

DIALECTIC

by
Kirk L Morpew

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Approved:

Michael O'Brien, Chairman

Salahuddin Choudhury

William Galloway

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(ABSTRACT)

**LORD, shall we not bring these gifts to your service?
Shall we not bring to your service all our powers
For life, for dignity, grace and order,
And intellectual pleasures of the senses?
The LORD who created must wish us to create
And employ our creation again in His service
Which is already His service in creating.
For man is joined spirit and body,
And therefore must serve as spirit and body.
Visible and invisible, two worlds meet in Man;
Visible and invisible must meet in his temple;
You must not deny the body.**

**Choruses from "The Rock"
T.S. Eliot**

We read in this stanza, from a T.S. Eliot poem, a description of man. Here we find man as a created being experiencing the two separate worlds that merge within him. We witness the coexistence of these two worlds in life and death, in our ideals and our temporality, in what we desire to be and what we are.

This thesis is a study (in architectural terms) of humanity touching the ideal, of the ephemeral brushing the eternal. And beauty, I must not deny beauty.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Deo gratias

This book is dedicated to my wife _____ Thank you for your loving and patient support.

To my Committee:

Many thanks to _____ for making what time he did not have.

Thanks to _____ for being _____, the crux criticorum.

Thanks to _____ for being the thoughtful third.

To my friends:

Thanks for asking tough questions

(especially _____).

Engravings by _____

A special acknowledgment to _____ for
his wonderfully elucidating book (from which I
have heavily borrowed concepts of beauty from)
The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas.

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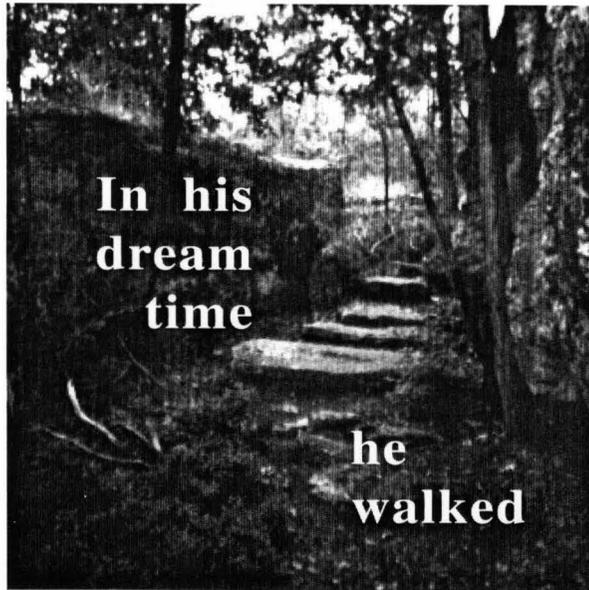
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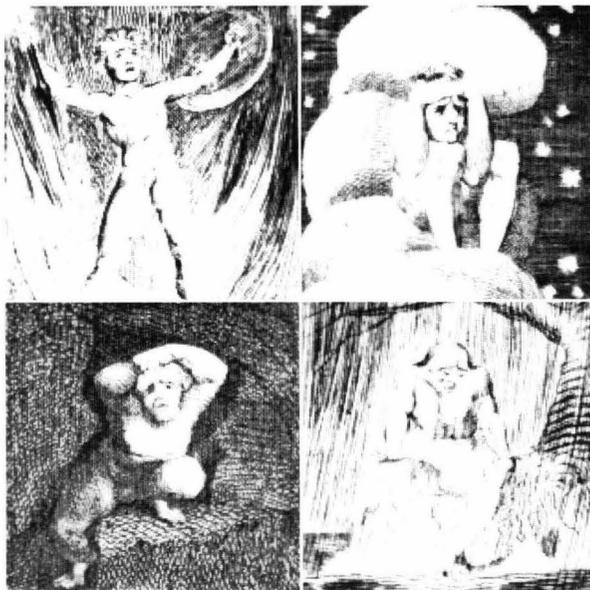
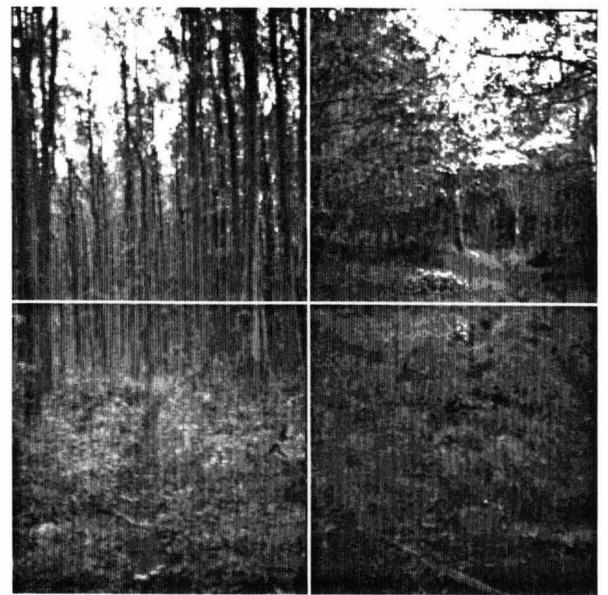
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He walked through eternal twilight in endless tunnels of green. Just ahead, there were always movement and dampened sound turning to stillness as he passed.

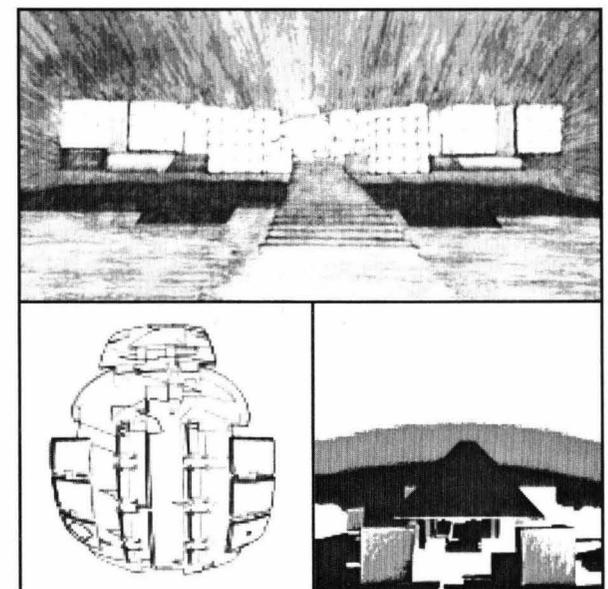
One night, as he walked, he became aware of his rhythm with the earth. He became aware of the dull shock that resonated through his body with each step and the echoed reply that came forth from the forest. He heard the sound of rock against hollow rock displaced beneath him and the tapping cadence of his staff. His breath became deep and regular, the beat within him strong and slow. His thoughts became cyclic and were woven within the layers of rhythm, ever changing between the earth and himself. Sometime within these thoughts (he knew not when) he became aware of another keeping pace with him. As he turned to look, the canopy above opened up to the sky and the moon startled him. There in the moonlight, he saw one as himself. In concert, they continued their walk upon a bright white rock that they sunk down into as they tread. They pushed on, slowly and deliberately through the now ordered forest. Ahead, poised just above the ground, stood a city.

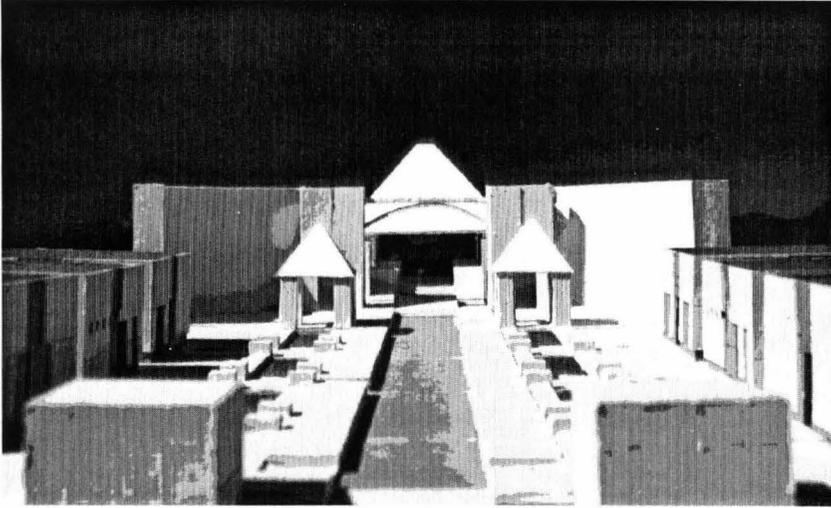


Said one, **“Before us stood a city of whiteness. At the city’s gate stood six. As I watched, the six entered the city and divided, three to the east and three to the west. Each sat and kindled a fire.”**

