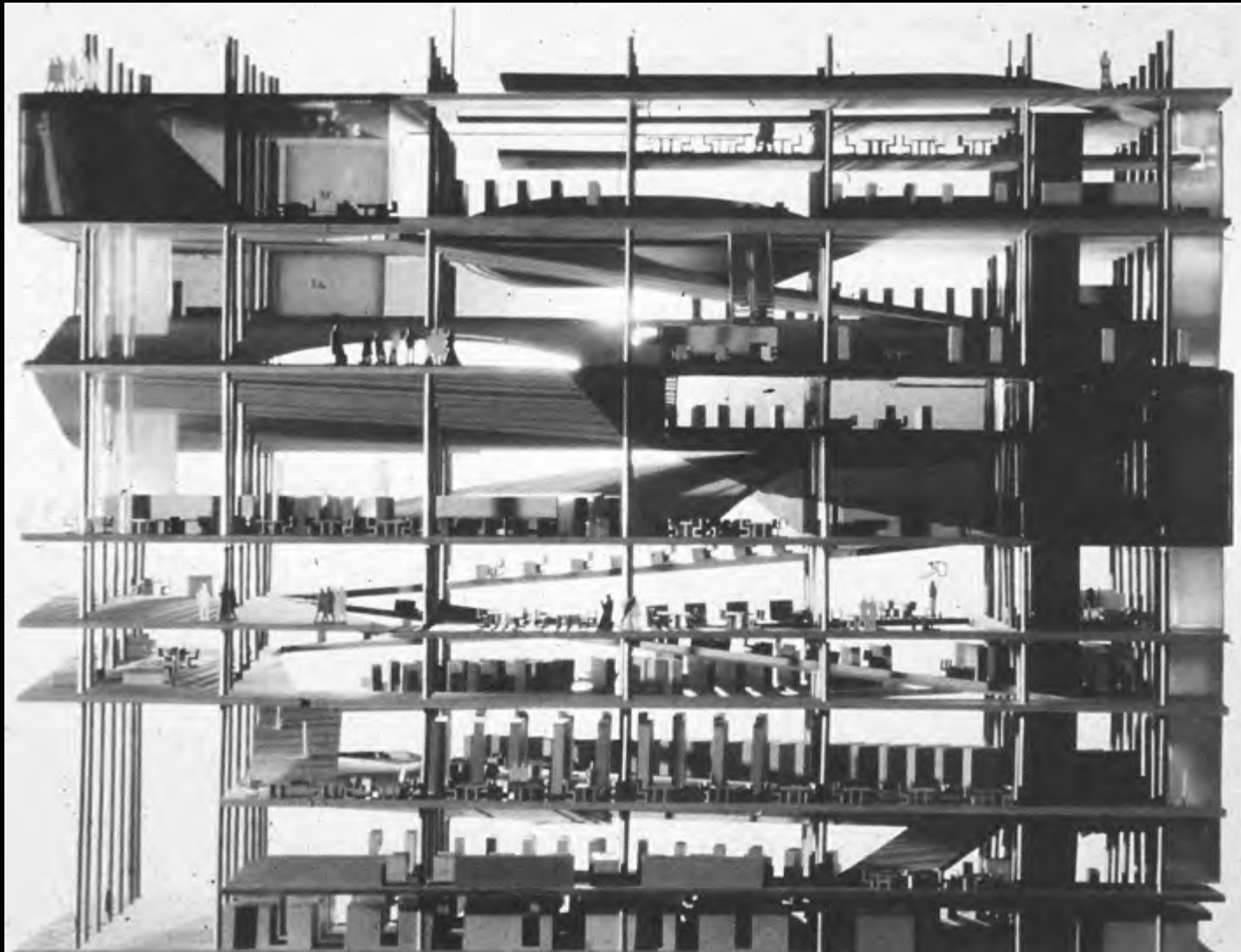


8. *Strategies of the Void*

Rem Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries, 1992-93





Koolhaas, CCTV



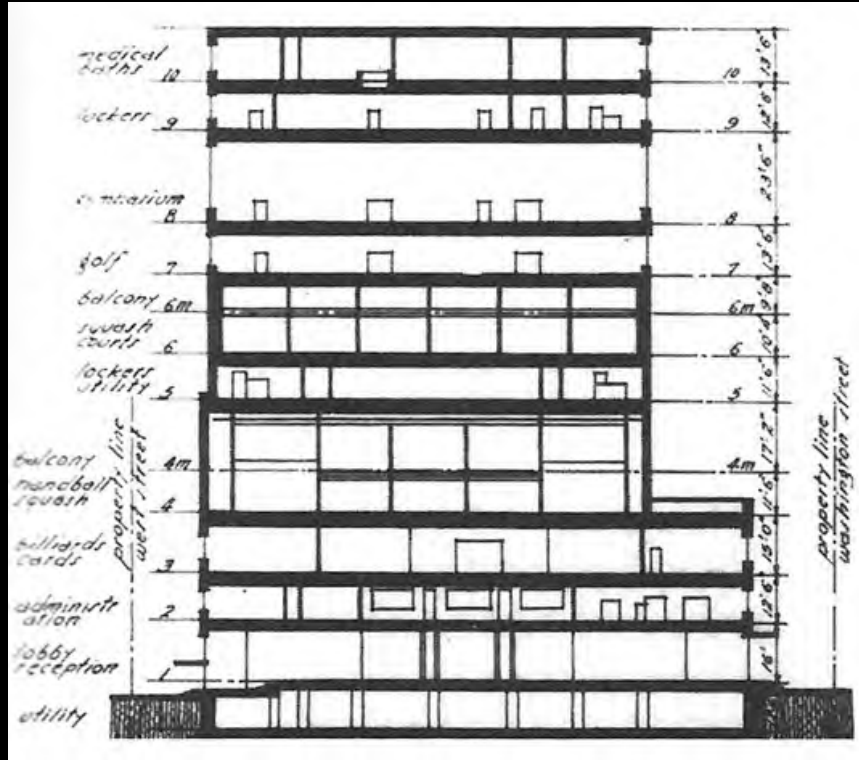
REX, Museum Plaza



Koolhaas, Waterfront City, Dubai

What does Walter Benjamin's remark mean in reference to the iconic buildings of today?

“If Walter Benjamin, in his famous and oft-quoted remark, said that architecture is viewed in a state of distraction, then the iconic buildings so prevalent today may reflect this condition.”



Koolhaas, New York Athletic Club and Seattle Public Library

“This prominence of iconic buildings relates to two factors: first, perhaps to a tendency to treat the diagram as an icon; second, a tendency to apply the iconic diagram directly to the problem of generating form.”



Koolhaas, Seattle Public Library

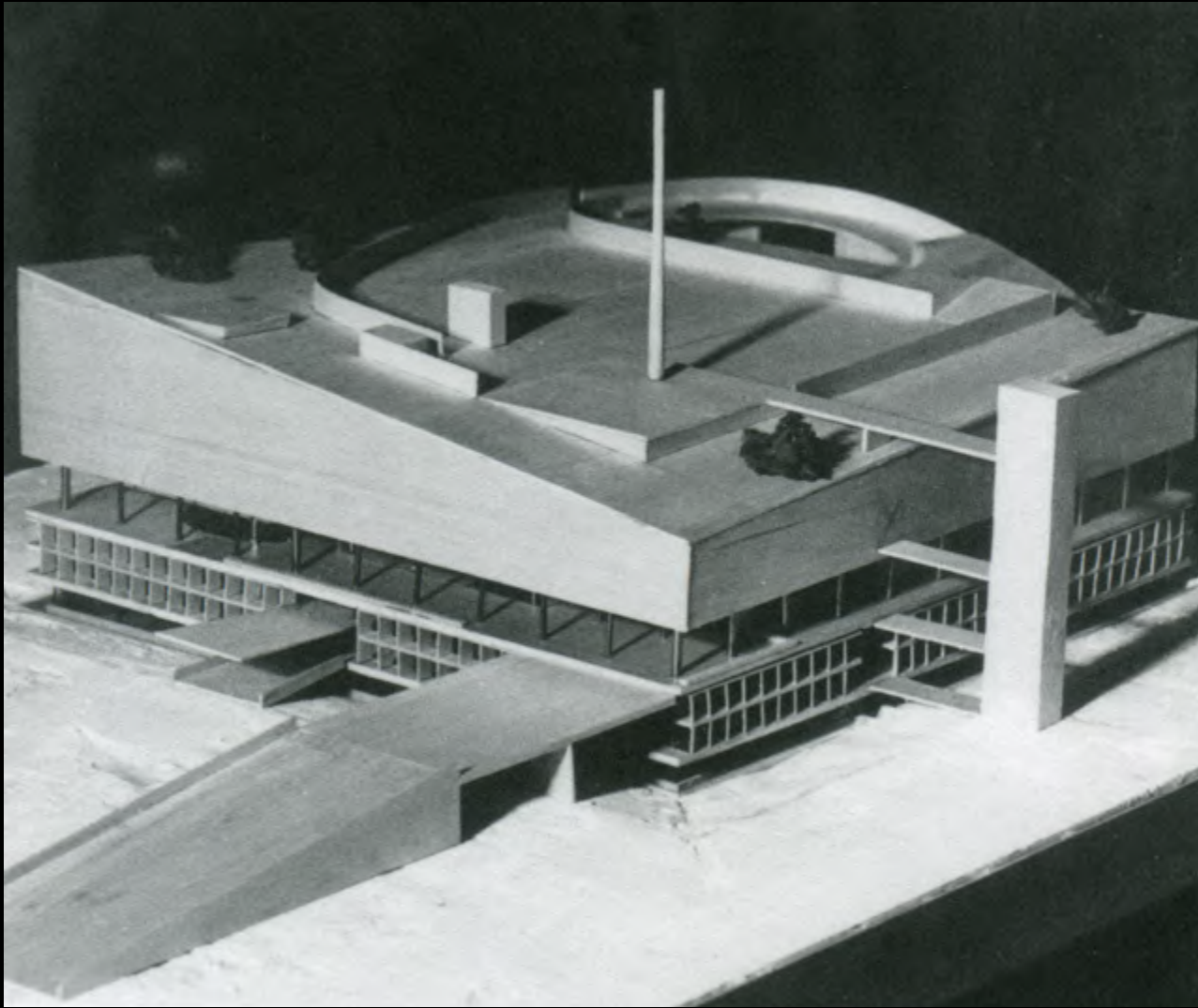


“However, much of his recent work, such as the Seattle Public Library or the Casa da Musica in Porto, privileges the idea of an iconic diagram in that the realized form of the building has a visual similitude to its diagram of functions..“



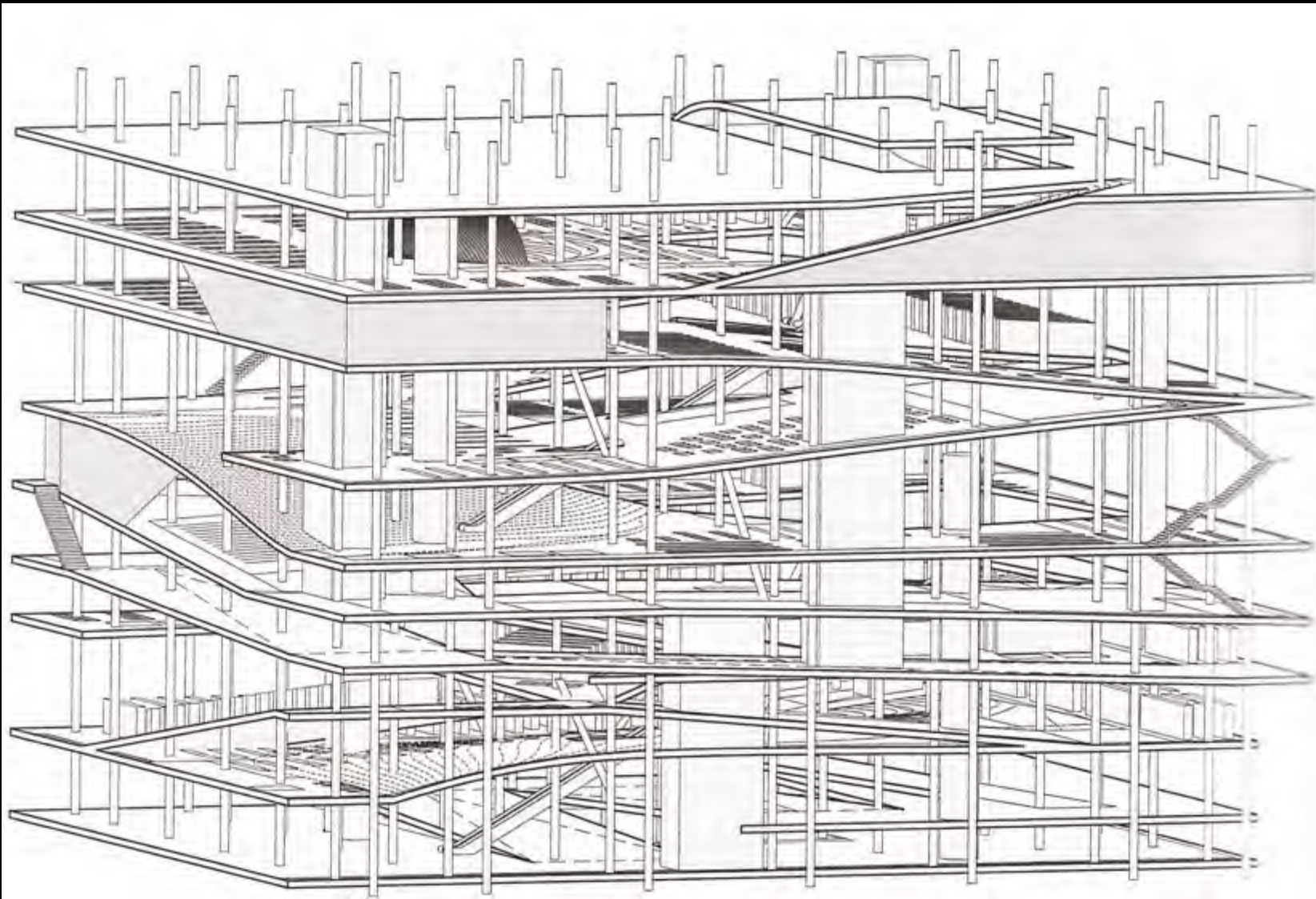
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

“It can be argued that Koolhaas’s 1992 project for the Jussieu Libraries takes a position between these two types of diagrams – that is, that it marks an inflection point in Koolhaas’s shift from a symbolic to an iconic diagram, and that this movement is registered through a critique of the diagrams of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.”



