's analysis of postmodern space through John Portman's Bonaventure Hotel, which he identifies as a paradigmatic example of the cognitively unmappable and subject-disorienting spatial logic of late capitalism (Figure 2). According to Foster, the spatial complexity that Jameson critically identifies has been adopted as a design paradigm by architects such as Gehry and Hadid. In this sense, postmodern architecture is transformed into a spectacle that serves the cultural logic of late capitalism.

FIGURE 2. Images of the Bonaventure Hotel designed by John Portman [13] [14] [15]

In the section titled ***Conditional***, the concept of junkspace—first introduced in The Harvard Guide to Shopping [16]—is used to examine how technologies such as elevators, automobiles, escalators, and air conditioning have transformed the modern urban form. In particular, elevator and automobile technologies provided the infrastructural basis for the vertical (skyscraper) and horizontal (suburban) spatial strategies that defined the urban fabric of the twentieth century. Within this framework, junkspace is understood as the spatial manifestation of technological systems.

In the section titled ***Consumerist***, it is emphasised that the concept of junkspace refers not only to a space devoid of qualitative value, but also to a spatial condition that is continuously reconfigured in accordance with the dynamics of consumer culture. Thus, junkspace does not signify the accumulation of waste within space, but rather the transformation of space itself into junk—both functionally and aesthetically.

In the section titled ***Design***, it is emphasised that the "designed subject" is a derivative of the constructed subject of postmodernism. The productive heroes of modernity—writers, artists, engineers, and architects—have been displaced, giving way to marketable designs and the disciplines that swiftly circulate them within consumer culture.

In the section titled ***Environment***, emphasises that the post-fordist mode of production has given rise to a design approach that shapes not only objects but also subjects. Standardised products, though mass-produced, are marketed as individualised experiences. So this leads to the construction of subjective identity through economic and consumer-driven strategies.

In the section titled ***Finitude*** is discussed Adolf Loos's critique of Art Nouveau's ornamental aesthetic, as articulated in his essay Ornament and Crime [17]. Loos contends that this aesthetic approach suppresses the desire to live by instilling a false sense of completeness in the consumer, ultimately leading to a state of existential numbness. Art Nouveau interior design is described through the customer's sense of "completeness" and the metaphor of a tomb, which results in a loss of the desire to live.

In the section titled ***Gesamtkunstwerk*** is being addressed a comparative examination of the concepts of Gesamtkunstwerk, Art Nouveau, and junkspace within a historical and aesthetic framework. While Gesamtkunstwerk seeking to revive artistic integrity and sensory experience, Art Nouveau implies "death in life." In contrast, Koolhaas's junkspace possesses neither aesthetic coherence nor adherence to the rational principles of modernism. Instead, it is positioned as a chaotic assemblage of contextless elements—devoid of meaning and evocatively described as "hell on earth."

In the section titled ***Hell***, Koolhaas's *Junkspace* article is positioned as a pessimistic and allegorical critique of contemporary architecture. This approach is compared to Hieronymus Bosch's grotesque and symbolic pictorial world. Like Bosch's images of hell, *Junkspace* represents a directionless, overloaded and devoid of meaning architectural universe.

In the section titled ***In/discipline***, Foster discusses capitalism's revenge on postmodern culture. He argues that capitalism has transformed postmodern culture by integrating interdisciplinary transitions into its own media and consumption system, thereby eroding postmodernism from within.

In the section titled ***Junk***, concept of junkspace is discussed in relation to Lévi-Strauss's term "mana" (meaning suspended, multi-meaning signifier). Junkspace represents not only specific building typologies but also a pervasive spatiality condition. It infiltrates everything from traffic systems to the human body—devoid of inherent meaning, yet encompassing all aspects of contemporary space. In this sense, Junkspace is a postmodern ideology of emptiness symbolising the collapse of meaningful spatial production.

In the section titled ***Kool*** focuses on the tension between Koolhaas's strategies on architecture, city and metropolis in his book Delirious New York [18] and *Junkspace*. The creative, open-to-interpretation, meaning-enriching strategies (parody, irony) used by Koolhaas in Delirious New York are now invalid within the context of junkspace. This is because junkspace is a space in which meaning is emptied out and interpretation becomes futile.

Discussed in the section titled ***Lite,*** the ideal of "information investments" corresponds to lightweight, permeable, and transparent structures within the discipline of architecture. In *Junkspace*, Koolhaas draws attention to the void of meaning within architectural ideals, the historical rupture, and the condition of disembodiment they produce.