The other continued, *“As the flames quickened, their bodies were clothed in the whiteness of the city until they could be seen no more.”*

Then they spoke in turn but as one mind, **“At the end of the city, to the south, behind a veil of silence, stood the place of rest.”**





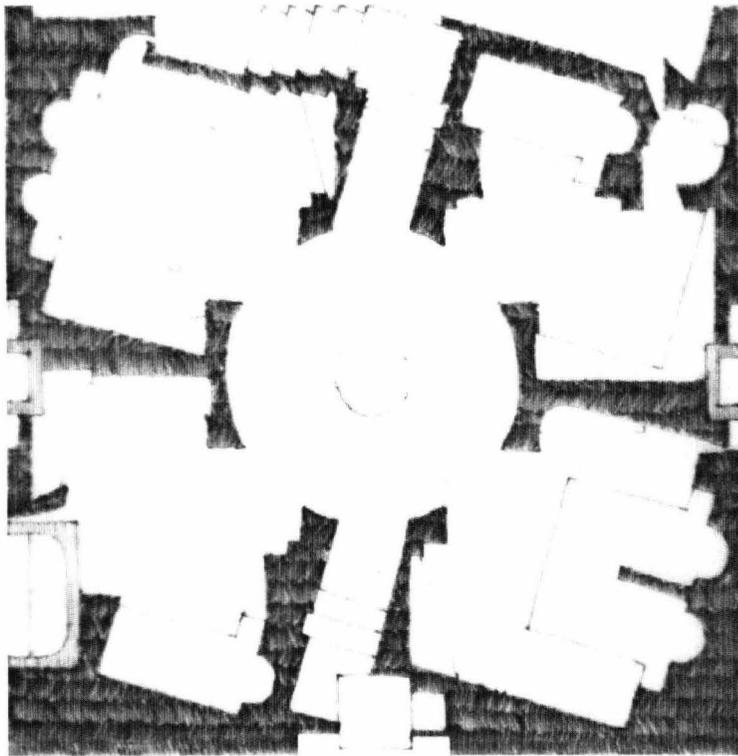
He could not dream of the city for a month. Then one night he felt another walking beside him and at once the city was in his path. They walked to the city as before with its six fires dancing, its six pavilions of whiteness where the six had sat and tended their fires. This night they pushed on past the white cubes that guarded the entry with solemn stares.

The first said, **“I touched the whiteness and was at once both elated and saddened. For even though my destiny was there, I am born of man and cannot dwell in such a place.”**



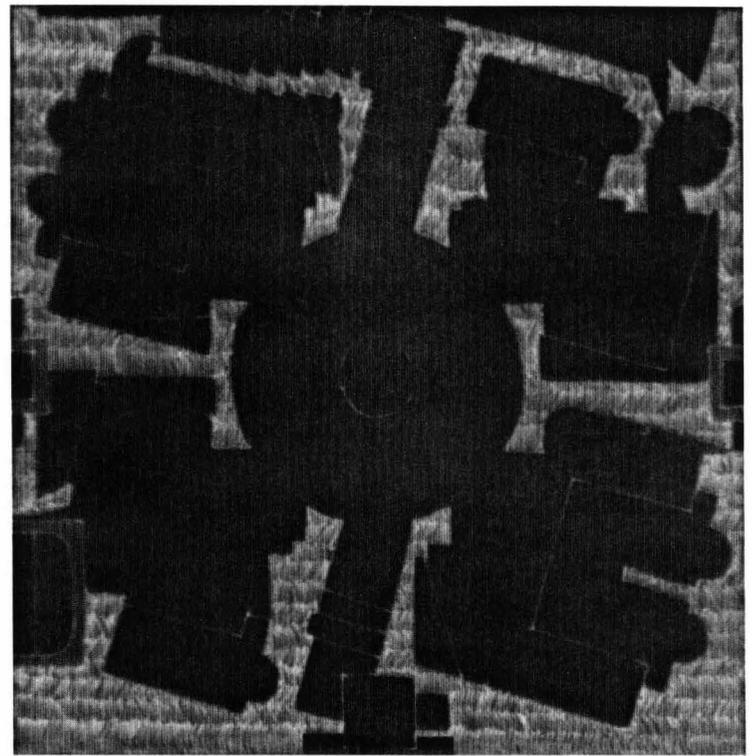
The other continued, *“The pavilions sat in silence. They were all different yet alike as they spoke in testimony of the fire. The quiet held the shadows of the night and the fires burned, somehow more perfectly, more orderly than I had ever seen.”*

They both witnessed the glow that emitted from one of the pavilions. They were drawn to explore the six before continuing their journey and entering into rest. Both approached the first pavilion but only one could enter in; the other would not leave the city of whiteness but instead walked about around them and marveled at their purity.



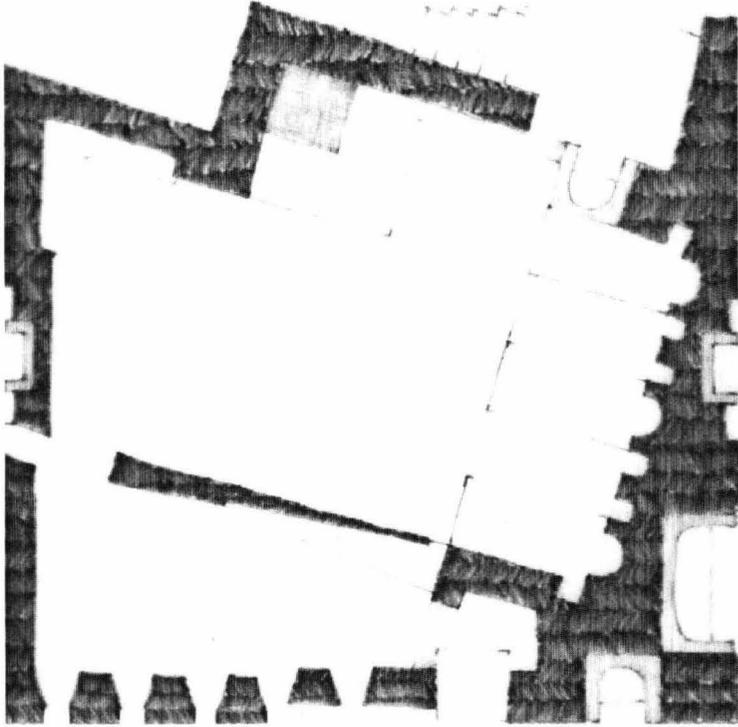
"As I entered over the marble threshold, slick with dew or sweat (I could not be certain) I could see steps that led up toward a domed room lightened by a fire that lay in its belly. This fire was irregular and familiar. Its smoke squeezed its way through the oculus, blackening as it rubbed its way into the night."

Four blackened rooms, that light could not penetrate, lay about the lighted dome.



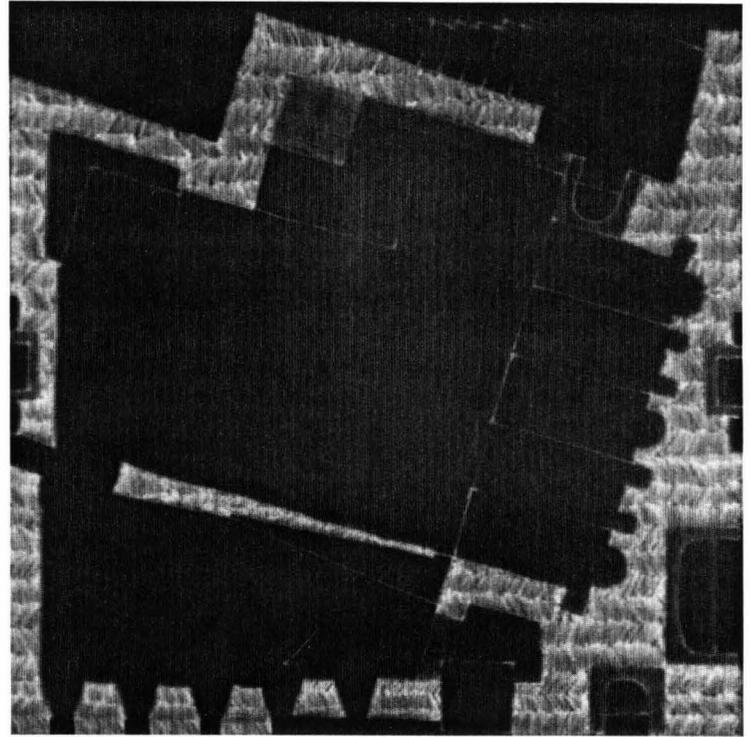
"Each room had a hollow in the rock to lie in the darkness and peer out at the light or to dream in the darkness of the light."

He stepped down from the pavilion, away from the city and toward the earth. As his foot touched the soil, the smell of crushed thyme awakened him.