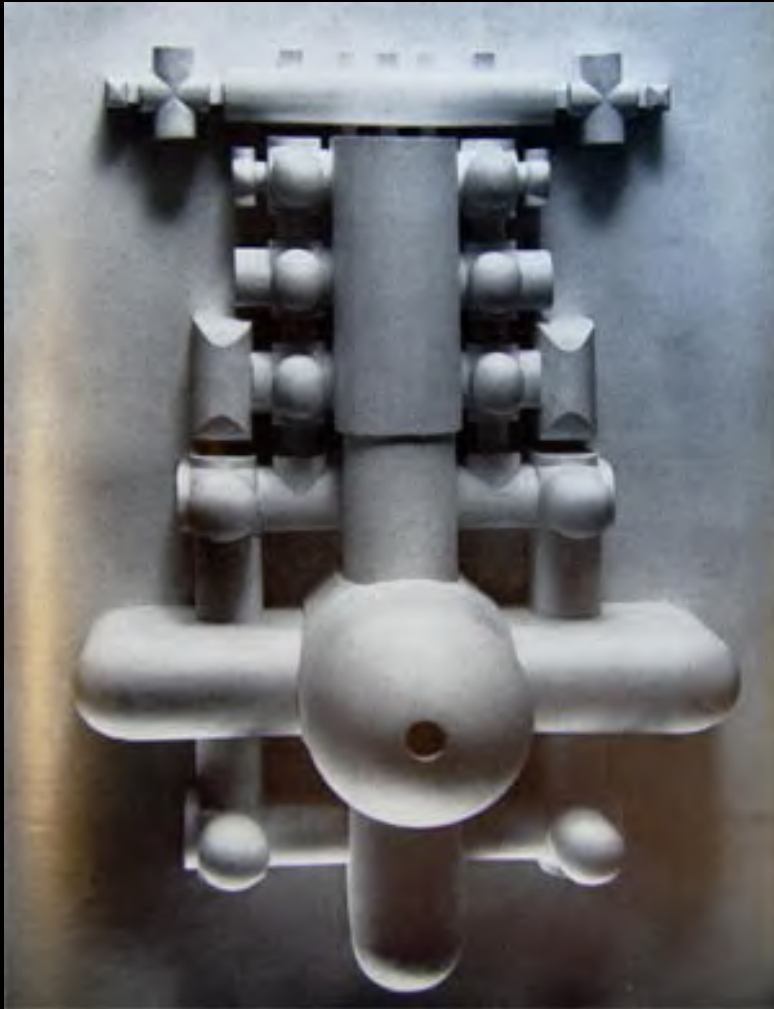
Le Corbusier, Palais des Congrès-Strasbourg

“...Palais des Congrès-Strasbourg...because in section the project implies a continuity between the ground and the roof...denies the ground as a datum by suggesting that the ground is conceived as a malleable fabric, capable of being pulled up to meet the roof.”

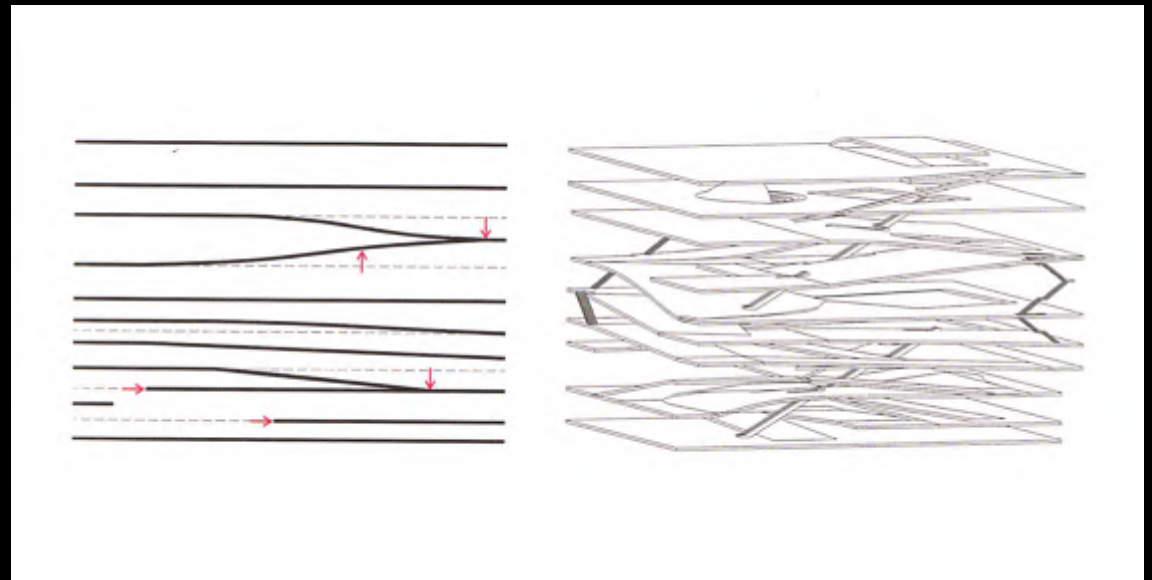


What is poche?

“...Koolhaas uses the void...an inversion of poche”



Latent – present or potential but not evident or active
Force – the capacity to do work or cause physical change;
energy, strength, or active power



Luigi Moretti, Plaster Cast

What does it mean to “capture its energy ... as a latent force contained between layers of solid floors”?

“While architects such as Luigi Moretti sought to solidify the void, Koolhaas instead seeks to capture its energy by conceptualizing the void as a latent force contained between layers of solid floors.”



How does void become poche in Tres Grande Bibliotheque?



“‘Strategy of the Void’...describes the library as a solid stack from which volumes are carved...’The major public spaces are defined as absences of building, voids carved out of the information solid.’ ”

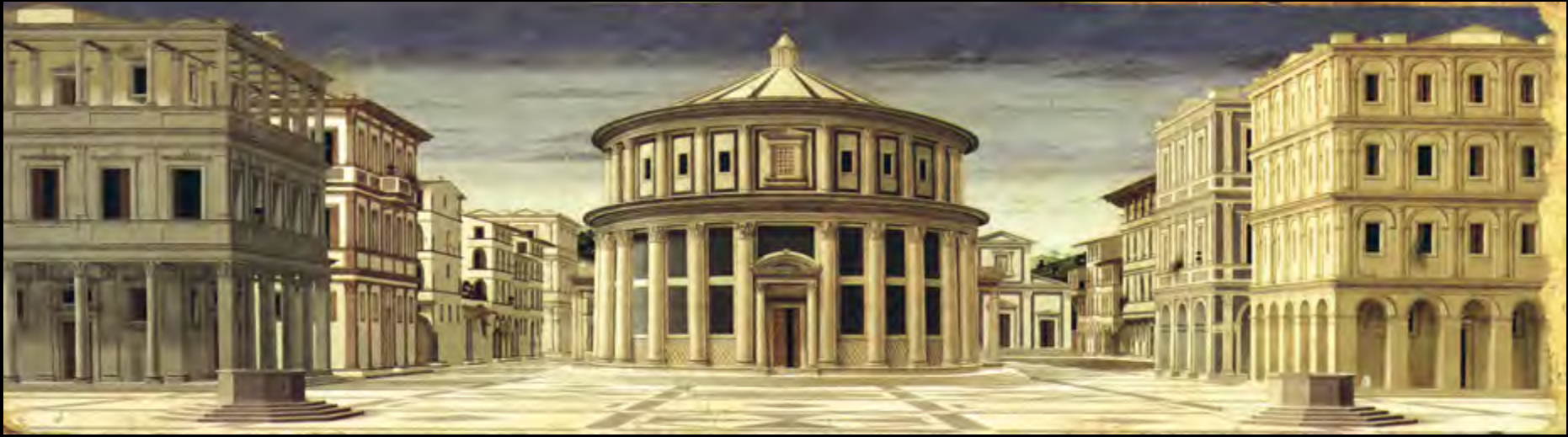
“...the project conceives the void not only as a critique of modernist precedents, but also as a means to rethink the relationship between the subject and the object of architecture, and ultimately to suggest another form of close reading.”



Paris uprisings over Vietnam, US imperialism, and the racial divide...



“...the expansion of which had been initially truncated by the student uprisings of May 1968. Koolhaas (describes) being powerfully affected by the events of 1968 and the literary and cultural theories generated in its wake.”



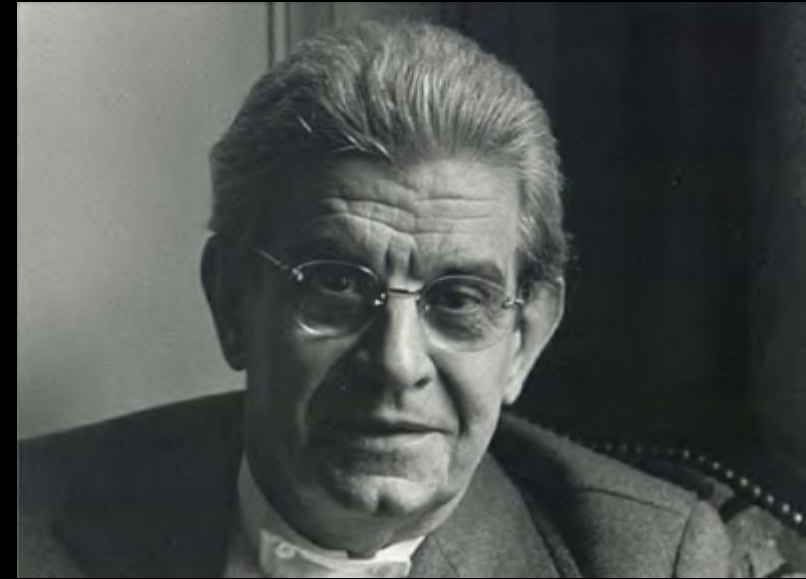
Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye

Discuss the 'subject' and 'object' in the above images with the statement below.

“These challenged the humanist notion of the subject and the modernist notion of the object as a part of a rational whole.”



Aldo Van Eyck, Estec Noordwijk, 1989



Jacques Lacan, return to Freud's ego

Jacques Lacan's notion of the split subject...

How does this view make the concept of 'wholeness' untenable?

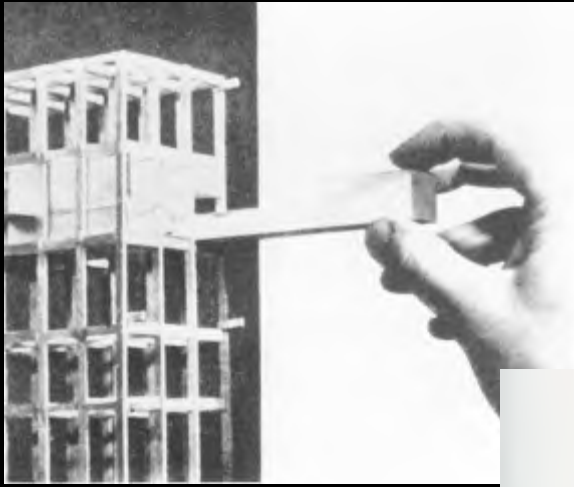
“...the fragment cannot help but to recall an absent ‘whole,’ and in that sense maintains, at least in concept, a traditional part-to-whole relationship. The post 1968 generation...reflected alternative ways to view the subject, drawing on structuralist and poststructuralist theory.”



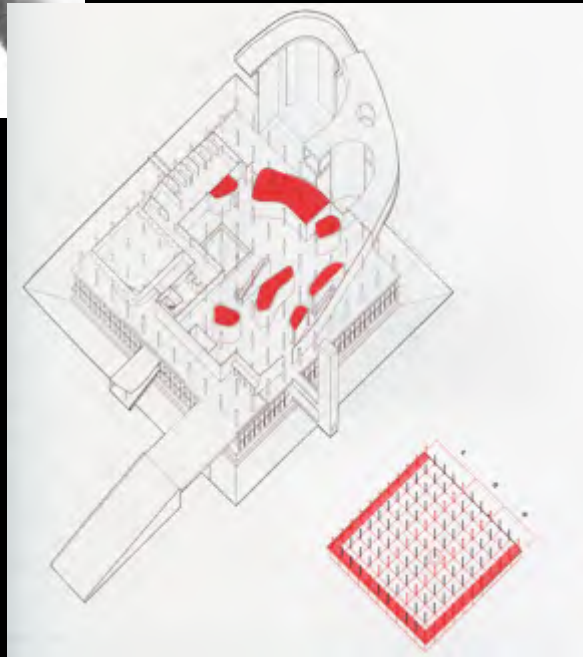
Koolhaas, Seattle Public Library and Casa da Musica

Discuss the quote below using the images above.

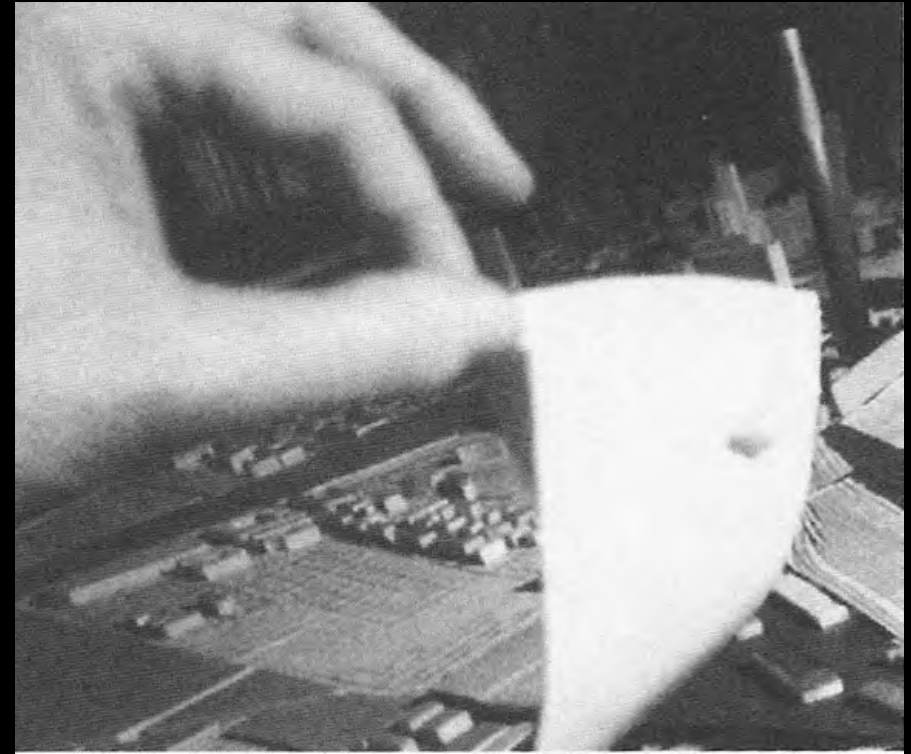
“A second aspect of Koolhaas’s strategy of the void involves creating situations which introduce a voyeuristic gaze and in which the voided space both blocks direct vision and reveals supposedly hidden elements.”