In the section titled ***Mimetic***, *Junkspace* is presented as a mimetic performance, composed in a disjointed, overlapping, dense, exhausting, and meaning-multiplying style. Koolhaas's language—reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's *One-Way Street*—relies on fragments, irony, and media-saturated narrative forms, thereby formally enacting the postmodern dissolution of meaning within architecture.

In the section titled ***Nobrow*** argues that consumption and shopping function not merely as economic activities but as spatial and cultural regimes that permeate all aspects of life. In this context, the claim that "everything is

melting into shopping" becomes a defining motto, capturing architecture's surrender of its social function to the logic of consumption.

The section titled ***Outmoded*** examines how capitalist junks are critically reworked through art, drawing on figures such as Walter Benjamin, Kurt Schwitters, and Eduardo Paolozzi. Schwitters's Merz practice, in particular, stands out as an example of producing critical constructions from the commercial and material debris of the modern world. Merz is a term coined by the German Dada artist Kurt Schwitters to describe his collage and assemblage works made from discarded materials [19] (Figure 3). In contrast, the architecture of junkspace eliminates the possibility of constructing a historical trajectory.

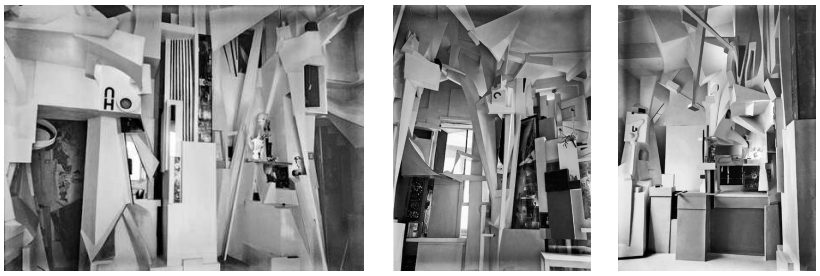
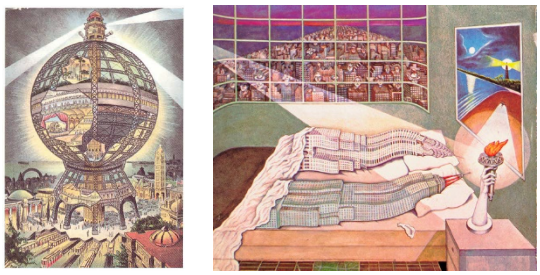


FIGURE 3. Merzbau by Kurt Schwitters [20]

In the section titled ***Post-Fordism***, Foster opens a critical discussion on post-fordism within the context of architecture. He argues that with the rise of the post-fordist economy, architecture has lost both its permanence and its capacity to generate form. The lifespan of buildings has significantly shortened, and the modernist ideal has been replaced by temporary and superficial spatial solutions.

In the section titled ***Quarantine*** addresses how the "Manhattanism" celebrated by Koolhaas in Delirious New York [18] was transformed—particularly in the aftermath of the September 11—into an image of threat and fragility. In Delirious New York [18], Koolhaas defines Manhattan as a "culture of congestion," and, he generated the figure of the skyscraper (Figure 4).



(a) (b)

FIGURE 4. (a) Globe Tower, second version, with exploded exterior [18], (b) Madelon Vriesendorp, Flagrant délit [18]

In the section titled ***Running Room***, Foster draws on Karl Kraus's chamber pot/pot metaphor to argue for the necessity of maintaining a distinction between art and everyday objects—an argument he extends to Koolhaas's *Junkspace*. While those who used pots as chamber pots were Art Nouveau designers, those who used pots as chamber pots were functionalist modernists. In this context, both groups limit their running room by ignoring the difference between art and usage.

In the section titled ***Spectacle***, Guy Debord's [21] notion of spectacle—defined as "capital accumulated to the point where it becomes an image"—is inverted: "spectacle is an image accumulated to the point where it becomes capital." Within this framework, junkspace constitutes the spatial form of spectacle culture.

In the section titled ***Typology***, Foster identifies shopping malls as the most dominant typology of junkspace, framing his discussion within the triple of form–formlessness–typology. The assertion that "formlessness is still a form; the formless is also a typology" is critically interrogated through Georges Bataille's concept of "informe"

[22]. In this context, the fundamental question is: Can the formlessness of junkspace be considered a typology in itself?

The section titled ***Universal*** discusses junkspace as a form of architecture that has lost its capacity for historical continuity and cultural meaning-making. Junkspace confines architecture to an age of the living dead, posing a threat to the meaningful legibility of historical signifiers.