In the third month he dreamt of a terrible storm where he was cast about as a boat in a sea of foam.

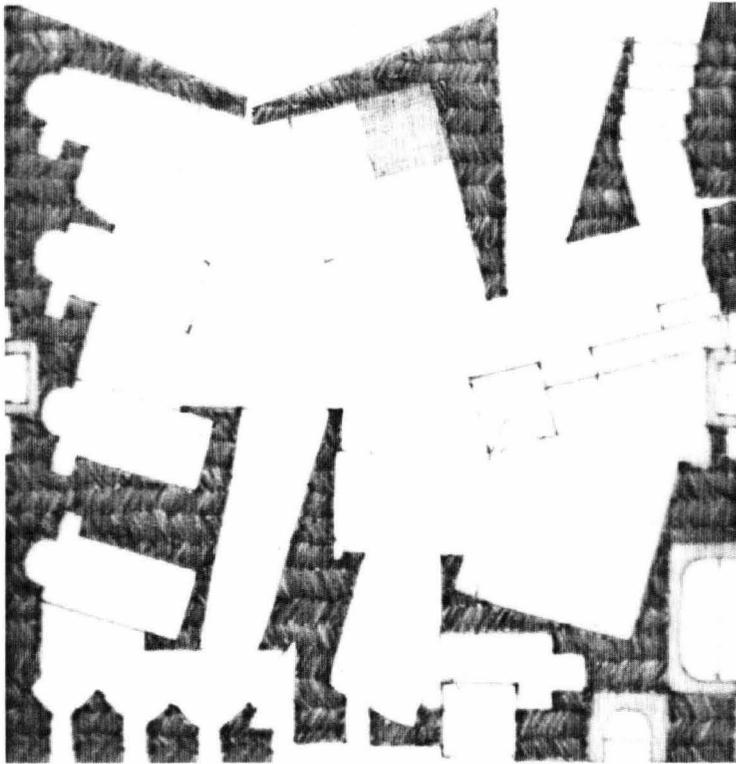
"I felt my life ebbing when the clouds parted to the moon. The sea turned to glass and the moon's faint reflection suspended my body in the night. The rain dripped from the trees, splattering upon the tin covering above my head, and a river rushed beneath my feet. As the red of dawn began to filter in, the room took shape. I discovered a fire pit with coals on a grate from some past evening. As I added wood and broke the old embers they fell through the grate and hissed their protest in the stream of water that washed them away."



When fully warm, he ventured out of the room toward the radiance of light. His shadow became twofold: one violet and ephemeral upon the wall and the other dark as wine and bold upon the floor.

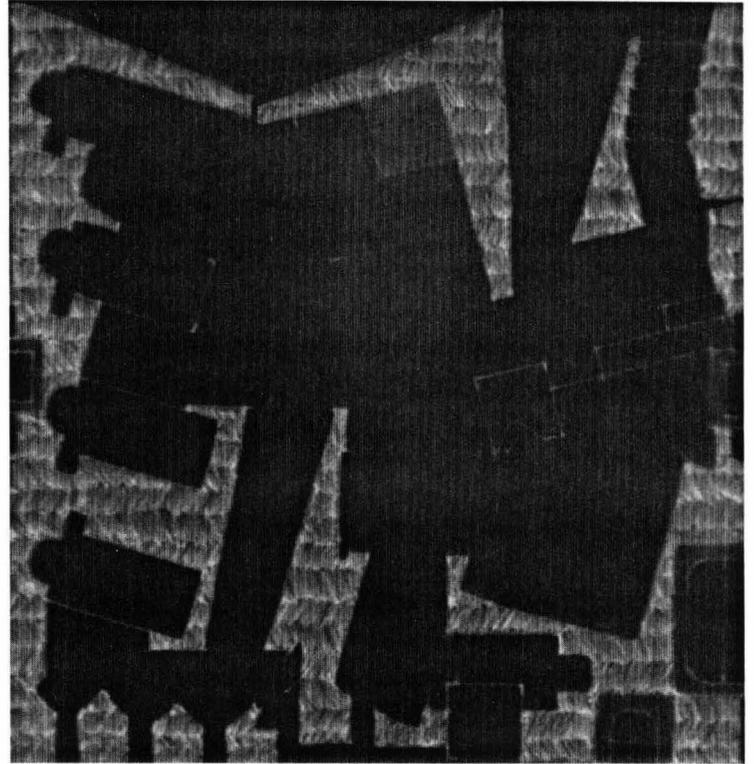
"There exposed, flowed a threshold of lamentation. I stepped over the threshold stream onto a block of marble that was cool and geometric. From there, I ventured into the fullness of daylight. This was the first time I had seen the city of whiteness in the daylight and it was brighter than I had imagined in my waking hours."

He awoke with a beam of sunlight streaming into his eyes, the soil dark from rain.

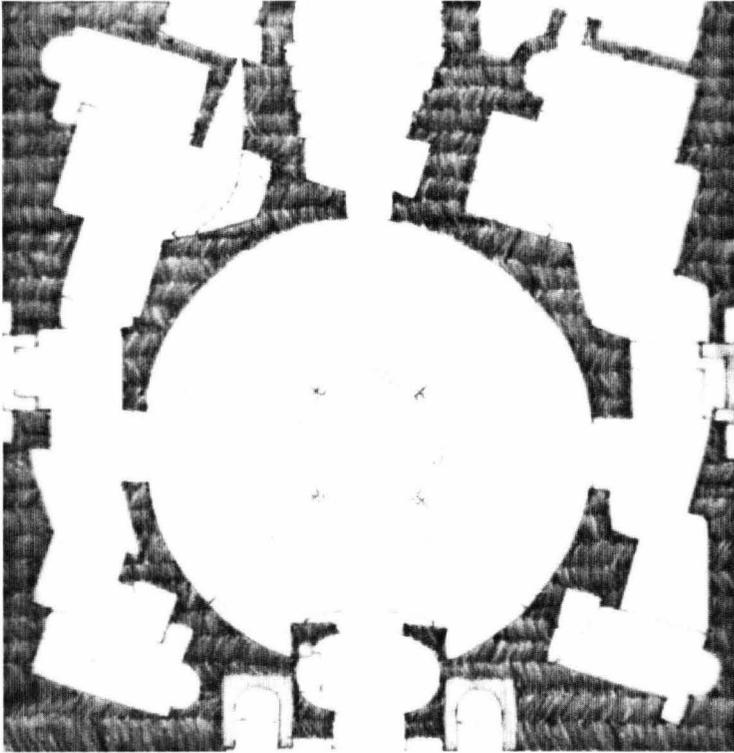


In the fourth month he dreamt of a slowly revealed cube of stone; its silhouette glowed in the surrounding darkness.

"A stream of water rippled against the cube and verified the dampness I drew in with my breath. I sat next to the rock and felt its coolness. As my eyes adjusted to the darkness I could distinguish the dark green moss glistening wet upon the wall from the still pool of water below it. I could see in the shadows of the rock how the water had washed it away and wondered if time was kept here. I thought how time was really measured by the number of tears wept, or by the number of times caught in the rain, or by the number of beads of sweat formed upon a brow. It is as if water is what etches moments into our faces much as it etches the land, and not the mere passing of night and day."



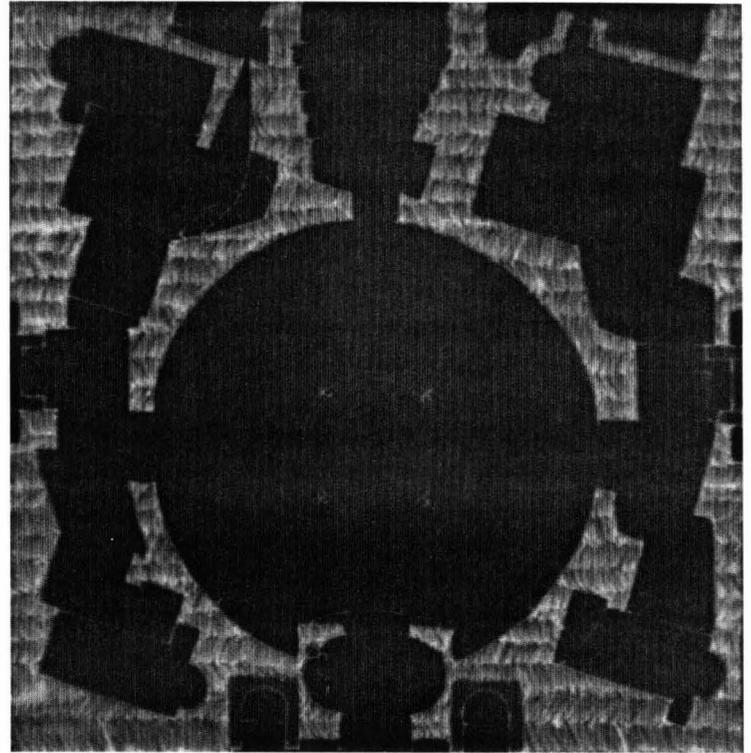
The thunder rumbled low and distant and he tried not to think of it.