Le Corbusier, Unite d'Habitation



Le Corbusier, Strasbourg



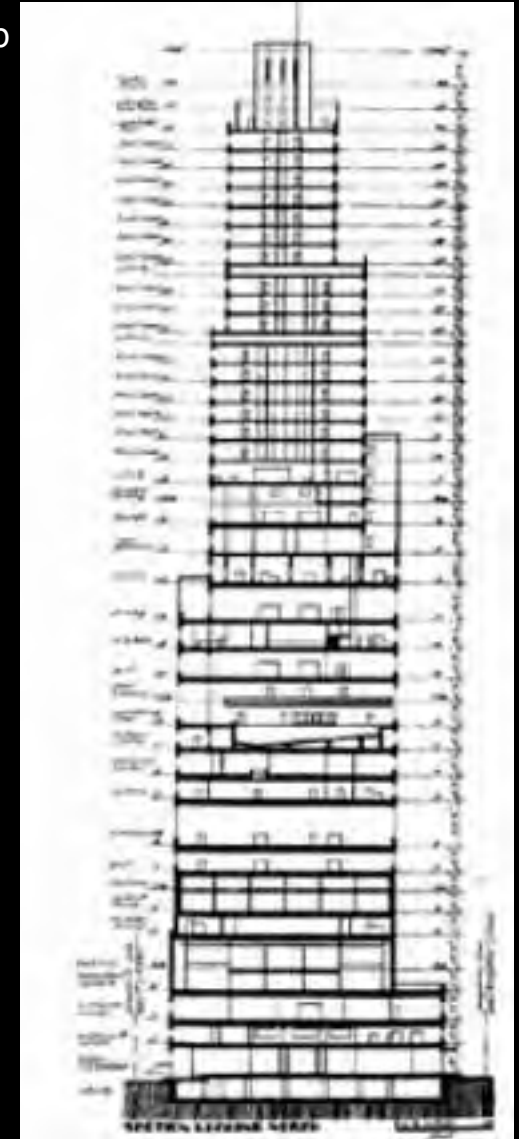
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

How is the 'lifting up' different for Le Corbusier and Koolhaas?

“...the surface is malleable and pliable, that it is no longer specifically related to the ground, and it partakes in a vertical continuum...in lifting up the city's fabric, a hidden aspect of its infrastructure is revealed as an underlying object.”



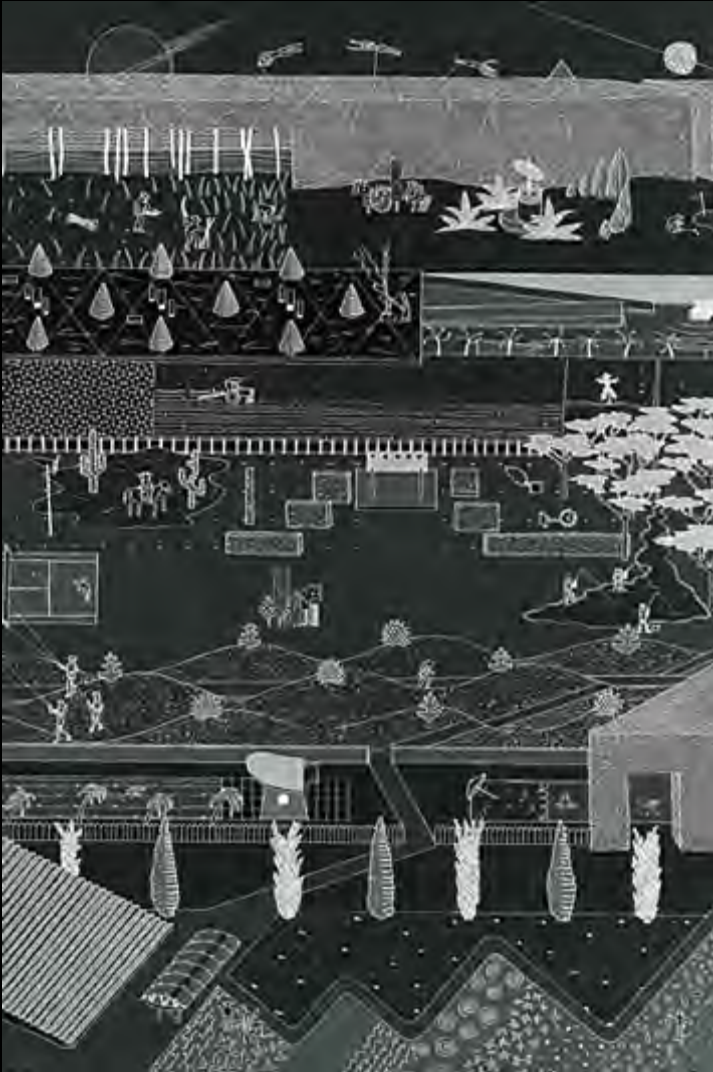
Koolhaas, New York Athletic Club



Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*

Describe the New York Athletic club as contiguous discontinuity in the New York Athletic Club.

“It is not a traditional diagram of function, but is rather a diagram symbolic of the dismantling of the traditional physical contiguity of part-to-whole relationships.”



Koolhaas, Parc de La Villette

“...contiguous discontinuity, also appears in Koolhaas’s entry for the 1982 Parc de La Villette competition in Paris.”



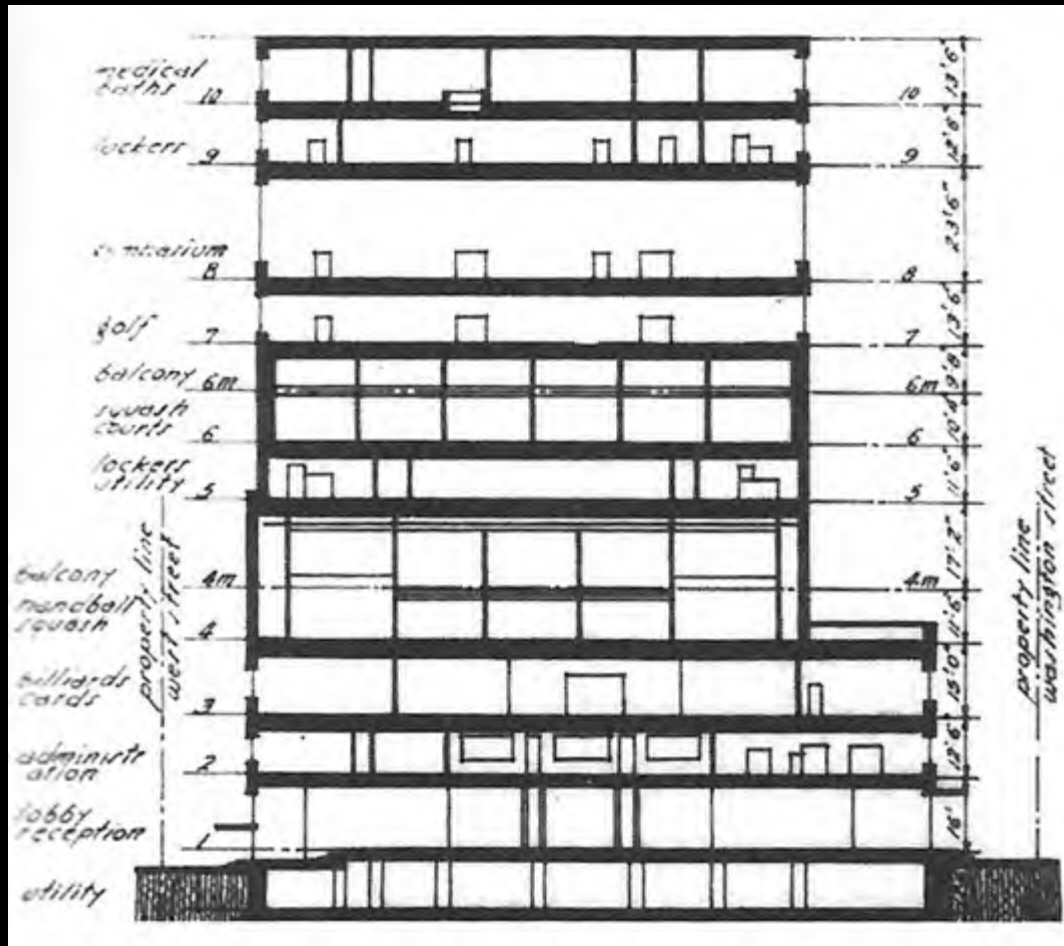
Nolli Plan

Koolhaas, Parc de La Villette



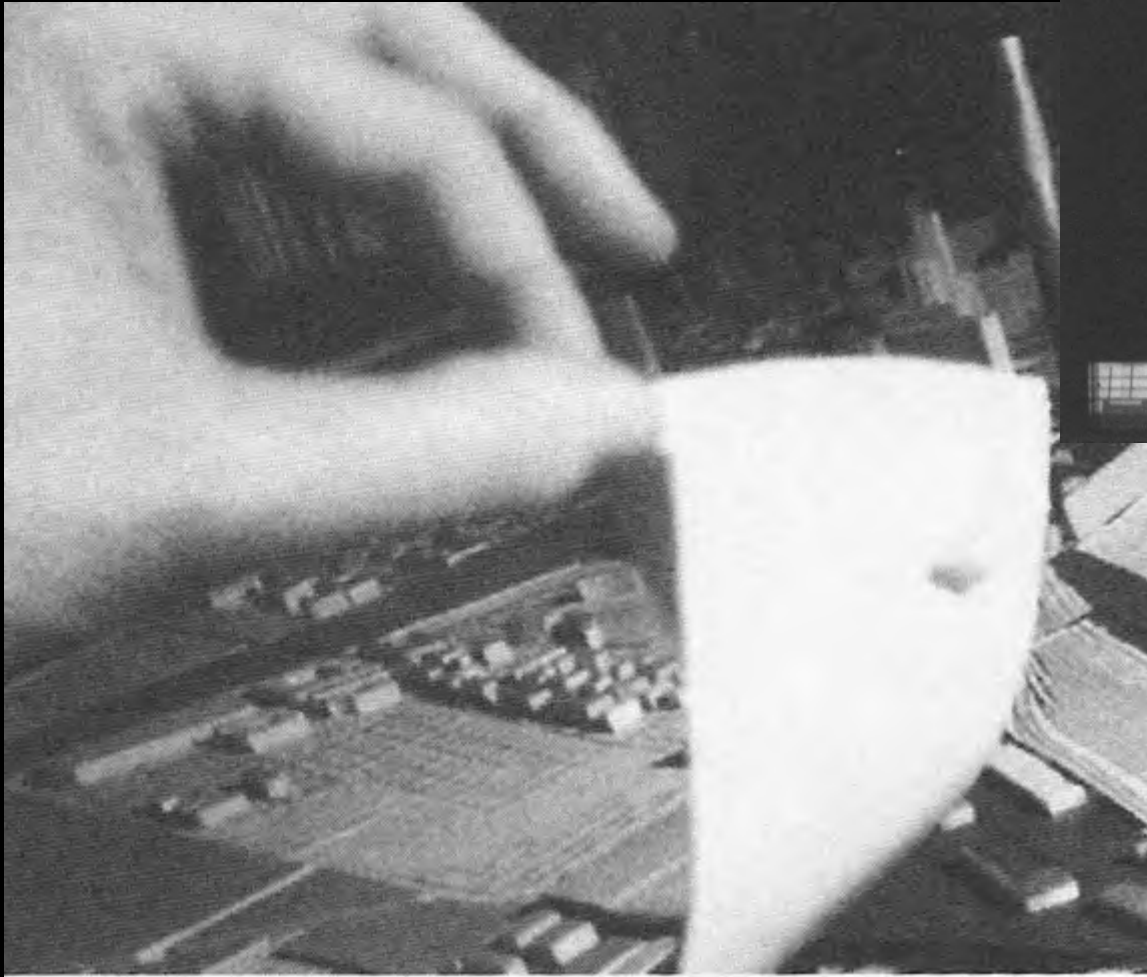
Discuss figure ground using the two images above.

“Koolhaas’s La Villette proposal breaks with a figure/ground urbanism to propose a montage of programmatic lateral bands linked by the strong vertical of a proposed promenade.”

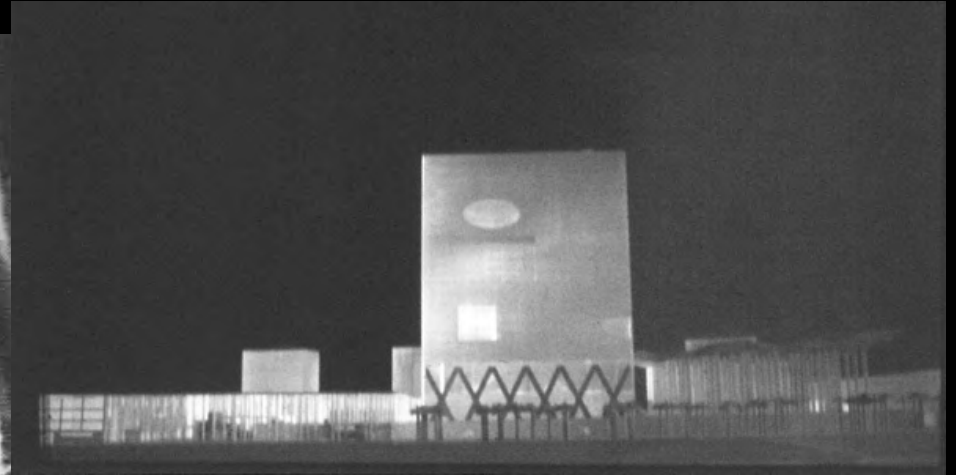


Compare the two images above.
Why is the comparison of these two specific project types important?

“This is a clear echo of the New York Athletic Club...”