Visual representation has gained importance with postmodern architecture. The section titled ***Virtual*** explores how junkspace and visual representation have become integral components of space. This situation indicates that architecture has shifted away from producing spatial experience and has instead become an object of visual consumption.

The section titled ***Without Qualities***, which brings together architectural theory and cultural critique, discusses the rupture between architectural production and subjective experience through the ideas of Adolf Loos and Robert Musil.

In the section titled ***X***, where the concepts of "modernism", "paradigm" and "architects" are foregrounded, it is argued that the oppositional model of postmodernism, rooted in the 'post-,' and the repetition strategy of the neo-avant-garde, based on the 'neo-,' have become obsolete. These models can no longer provide a valid paradigm for contemporary architectural practice.

In the section titled ***Yes***, the concept of *JunkSignature*™ reveals how advanced engineering has become not only a structural tool but also a means of visual and ideological spectacle. Koolhaas draws attention to how figures like Santiago Calatrava reduce architecture to symbolic narratives. Foster, through Koolhaas's question "Why do they never say NO?", criticizes how architects are compelled to produce affirmation instead of critique, and how they are increasingly reduced to service providers who unconditionally comply with demands.

In the section titled ***Zone***, Foster draws an analogy between Robert Musil's figure of "the man without qualities" [23] and Koolhaas's *Junkspace*, and interprets junkspace as a "space without qualities." This space has transformed into a "space of control" that algorithmically structures not only the individual's position but also their modes of behavior. With the term "scripted zone," Foster refers to a controlled space governed by prewritten rules and directives that constrain individual action.

As a result, the *renaming* step reveals how the conceptual structure of Foster's text is configured and how it delineates the theoretical trajectory of his response to junkspace.

Rethinking

In this section, Rem Koolhaas's concept of junkspace and Hal Foster's *running room* approach are reexamined through Roland Barthes's theory of "zero degree." These two concepts make visible the formal and semantic ruptures of modern architecture, contributing to the rearticulation of architectural discourse.

In Koolhaas's definition of junkspace, the regular and hierarchical forms of modern architecture are dissolved and transformed into fragmented, homogeneous spaces that are constantly repeated. These structures lose their functional properties, becoming surfaces devoid of meaning. According to Koolhaas, this condition represents a threshold at which architecture is "zeroed out" in terms of design philosophy and meaning production [4] [24]. Much like Barthes's notion of "writing degree zero," all ideological and aesthetic layers are neutralized in this context.

On the other hand, Hal Foster argues that architecture still has the capacity for critical and creative intervention against this neutralisation, as demonstrated by his running room approach. He claims that architecture can generate new potential spaces by introducing 'negative capability'. Thus, *running room* repositions architecture as both a physical and an intellectual ground for resistance.

The relationship between *junkspace* and *running room* establishes a critical dialectic between what architecture is and what it should be. While Koolhaas argues that the production of meaning has collapsed entirely, Foster shows that alternative strategies are still possible within this context.

The *rethinking step* reinterprets these two approaches within the "zero degree" axis. Today, Foster's perspective is expanded through practices such as adaptive reuse. Joshua McWhirter's concept of "adaptive reuse" suggests transforming junkspace with collective and public functions [25] [26]. This approach establishes a dynamic foundation that links the "zero degree" debate to contemporary urban policies.

CONCLUSION

This theoretical discussion of the "zero degree" in architecture, as explored through the concepts of *junkspace* and *running room*, reveals that the contemporary built environment is defined by a loss of meaning rather than its creation. Rem Koolhaas's concept of junkspace represents the final stage of the formal, political and ideological developments of modernism; it is an architectural regime dominated by voids, continuity and neutral surfaces, characterised by a tendency to forget. In contrast, Hal Foster proposes an architectural consciousness emerging against this regime of forgetting. He argues that architecture can establish a space for running and a ground for critique in the unhealed cracks. Section titles such as Autonomy, Spectacle, Typology, and Without Qualities, in particular, represent a process in which architecture loses its identity, becomes a spectacle, and loses its critical function. However, running room, though fragmented in these sections, offers a line of theoretical resistance that remains unexplored. While *Junkspace* represents the post-fordist scenario that silences architecture, *Running Room* explores alternative forms of writing that could intervene in this scenario. At this threshold, where architecture has regressed to "zero degree", there is no longer a narrative of the past or a utopia of the future, only an intervenable present. In this context, Foster's *Running Room* is not merely a response, but an ethical stance for architectural theory — an invitation to rewrite the conditions, fracture the narrative and rethink architecture. Architecture must reveal itself as well as construct itself.

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