In the fifth month he dreamt that he stood before a fire that gave no smoke nor heat. Behind it stood an opening that was dark and regular but open to the sky as was the city. He made his way around the fire into a small elliptical room with a candle glowing upon the wall. The movement disturbed the stillness and his shadow danced with the flame.

"I perceived myself as the sun with the candle in orbit around me, but the half-formed thought sickened me as I am no giver of light."

He passed through the elliptical room down into a hypaethral bowl that held the stars. In the bowl's center was a pool of still water that captured the sky and recorded breezes that one could not feel.



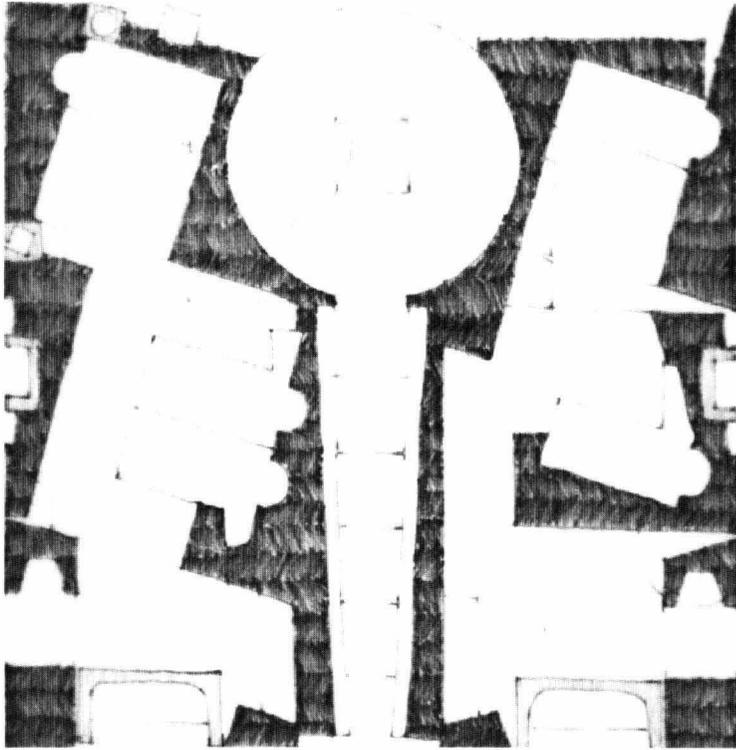
"I stood and watched the moon shed its shadow in this still pool, but the earth sighed and stirred the water as to cover its nakedness."

"I perceived the pool of water as the antithesis of the fire outside the pavilion but I could not conceive of a synthesis."

He explored its dark rooms and narrow ways. He felt sheltered but anxious. He envisioned himself spinning through the darkness controlled by only the stasis of the pavilion.

"I climbed far back into the pavilion and let it embrace me through the night. I awoke the next morning still in the niche. Light filtered in through a thin marble roof, its veins opaque in the sunlight."

A squirrel chattered and he awoke under a large oak, its limbs stretched dark across the sky.



In the sixth month he dreamt of twilight in the city. The city of whiteness acquired the rosy hue of the sky. An opening lay before him that brightened a path downward to a circular room pressed into the earth. Sounds echoed about him: the clicking of hard nails against stone, a sudden flurry of wings, and flute-like shimmering voices resonated throughout. The sound filled the walls within and spilled out into the forest. To the center of the room lay a pool circumscribed by feathers; a few floated in its stillness with glowing beads of water pressing down hard upon them. The feathers were the only visual affirmation of who dwelt within the shadows.

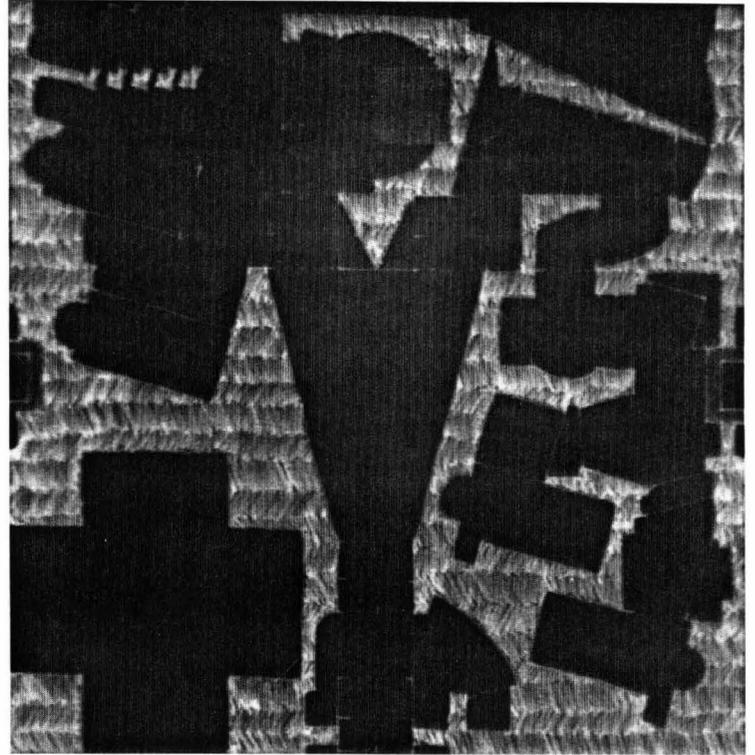
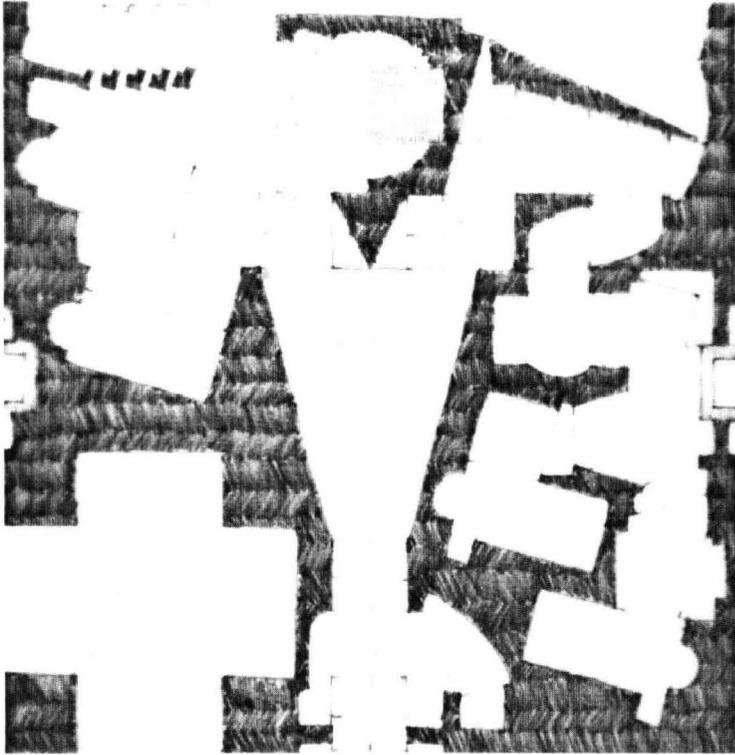


"At the room's edge, a patch of light lay stretched under a serpent. His tongue stabbed the air in hope a youth might fall from it."

There was no place here for man to find rest. He followed the stair back toward the city and found that its distance seemed to multiply during his stay. Upon reaching the city, he discovered chambers on both sides of the pavilion in which he could lie down. All throughout was the sound of birds.

"As night deepened, the walls quieted to muted stirrings and I found sleep among the unseen sounds."

In the blackness, the call of a whippoorwill pierced the silence; he shuddered as he slept.



In the seventh month he awoke in utter darkness. He felt his way through the blackness; his fingertips fell raw upon the wall. He stumbled up toward a violet coolness and then toward more whiteness. He could now see the coarse edges that held him to the darkness. A white shaft of light broke through a wall and led him out toward another chamber. This chamber's walls gave way to the light and was overflowing with lightness.

"In the chamber lay a fire that sung out with reassurance and primal virtue. As I looked upon the flame, watching it dance and send sparks up into the darkness, it became brighter and brighter until I could not look upon it and had to turn away. A shadow, fastened to my feet, sprawled itself across the floor. Its edges appeared withered as if it were being consumed by the light."