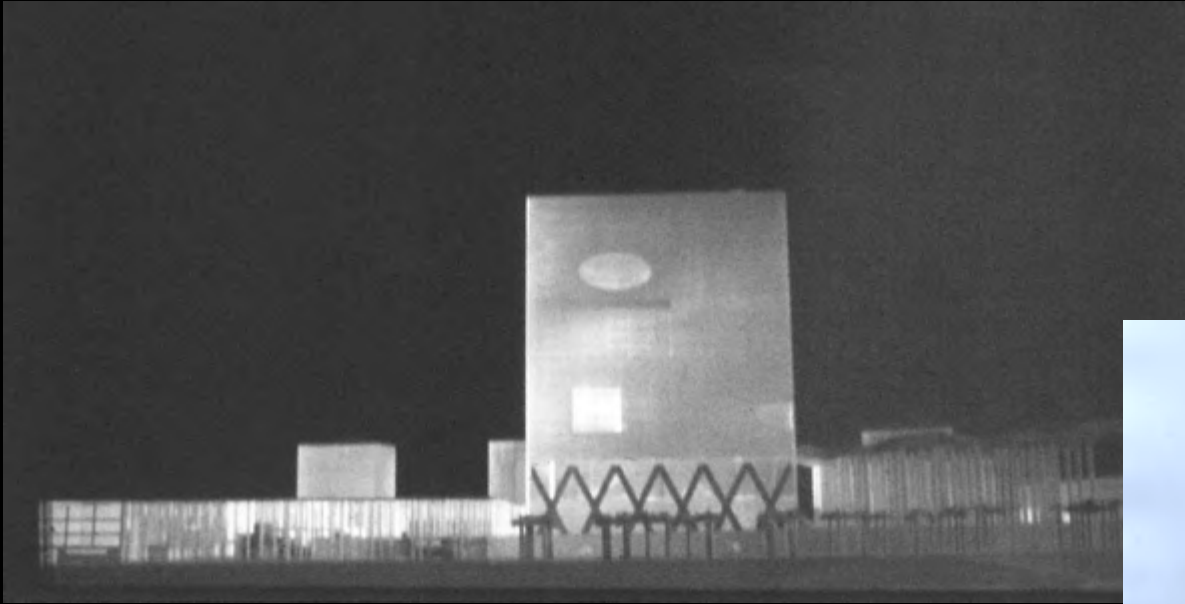


Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries



Koolhaas, Tres Grande Bibliotheque

“This denial of the ground as a datum begins to appear in Koolhaas’s project for the Tres Grande Bibliotheque in 1993, which further develops Koolhaas’s diagram of contiguous discontinuity in the section of the building.”



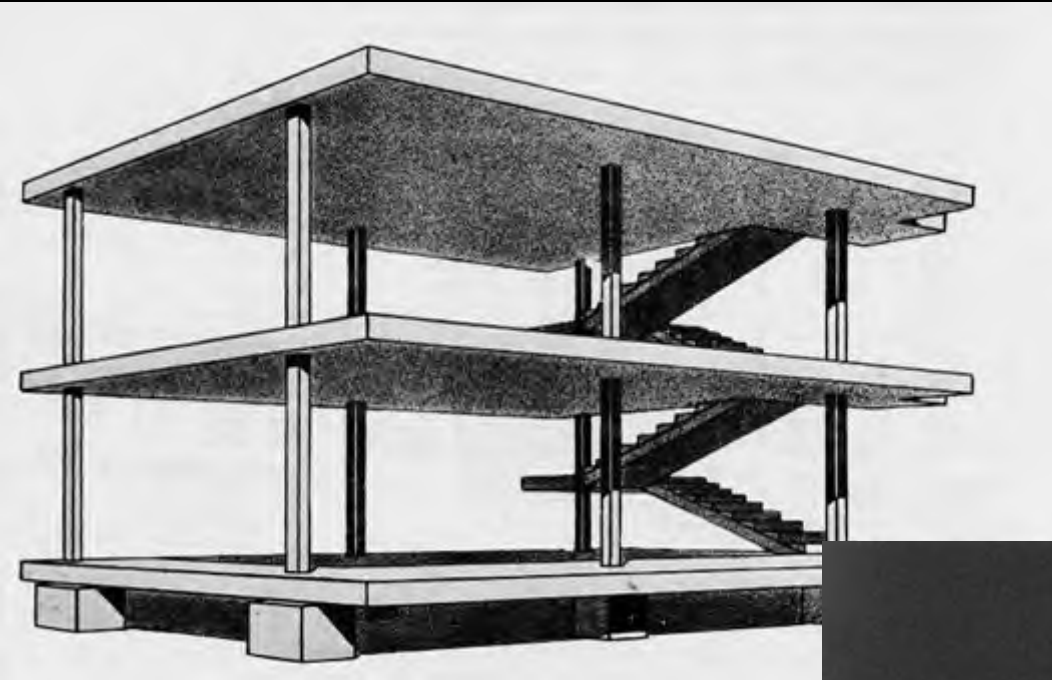
Koolhaas, Tres Grande Bibliotheque



Mies Van der Rohe, Crown Hall

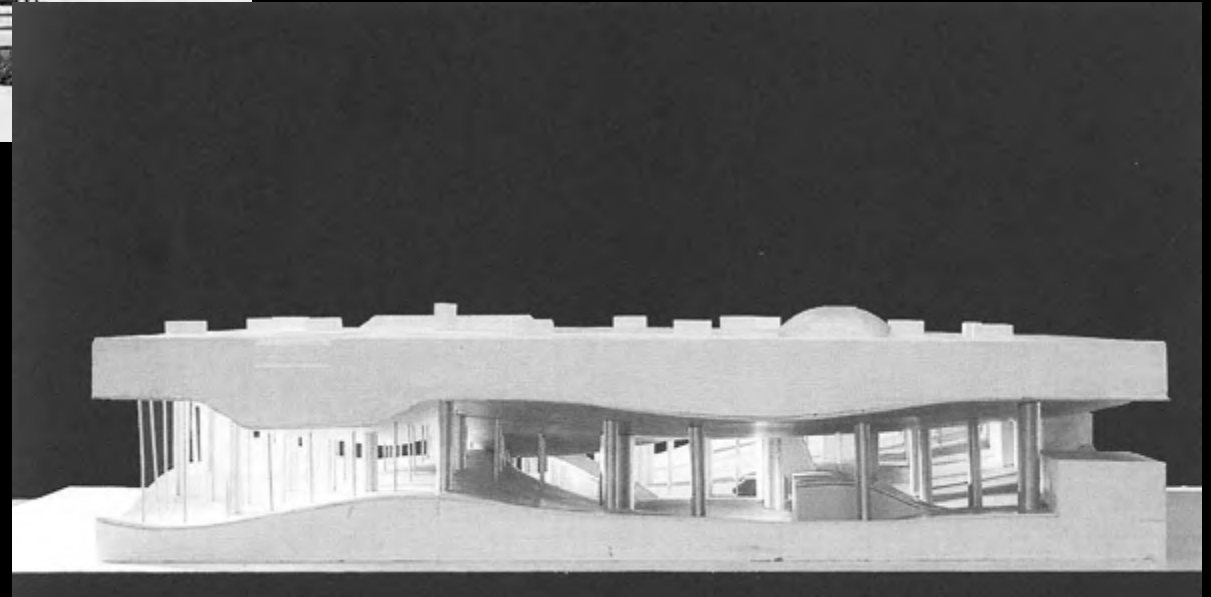
Discuss the statement below using the images above.

“This structural system also could be seen as a critique of Mies’s umbrella diagram.”



Le Corbusier, Maison Dom-ino

Koolhaas, Convention Center, Agadir, Morocco



How is the convention center in Morocco a critique of the Maison Dom-ino?

“The 1990 project for a convention center at Agadir, Morocco, presents a critique of the horizontal extension of space proposed by Le Corbusier with his Maison Dom-ino diagram.



Koolhaas, Convention Center, Agadir, Morocco

Describe the three types of sectional interpretations.

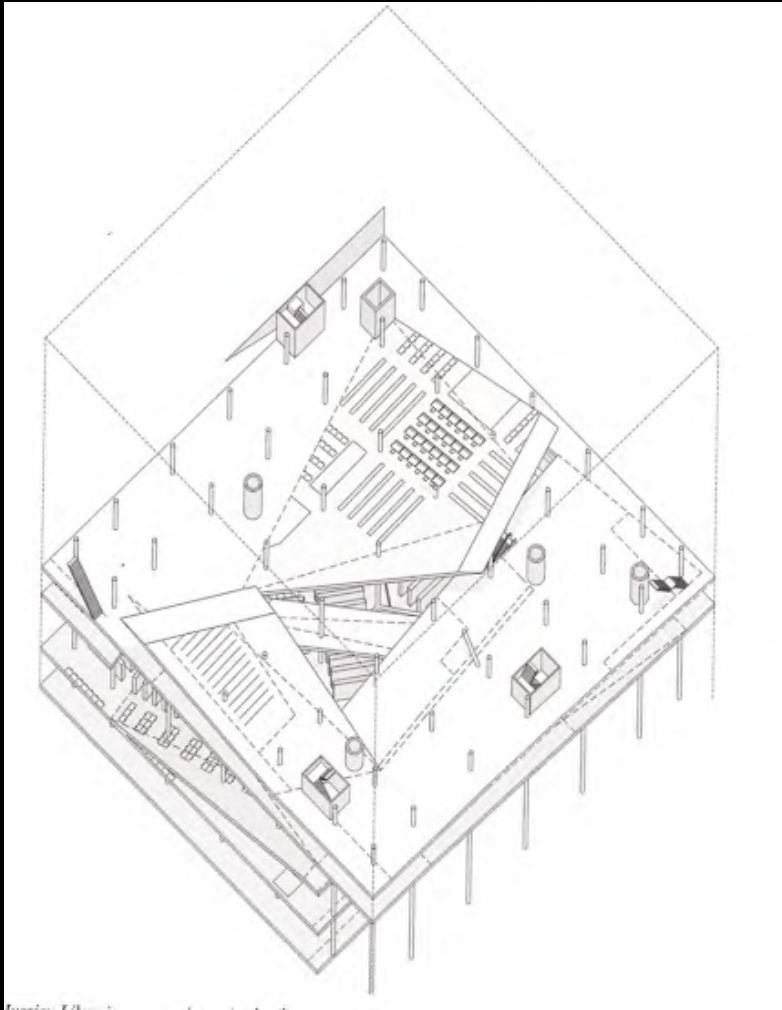
“...one, the ground becomes modulated; two, the sectional space becomes modulated where the ground rises substantially in the section; and three, the horizontal is no longer a continuum.”



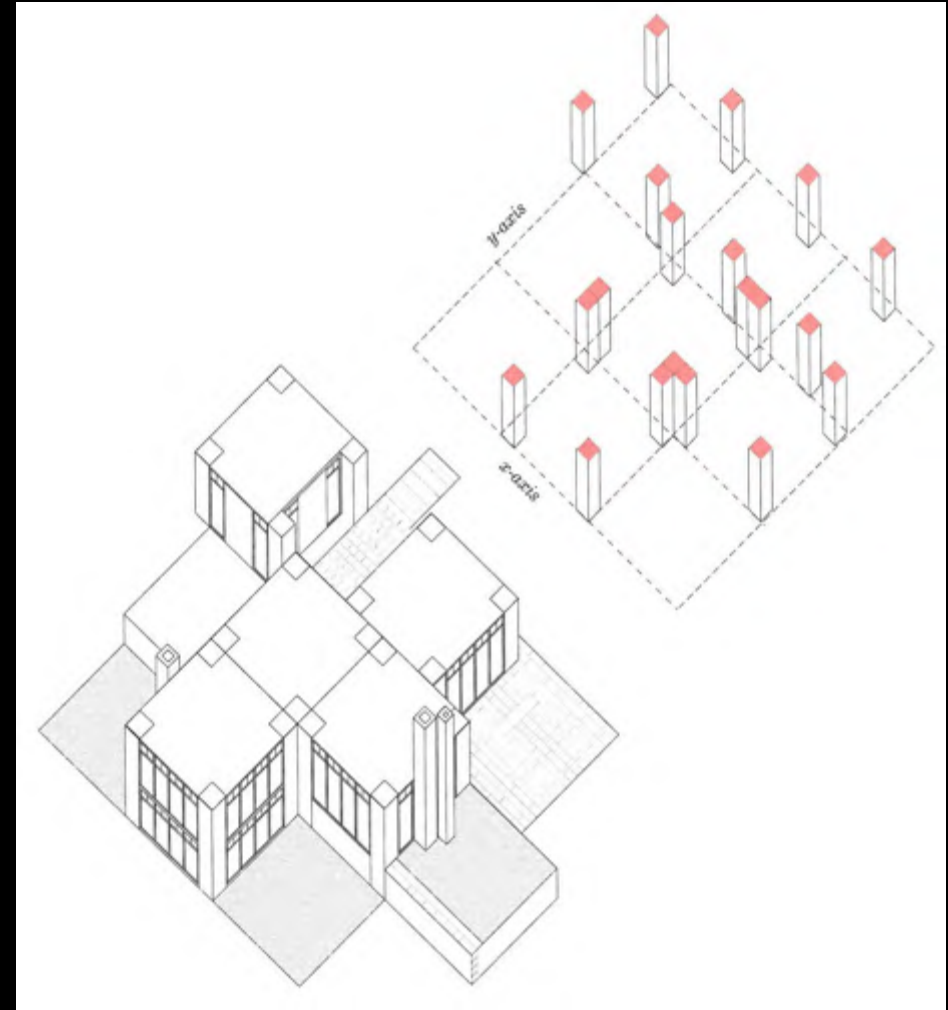
Koolhaas, Convention Center, Agadir, Morocco

Discuss the figured void and figured poche.

“...proposes a figured section where the horizontal is a figured void cut out of an equally figured solid poche.”



Koolhaas



Kahn

What is Eisenman saying differentiates Koolhaas from others before him?

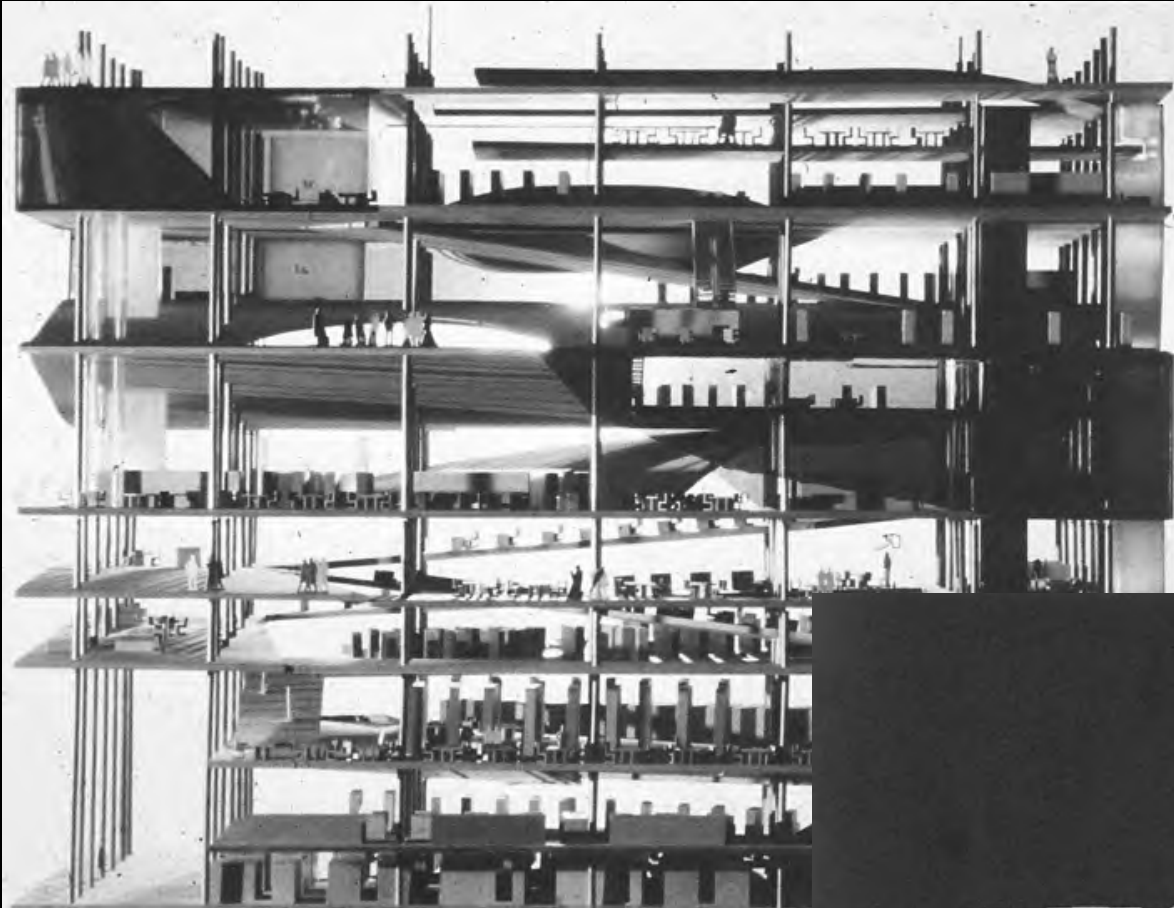
“Koolhaas introduces a horizontal disturbance in section as a dominant mode of discourse rather than the vertical extrusion typical of classical architecture and present in the work of postwar American architects such as Louis Kahn.”



Koolhaas, Seattle Public Library, Casa da Musica, IIT Student Center

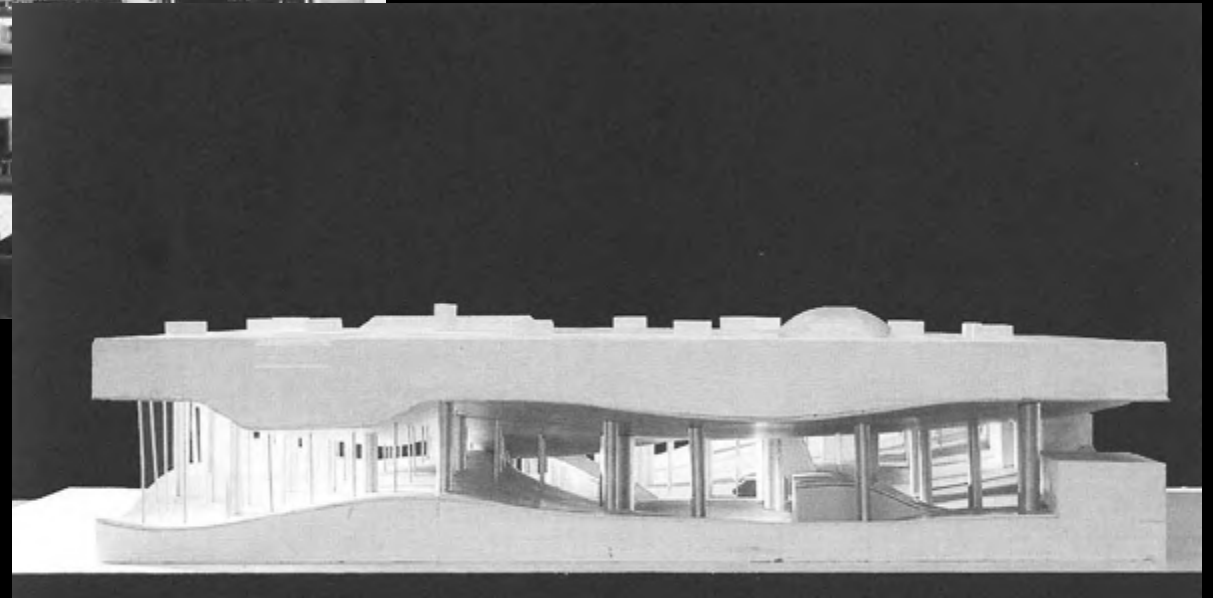
Why would this condition be called a 'performative discourse?'

“The resultant *coup d'oeil* and peripheral views shift the focus of opticality from the physical object to the subject...becoming a part of a different kind of spatial relationship between subject and object...*performative discourse*.”

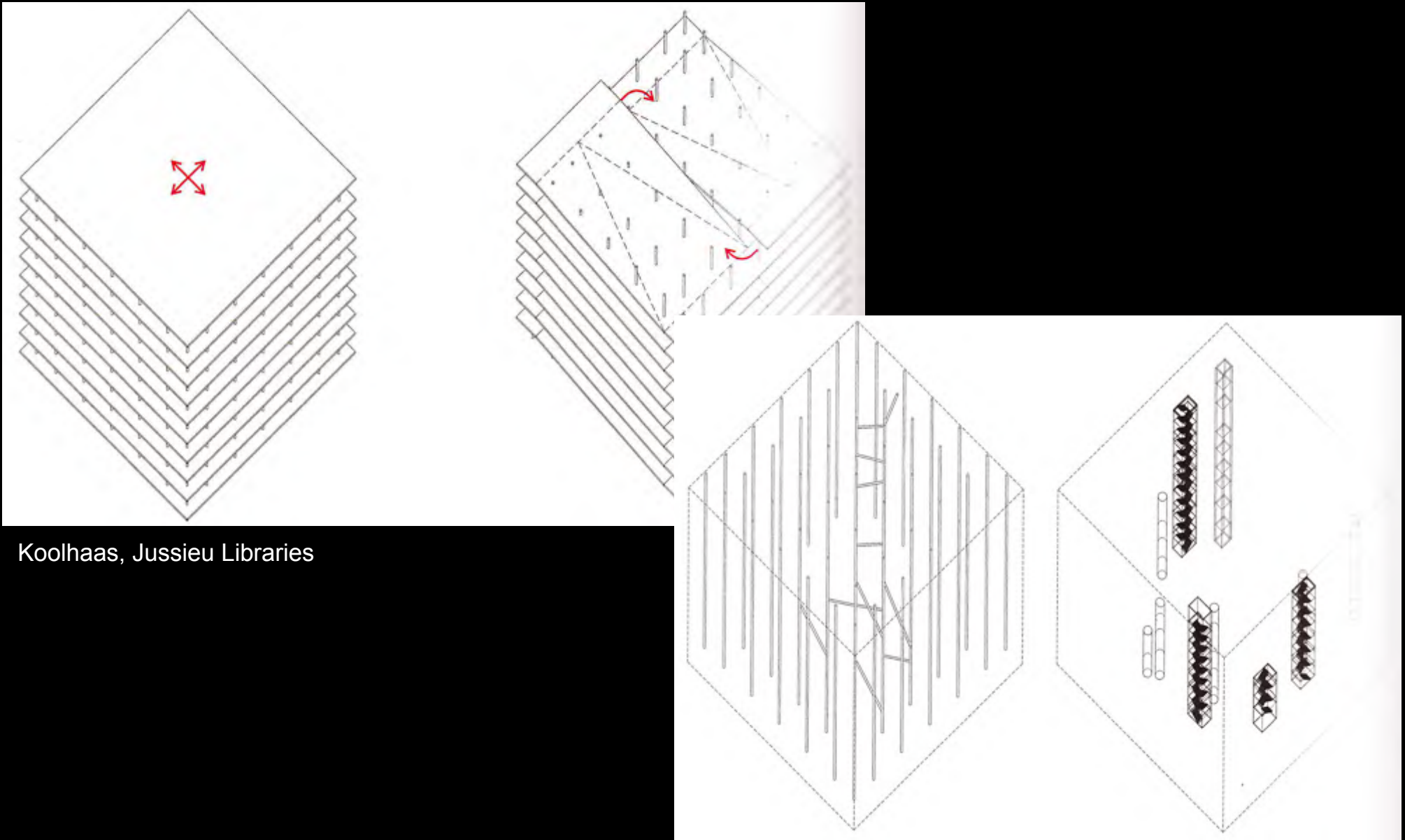


Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

Koolhaas, Convention Center, Agadir, Morocco

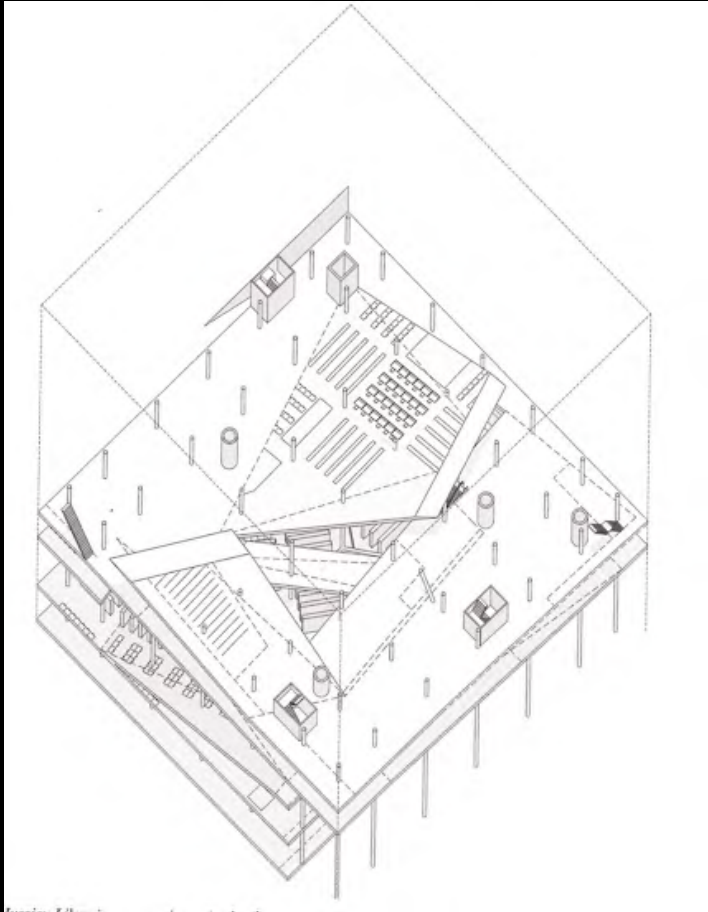


“While the Jussieu Libraries project of 1992-93 is essentially a vertical project, the warped floors signal an evolution from Agadir.”



Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

“Conceptually the circulation and the floor levels become a continuous surface, yet the project retains a discontinuous relationship in terms of a Cartesian axially.”



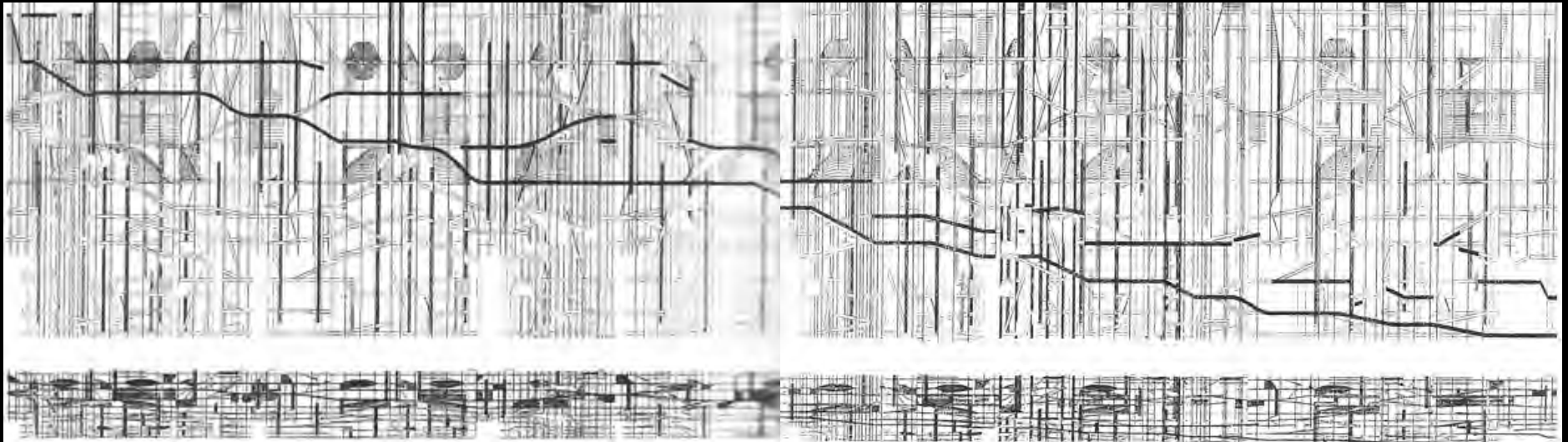
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries



Koolhaas, Seattle Public Library



“There are spaces in Jussieu which allow a voyeuristic tendency to take place..begins with the Jussieu Libraries and continues...in the Seattle Library.”

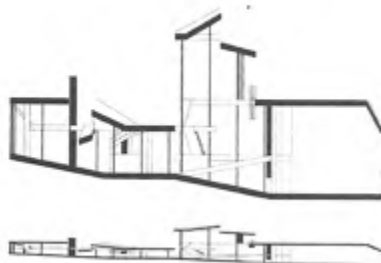


Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

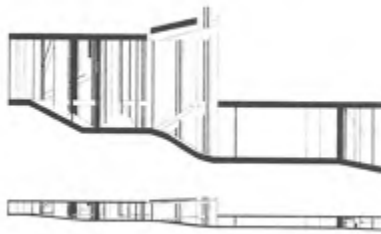
“The unfolded section of the Jussieu Libraries competition entry becomes a critique of Koolhaas’s earlier New York Athletic Club diagram, and produces an entirely new diagram that focuses on the internal continuity of surfaces.”



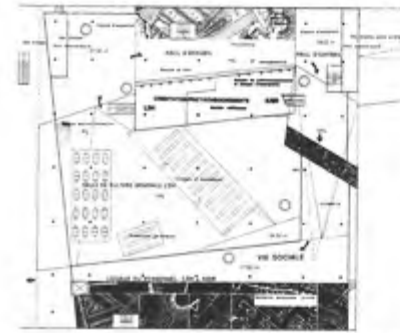
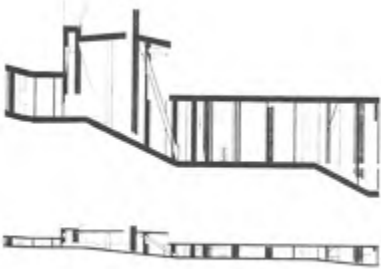
9. Jussieu Libraries, third sublevel, plan and sections.