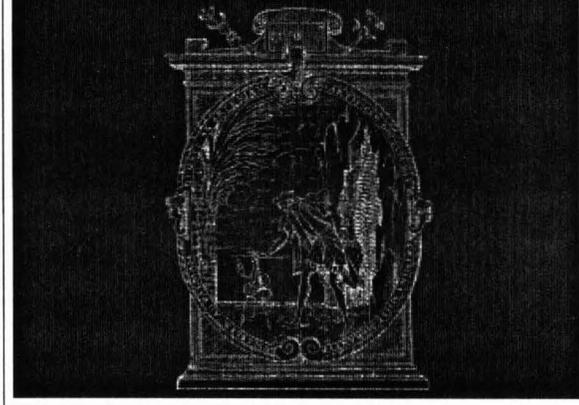
But upon the wall another shadow fell. This one was not consumed, but somehow gained more presence as the flame brightened. With raised hand, he squinted toward the fire and saw a dark figure sitting, gazing into the flames. The figure turned toward him and spoke.

"Who is this that dwells within the shadows?"



It was then that he recognized the traveler as himself. At once, he was neither and he was both. He had just entered into the room from the darkness, but he had also been sitting there, gazing into the flame since time began. One shadow remained, the room as before, but he had changed. He perceived the condition of man to be the unity of the finite and the infinite. This was not to be a harmonious synthesis but one as fire and water, only held together by the continuous effort of will. He felt the anxiety.

POSITION



For me, architecture has two duties. First it should reveal beauty and secondly it should reveal something about ourselves. In this way architecture may allow us to more fully understand what things are and what we are.

This notion of beauty, however vague, is real and is active in our lives. Something is stirred within us when we experience certain art or natural phenomena. Our senses become full, our imagination is awakened and our intellect stimulated. We experience beauty subjectively, but this requires (at least initially) a sensible object to effect our senses. It is our senses that allow us to drink in the phenomenological value of an object.

Our imagination serves as a mediator between the intellect and the sensible. It makes associations for the intellect and works to heighten beauty through retention and reproduction. The imagination allows the intellect to enjoy beauty no longer present through the senses.

The intellect reveals beauty to us. It penetrates through the sensible, concrete material into the essence of a thing. We find that beauty lies not only in the subject but also in the object. Or perhaps beauty is best thought of as a relationship between

the object and the subject. It is as if beauty lies in the in between and is sustained by both.

We seem to recognize the perfected being of things. Our being acknowledges the being of the thing. In things, this being consists of spirit and matter or formed-matter. In man, however, there is a third element called will, which I will discuss in a moment.

When we desire to “make” we look to nature for beginnings. All our temporal awareness comes from nature, and while it may be true that art imitates nature, this should not be a call for realism but for a revealing of the nature of things; the order and purpose present in nature. As we work with our imaginations and our hands, we manipulate the sensible while trying to find the objects form. This is not a process which is preconceived although certain parameters or meanings may be. Instead, we discover the object’s form; we don’t create anew, we merely recompose. Our intellect recognizes what the object wants to be, what its essence is. When the thing itself has fully received its form we recognize its beauty. Its completeness (its perfection, if you will) strikes a chord deep within us. For me, the discovery of beauty must take precedence over preconceived ideas and meanings

POSITION



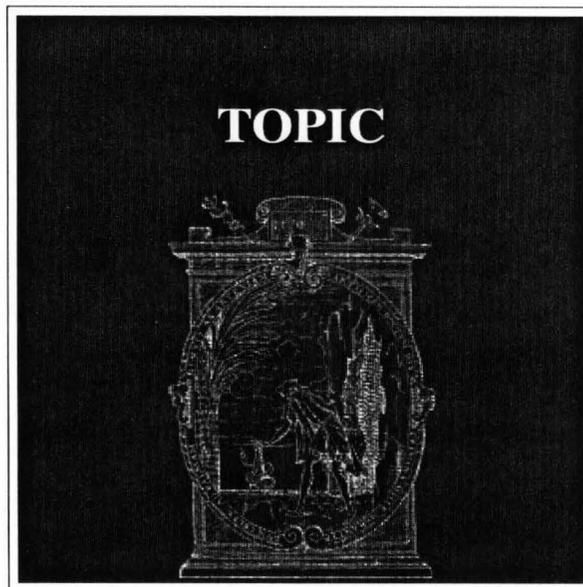
because beauty contains more truth than our thoughts can give our work. This is not to say that our thoughts cannot have truth, but rather that our works never seem to materialize as one with our thoughts.

Part of this way of working can be rational. By rational I mean that one may use certain principles (prejudices) over and over again in various works. Other aspects of working in this fashion are suprarational. One may not be able to speak about certain aspects of their design directly but only around what they are. We often find words for what these things are not before we find words for what they are.

As our imagination serves to mediate between the essence and the materiality of an object, the will of man mediates between the spiritual and the animal aspects of man. In things, the spiritual and the material qualities lie as one. In man, his spiritual and material realms are held together in tension by a positive third element known as will or self. The two antagonistic worlds of the temporal and the eternal can be understood through the Hellenistic Apollo and Dionysus or the Christian Bible or Goethe's *Faust* or Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death*. All these works elucidate man's

condition and man's state of being. Hesse's Steppenwolf stated, **"Man is not by any means of fixed and enduring form...He is much more an experiment and a transition. He is nothing else than the narrow and perilous bridge between nature and spirit. His innermost destiny drives him on to the spirit, and to God. His innermost longing draws him back to nature, the mother: his life is a fearful wavering between these two powers."**

How does one express this in architectural terms? In my architecture, this idea of humanity touching the ideal, and the anxiety created by that event, occurs in the pavilion walls. Metaphorically, the wall is the will. The paradox is that one may only experience the wall, and hence the anxiety, only indirectly. This is a rather curious and, for me, enjoyable aspect of this work. One must have knowledge of both the measured, the calculated, the preconceived *and* the romantic, the unspeakable, the mystic, to understand the in between, the wall, the will, and the being of man. One must use their imagination (the mediator between the senses and the intellect) to understand the whole. The wall can only be explained or understood through the dialectic nature of both worlds, not by the wall itself.

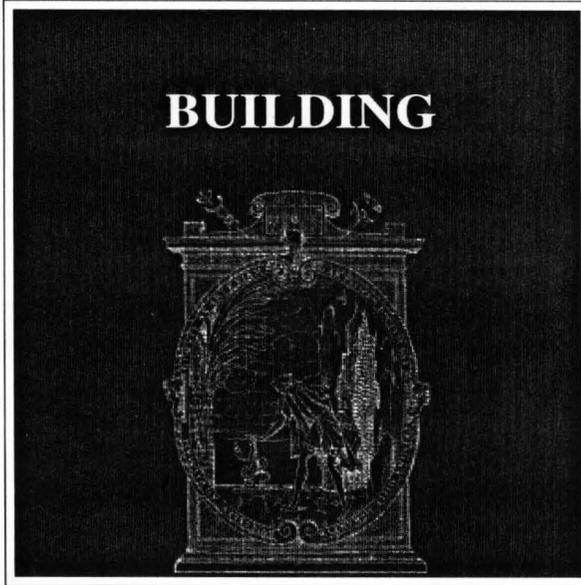


The primary topic that the thesis deals with is the treatment of public and private spaces. During the exploration of public/private spaces I have come to believe that the public spaces should express the universal ideals of a society and for the most part deny the individual. Toward this belief, I have employed a very formal language in the public realm. The overt geometry is a symbol for the world man aspires to - a higher unseen, universal order and wholeness. This formalism becomes the matrix in which life may be expressed. Against an ideal backdrop life becomes magnified: an architectural event may occur. The public realm, the city, the pure built organism, stands above the earth and its edge forms the threshold of its presencing. Its symmetry reinforces the notion that it is blind to the surrounding nature and that it is a world unto itself. It has a direction, an orientation, and a center of its own. Its surroundings become only relative to its being.

The fire pits and the pathway immediately adjacent to the pavilions serve as a threshold between the public and private. I consider the fire pits to be "invitational" and they provide the individual a place to fellowship while still remaining in the ideal realm.

Within this idealized world a "strange making" occurs. The six pavilions attempt to introduce nature back into the very world that denied it. These six exceptions brought to the pure organism because of some human need or desire, contribute as long as they do not destroy the underlying order. Aristotle in his Poetics stated, "**The perfection of Diction is for it to be at once clear and not mean....On the other hand the Diction becomes distinguished and non-prosaic by the use of unfamiliar terms, i.e. strange words, metaphors, lengthened forms, and everything that deviates from the ordinary forms of speech.**" The private spaces in the six pavilions deal with how man dwells as an individual. How man dwells existentially. It speaks of man's affinity for the earth and about life carved from darkness - fallen man.