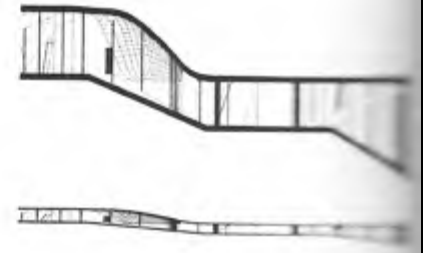
10. Jussieu Libraries, second sublevel, plan and sections.



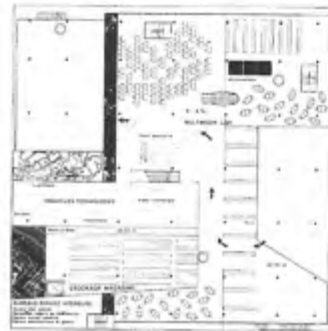
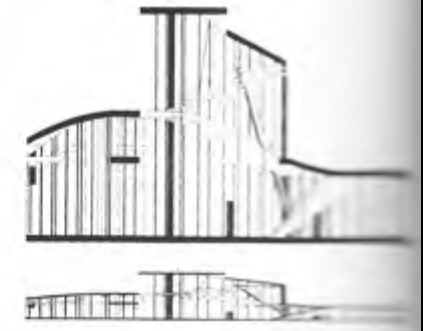
11. Jussieu Libraries, first sublevel, plan and sections.



12. Jussieu Libraries, mezzanine-entry level, plan and sections.



13. Jussieu Libraries, first floor, plan and sections.



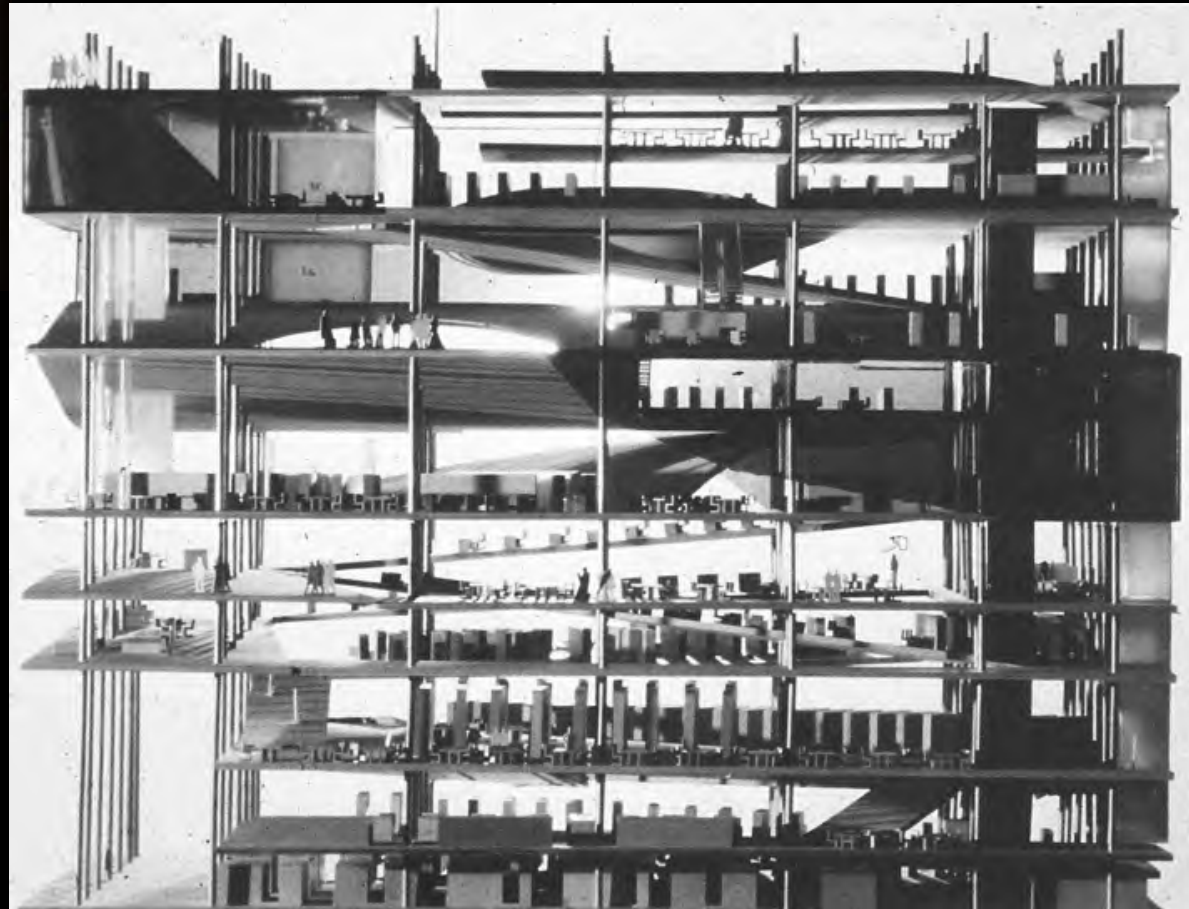
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

“The sections also suggest that the only real volumes in the building are the interstitial spaces between floors.”



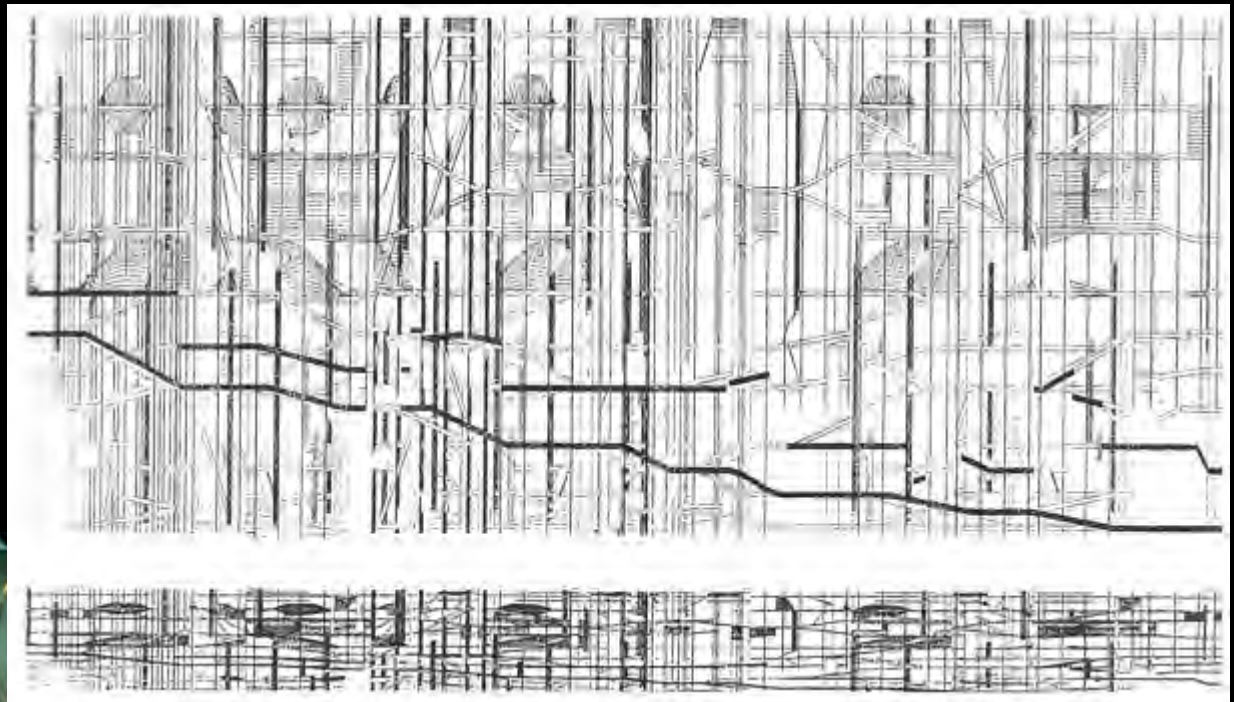
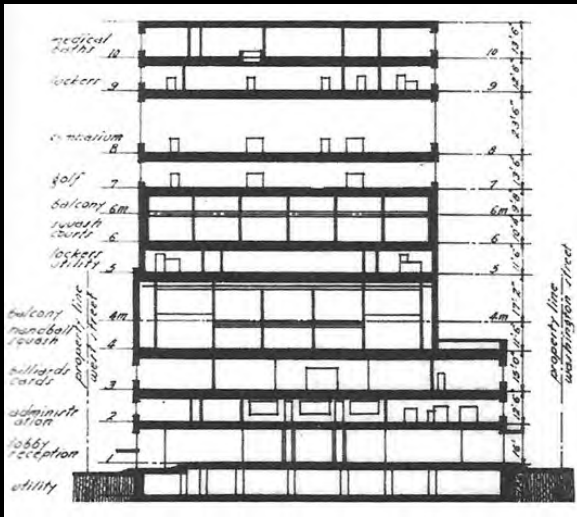
Koolhaas, Tres Grande Bibliotheque

Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries



“At Jussieu, as in the Tres Grande Bibliotheque, Koolhaas retains aspects of classical architectural notation...”

Lecture 9: Rem Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries, 1992-93



Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries



Koolhaas, New York Athletic Club & La Villette

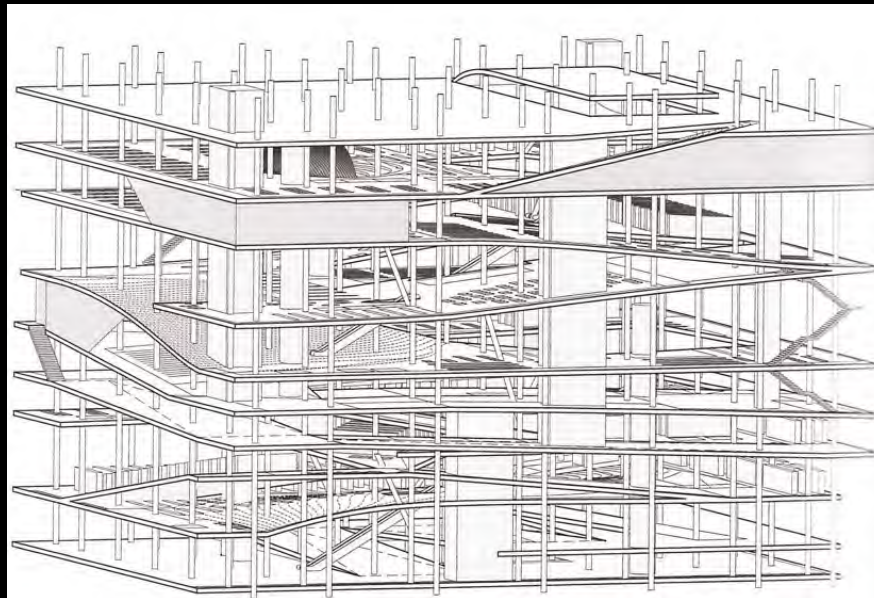
“The cross section of the Jussieu Libraries expresses the discontinuous relationships of program, and the continuity of the ramped floors produces an entirely other section, no longer the stacked layers of the New York Athletic Club or La Villette.”



Moretti



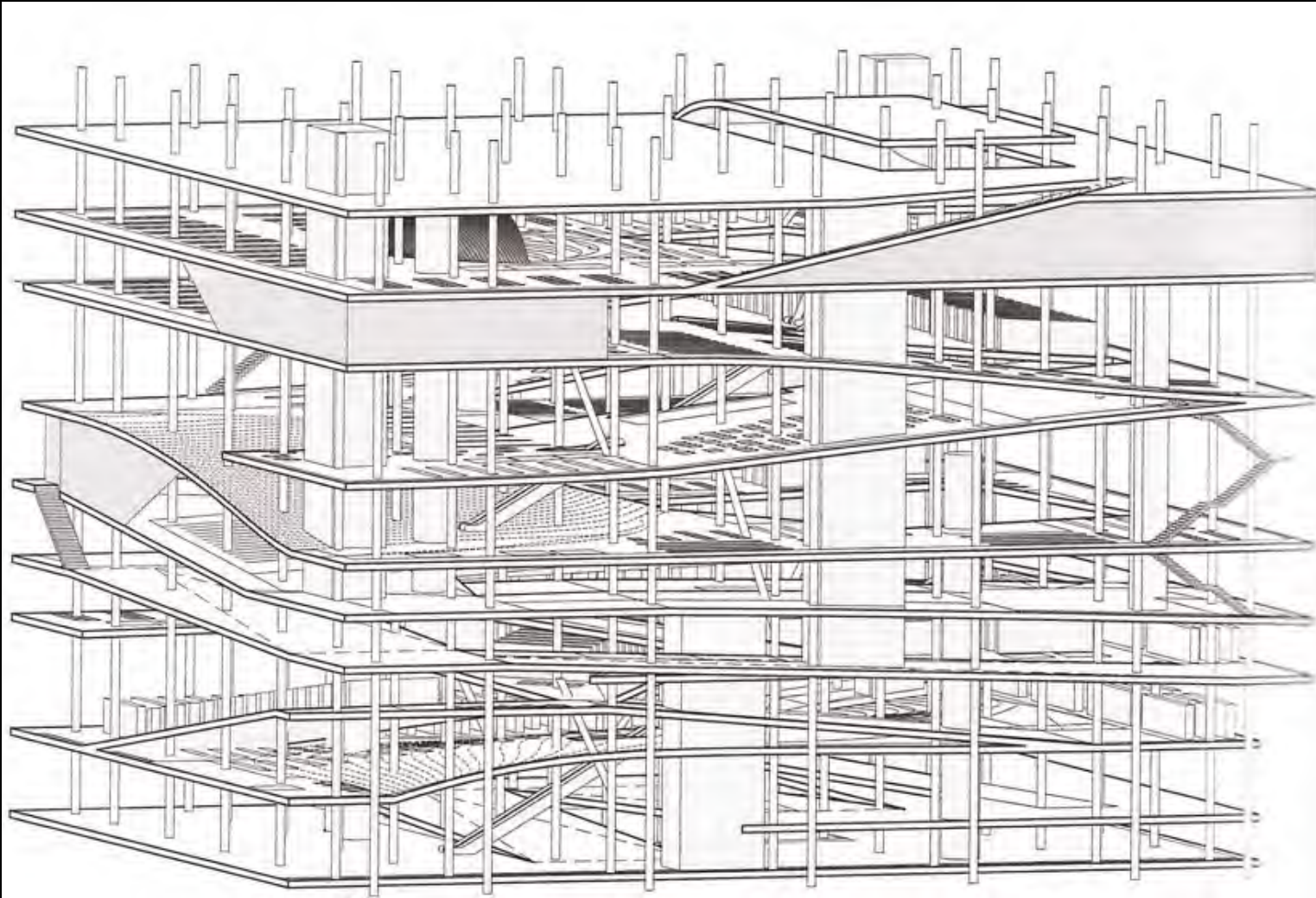
Venturi



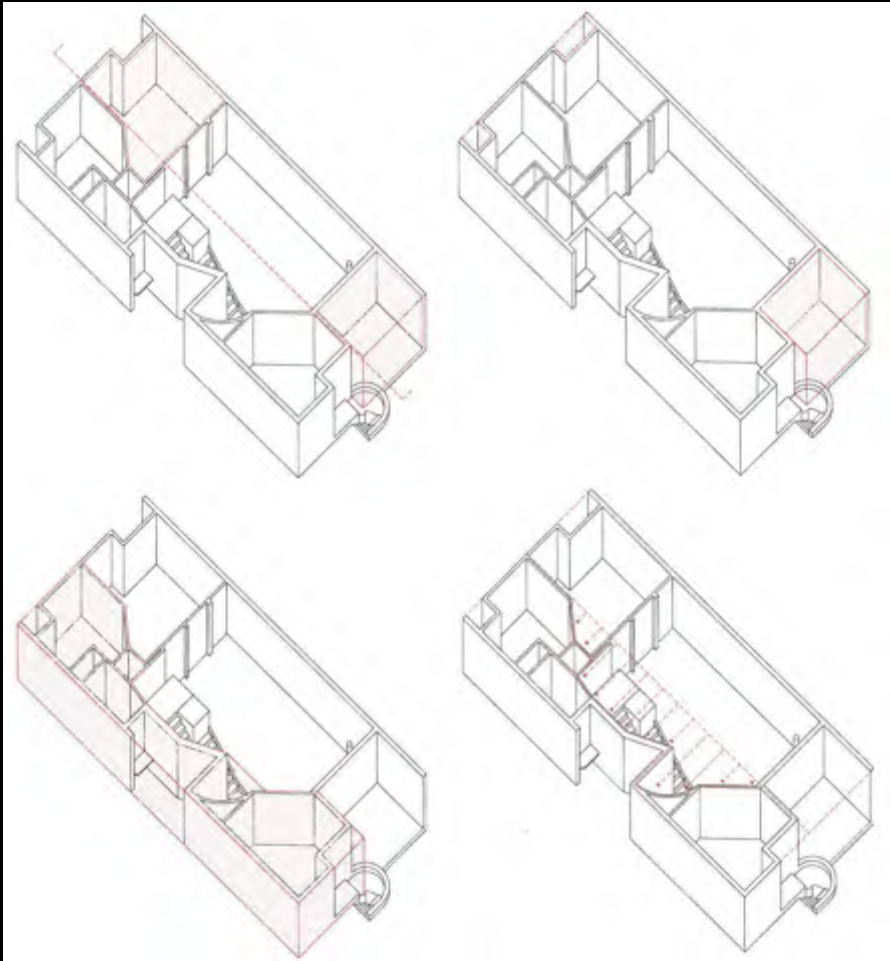
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

“...suggest a departure from architecture as a product of close attention...linking the issue of the void – present in the postwar work of Moretti and Venturi – to new methods of working that confront questions about part-to-whole relationships, inattention versus close attention, disjunction versus fragmentation.”

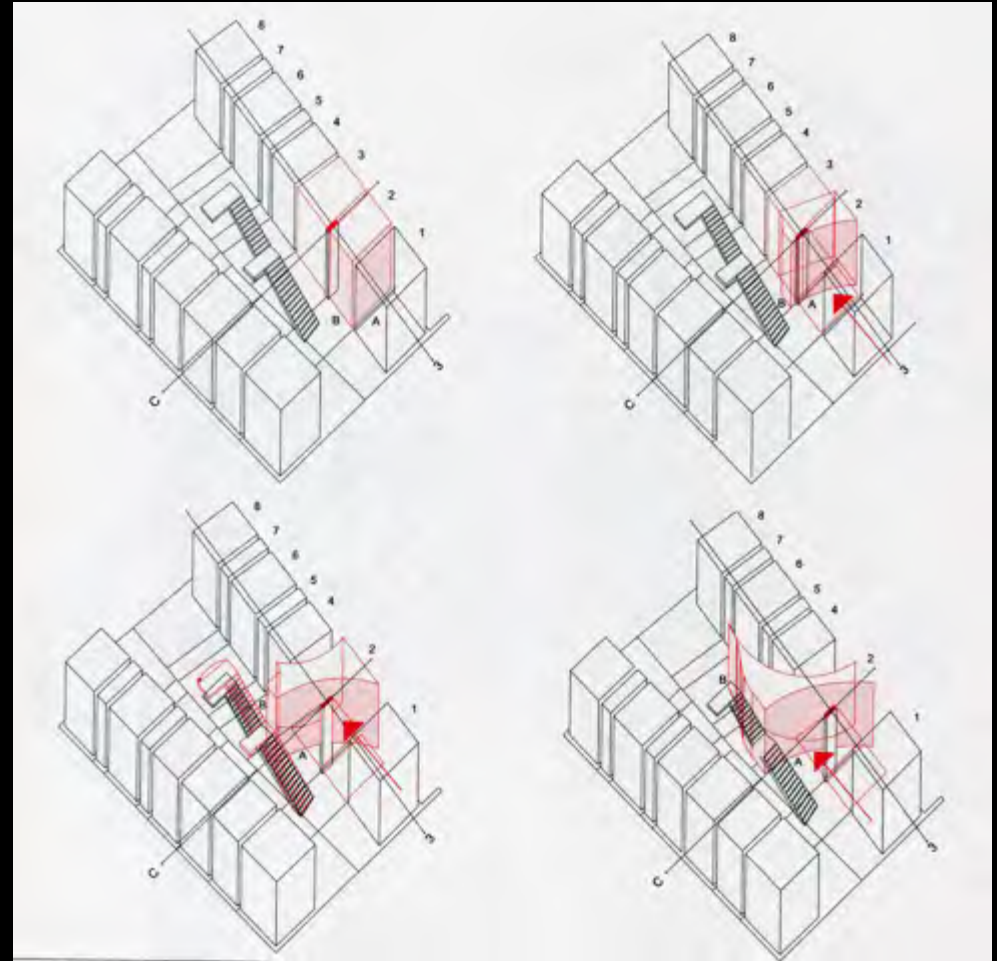
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries



“These voided elements, which are rendered as gray solids in the large competition model, cannot be read as purely poche, nor as purely figure.”

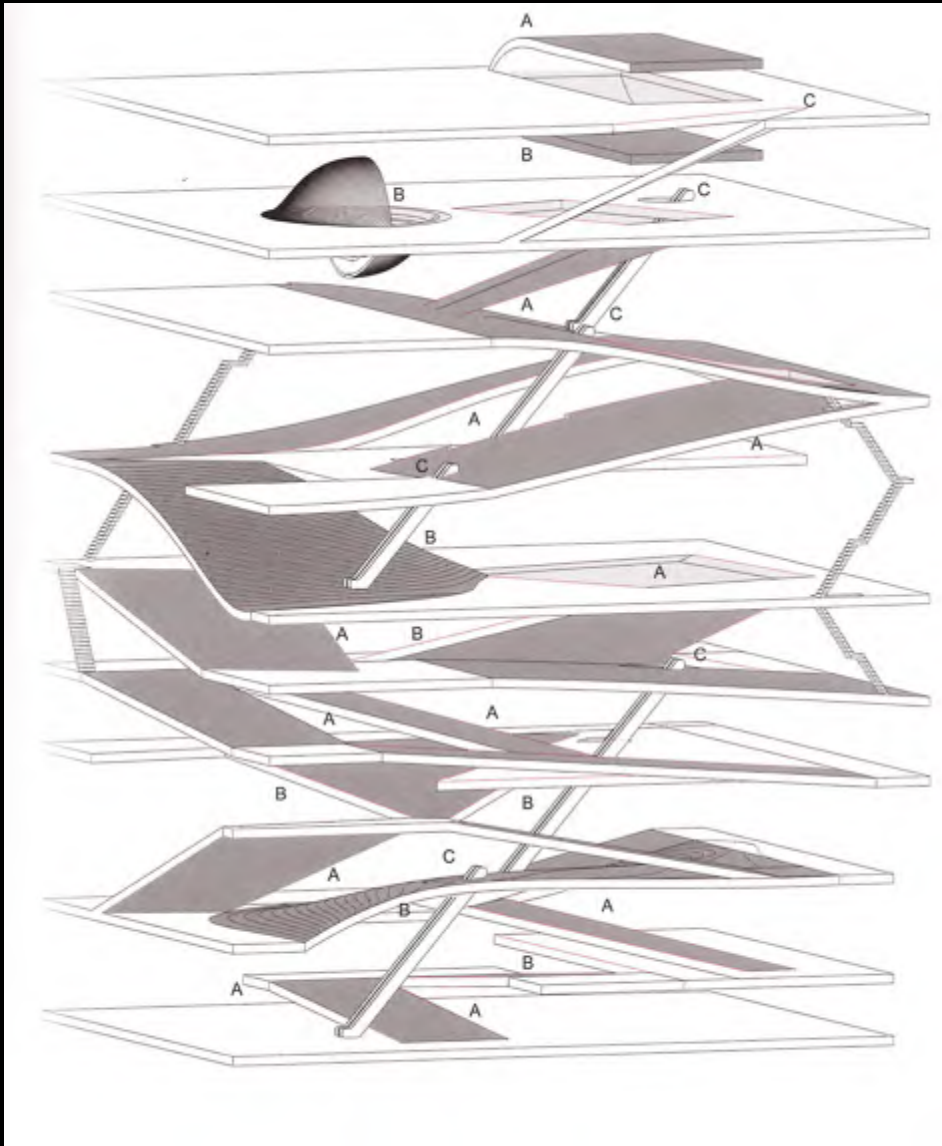


Venturi

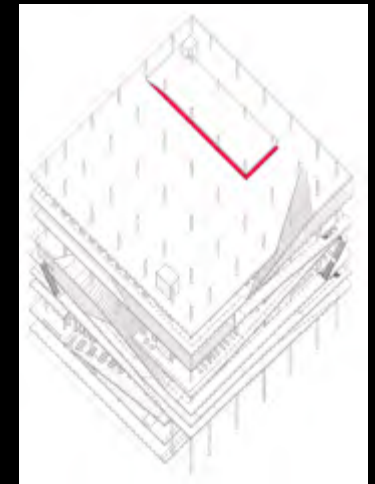
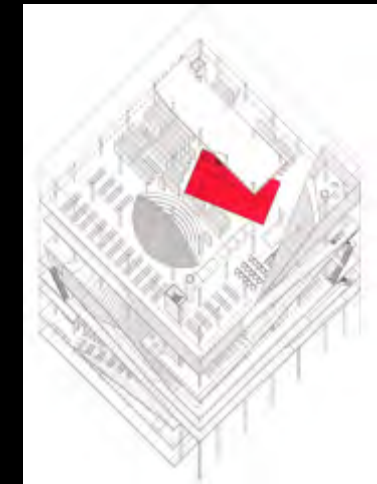
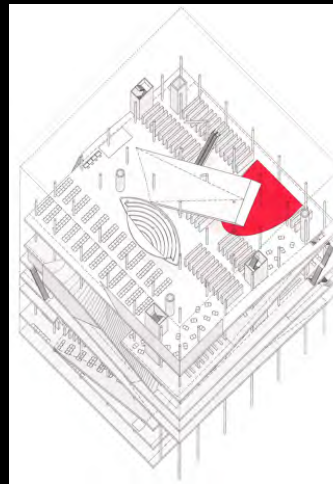
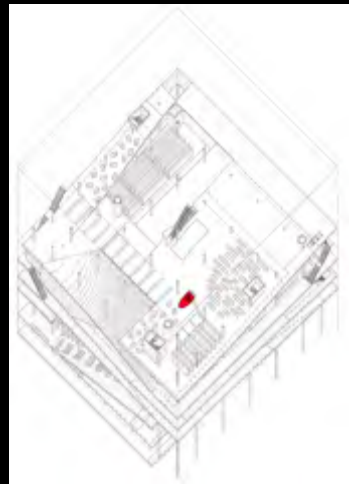
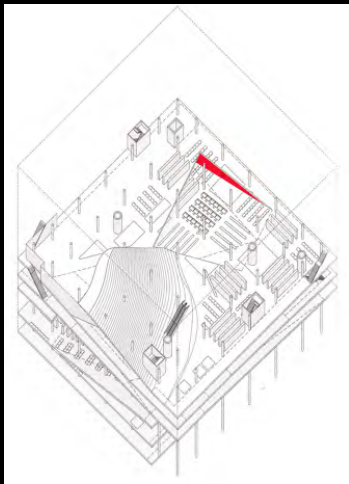
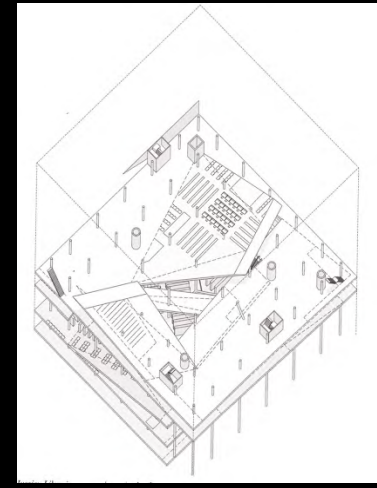


Moretti

“The energy, whether it is registered in different shapes, horizontal cuts, spirals, or ramping floors, does not disturb the edge. This contrasts with the edge stress of cubist painting and the centrifugal stress of Venturi’s and Moretti’s work.”