BUILDING



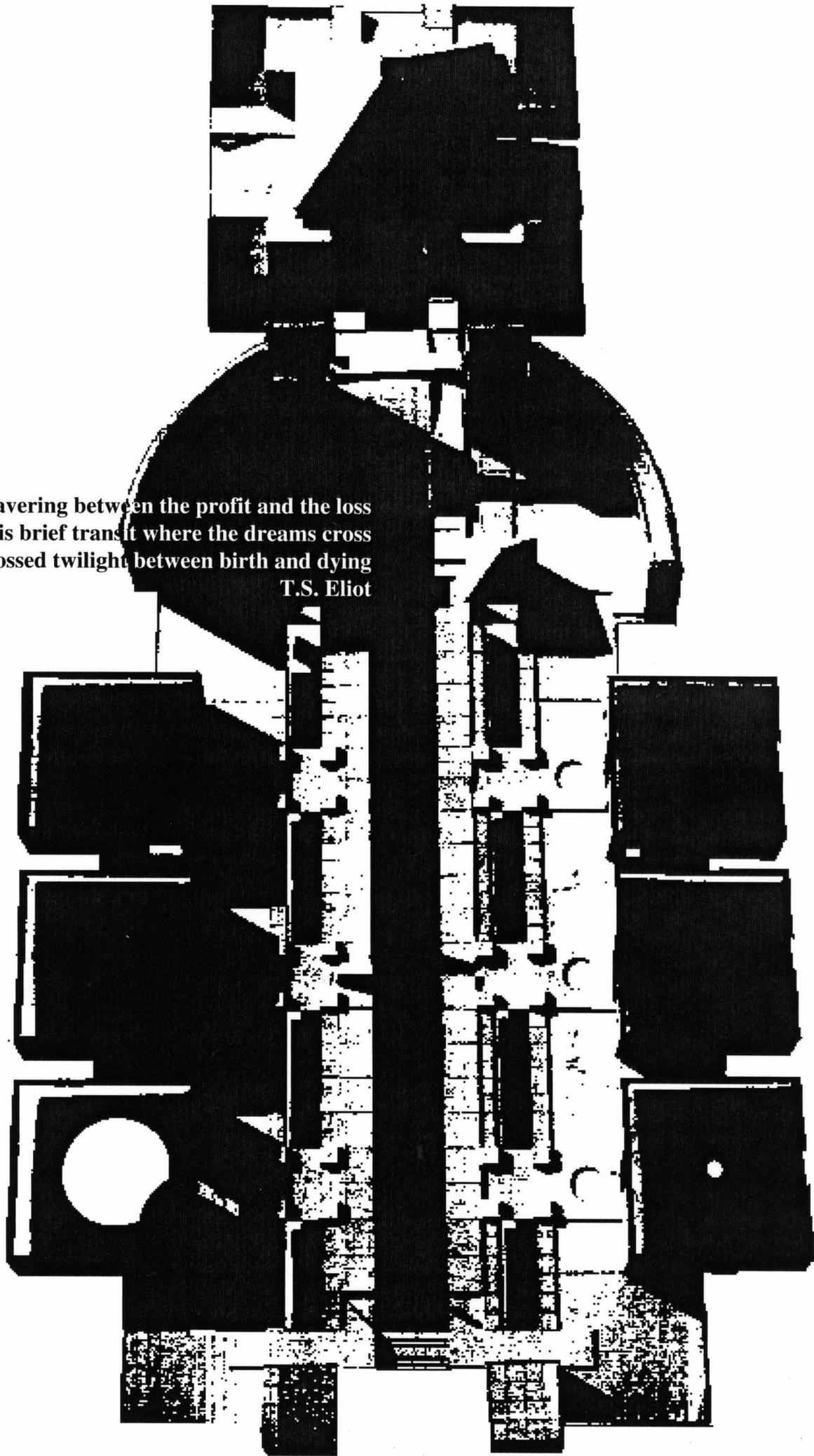
The building is a hostel located at the southernmost point of the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail is a 2100 mile foot path which runs from Katahdin Maine southward to Springer Mountain Georgia. Thousands of experiences lie along the path. Most of these experiences may be distilled into a dialectic. If the dialectic nature of some of these experiences can be concretized (and in the process magnified), a new awareness may be obtained. Some of the dialectic themes I have employed in the project are axis, curve; movement, stasis; individual, collective; walking, resting; light, dark; cold, heat; wetness, dryness; natural, built; departure, return; and path, goal.

But having said all this, it is my hope that the building speaks for itself.