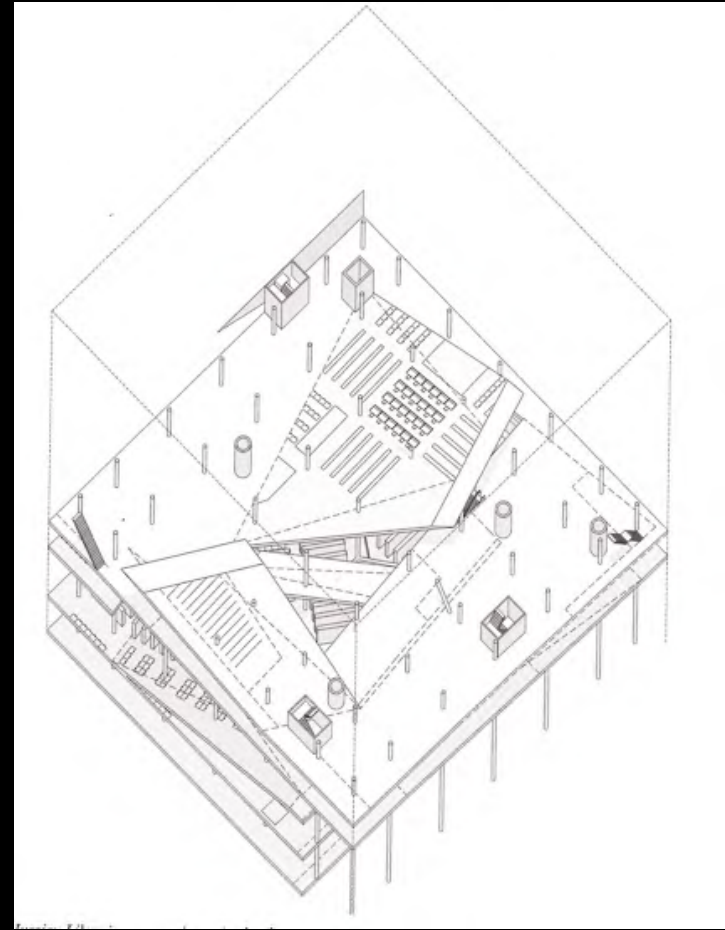
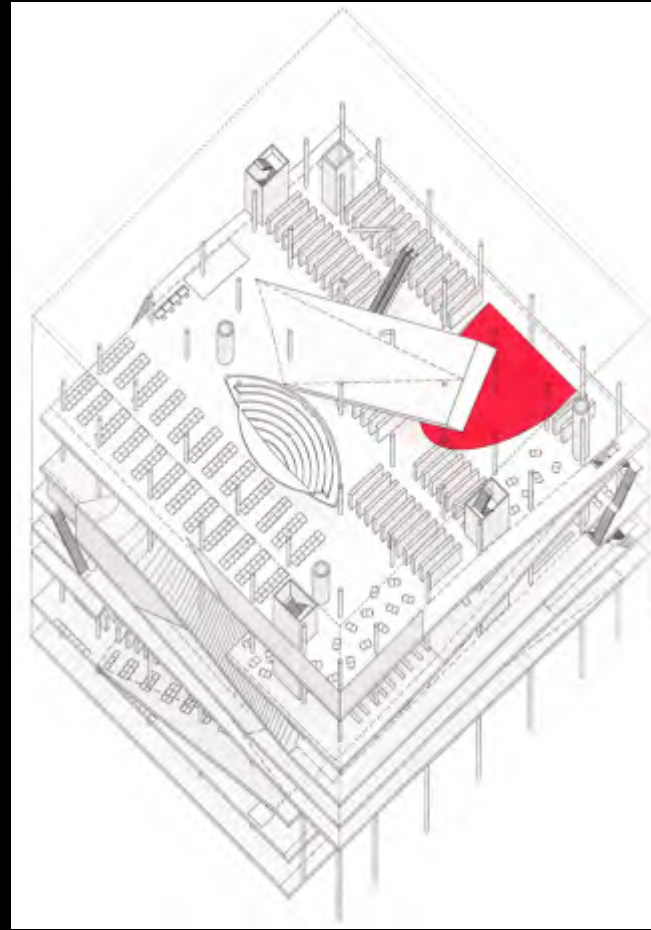
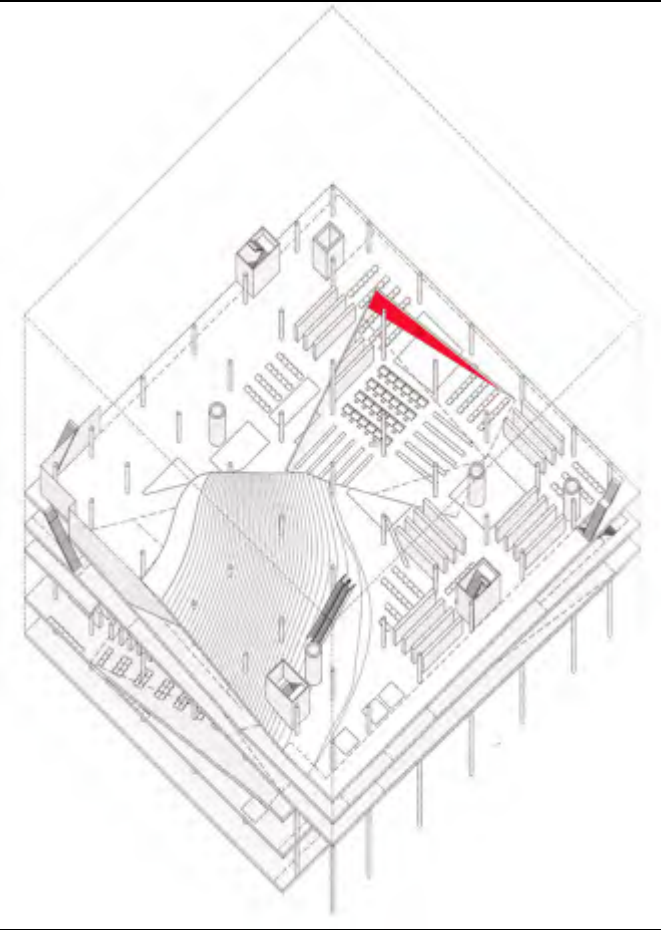


“At Jussieu, these is neither a centralized stress, nor a stress at the edge. Rather, the stress is diffused; it appears in the different layers of the object, particularly when the only centralizing figure is clearly thrown off center, but not enough to be seen as moving toward the edge.”



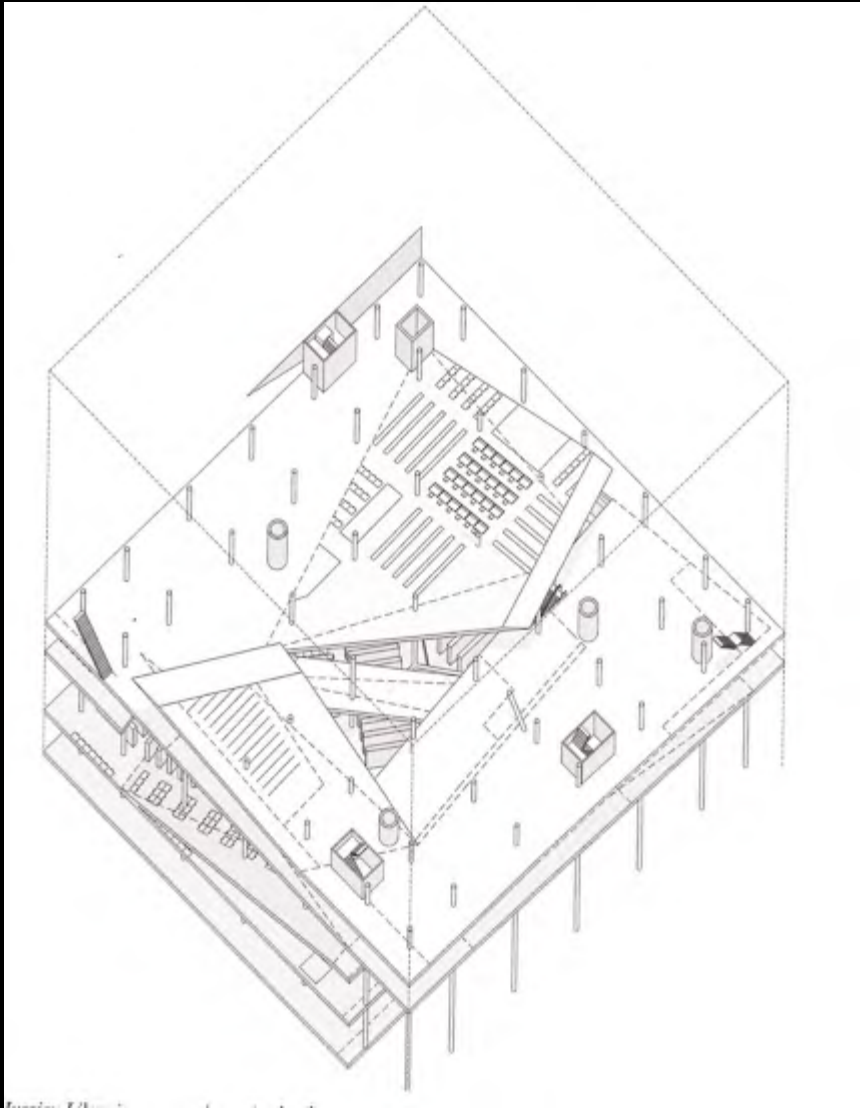
Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

“The void produces a space of unresolved tension between center and edge. It is this irresolution that introduces what has been called here the idea of undecideability.”

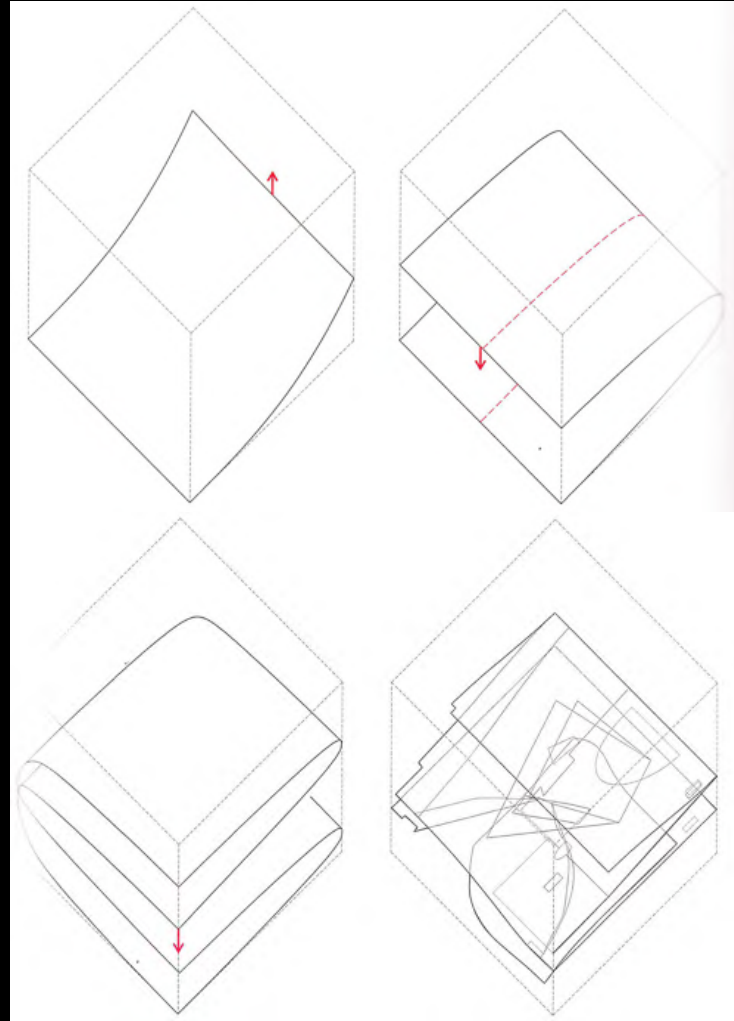


Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

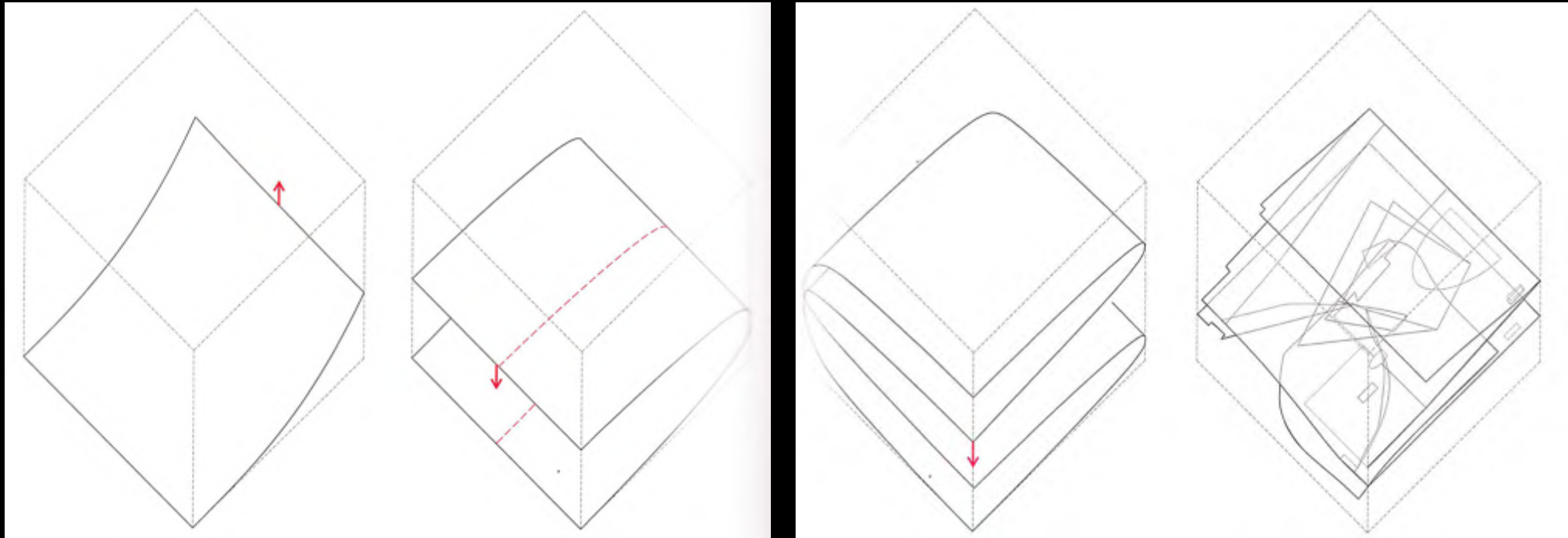
“The void produces a space of unresolved tension between center and edge. It is this irresolution that introduces what has been called here the idea of undecideability.”



Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries



“...the floor and the circulation are joined as a single element. The Jussieu Libraries become the model for many of the later projects, including the Seattle Library, the Casa da Musica in Porto, and the Dutch Embassy in Berlin...”



Koolhaas, Jussieu Libraries

“...the critical and theoretical arguments condensed in Jussieu’s model, drawings, and section give way to an increasingly iconic use of the diagram by Koolhaas at the Seattle Public Library and at the Casa da Musica.”



Koolhaas, Seattle Public Library



“...Koolhaas’s work begins to suggest another attitude toward close reading. When the reading of the diagram approaches the reading of the building, close reading is no longer necessary...They give up close reading for the immediacy of shape and a more popular appeal: the diagram as logo and branding.”