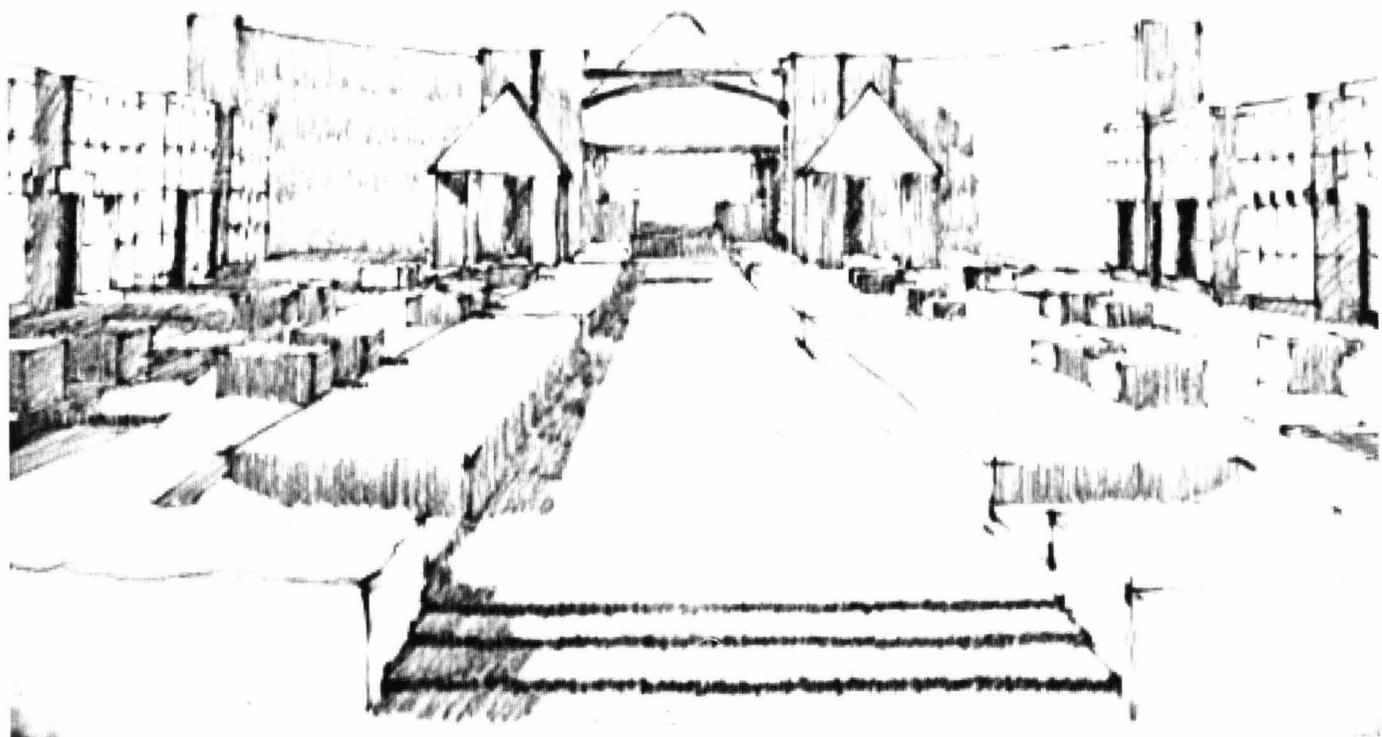
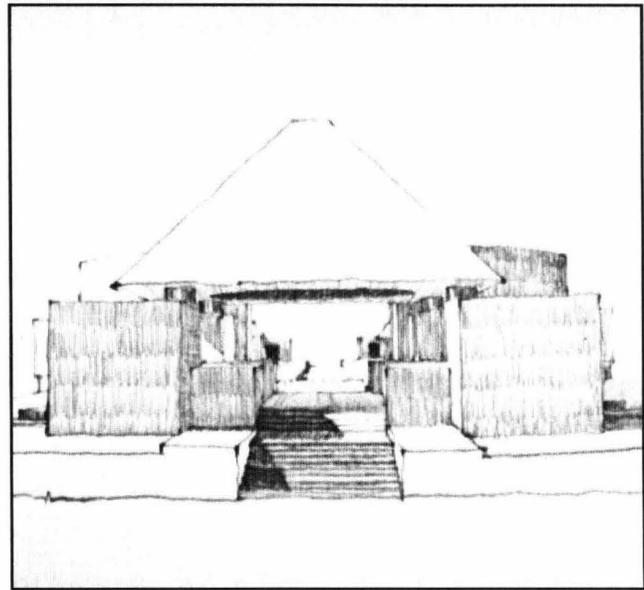
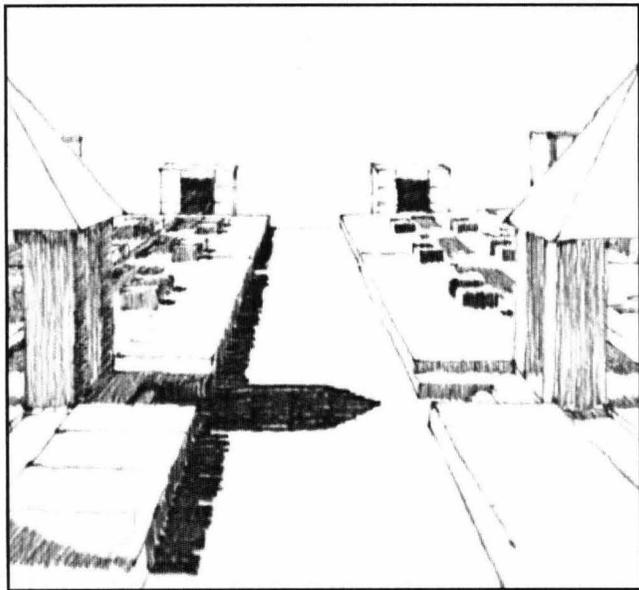
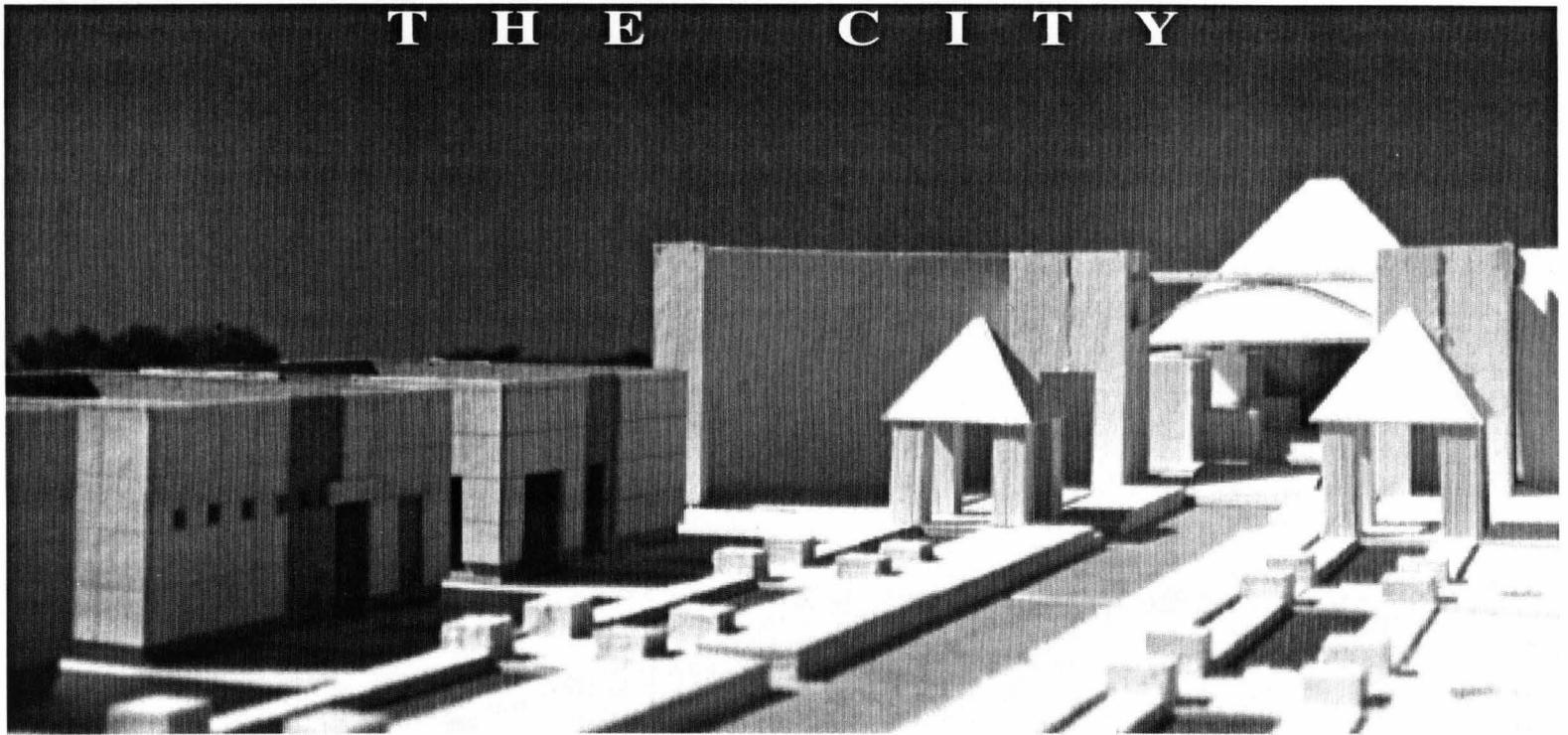
**We thank Thee who hast moved us to building, to finding, to forming at the ends of our fingers and beams of our eyes.
T.S. Eliot**

T H E C I T Y

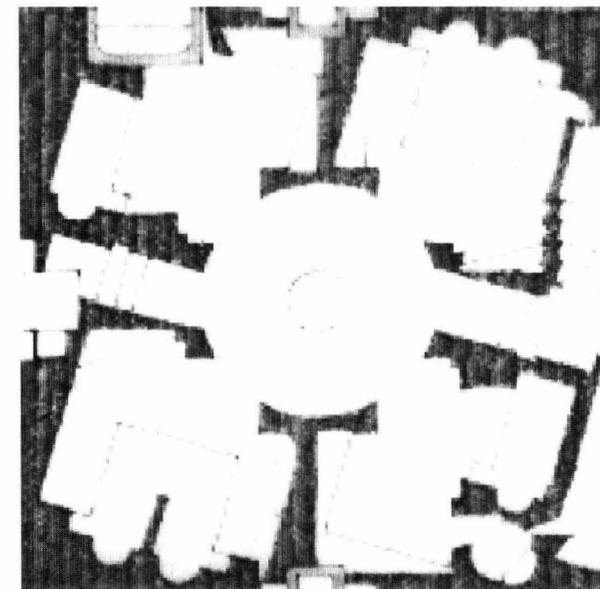
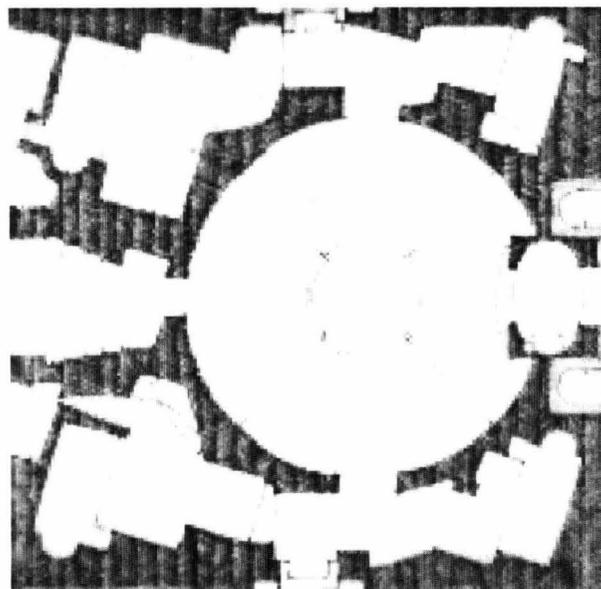
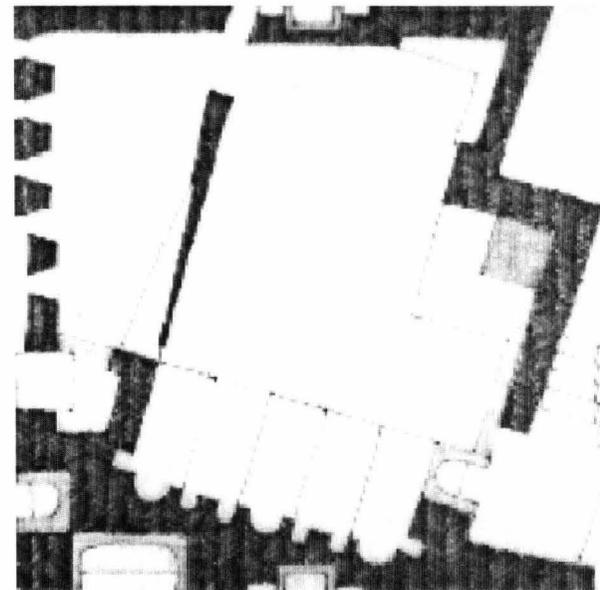
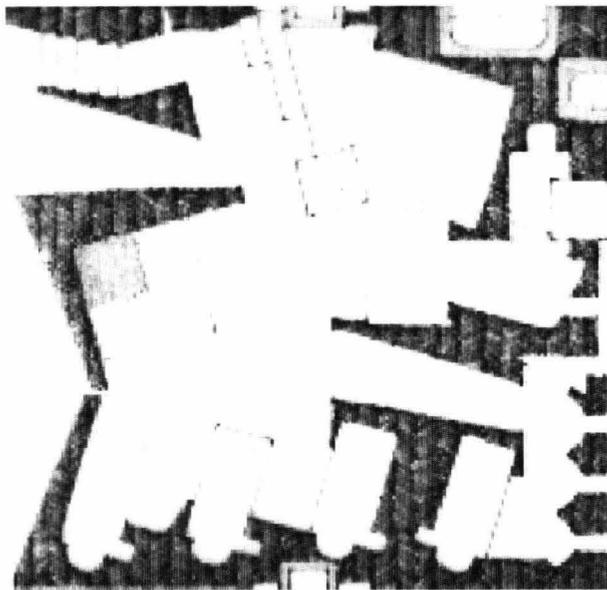
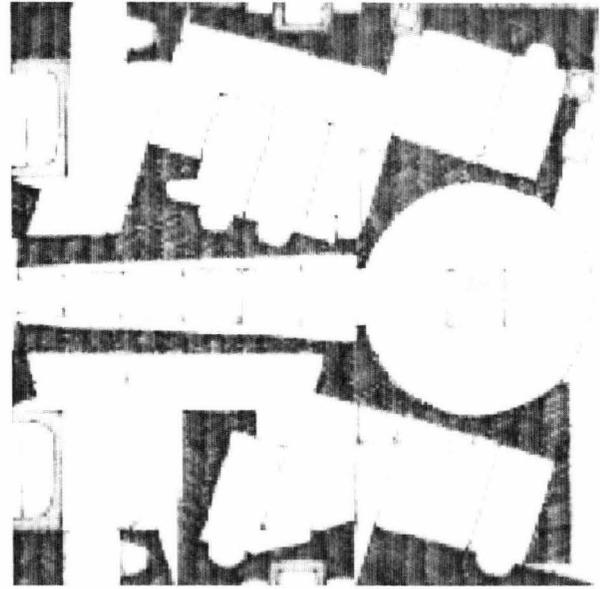
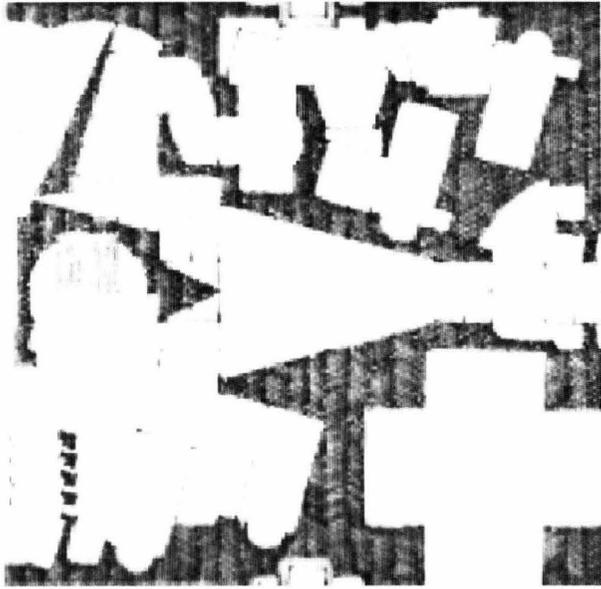
Wavering between the profit and the loss
In this brief transit where the dreams cross
The dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying
T.S. Eliot



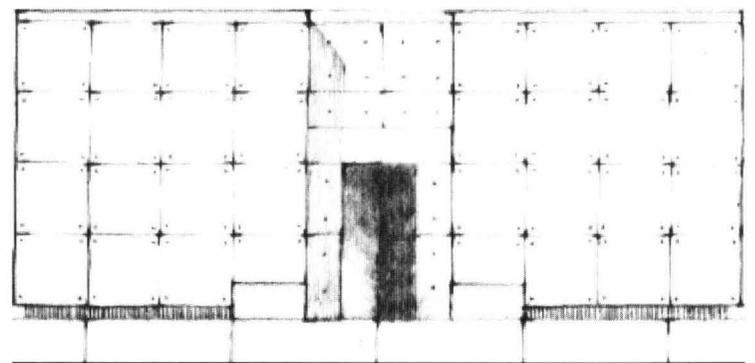
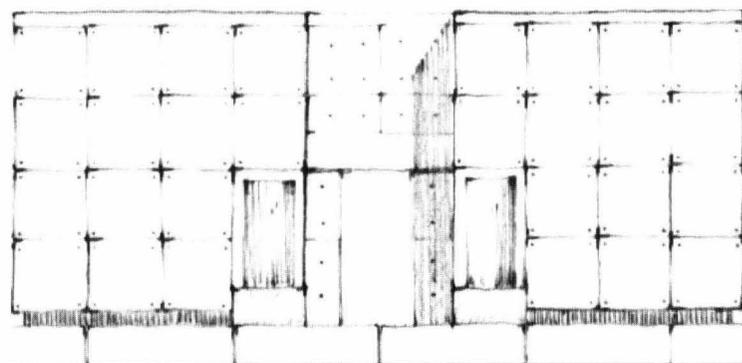
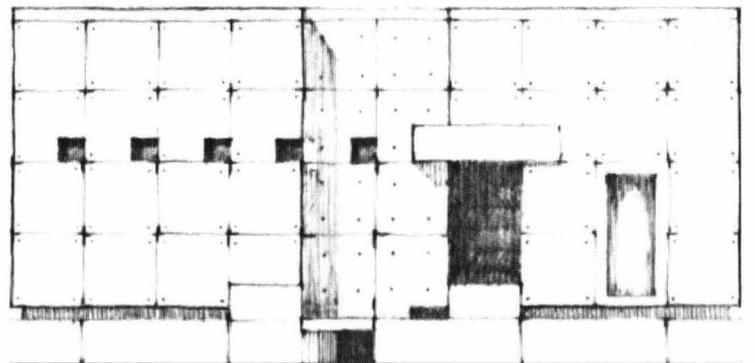
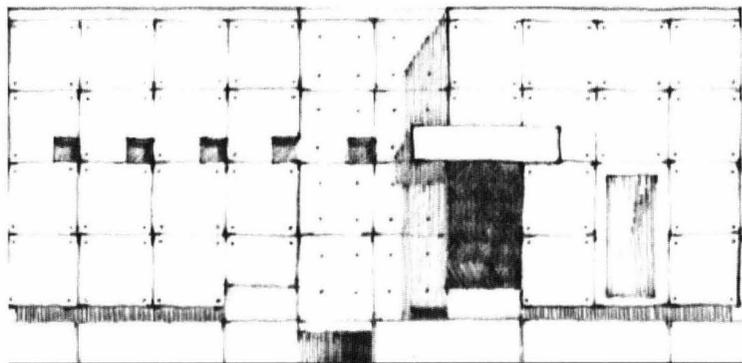
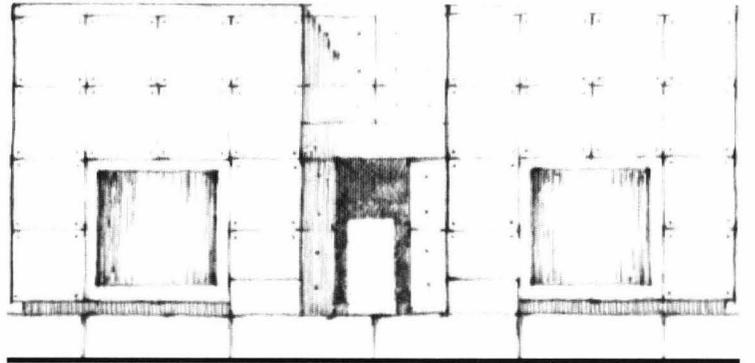
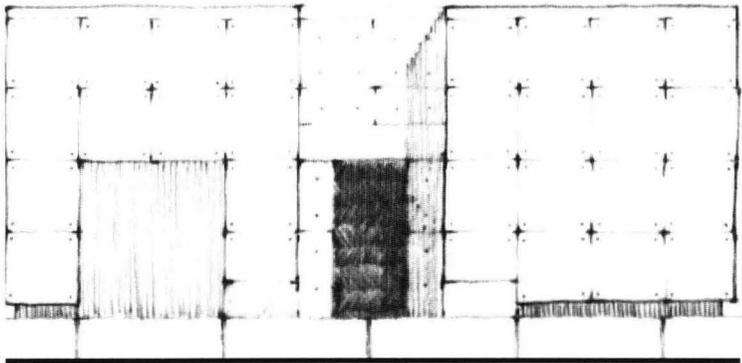
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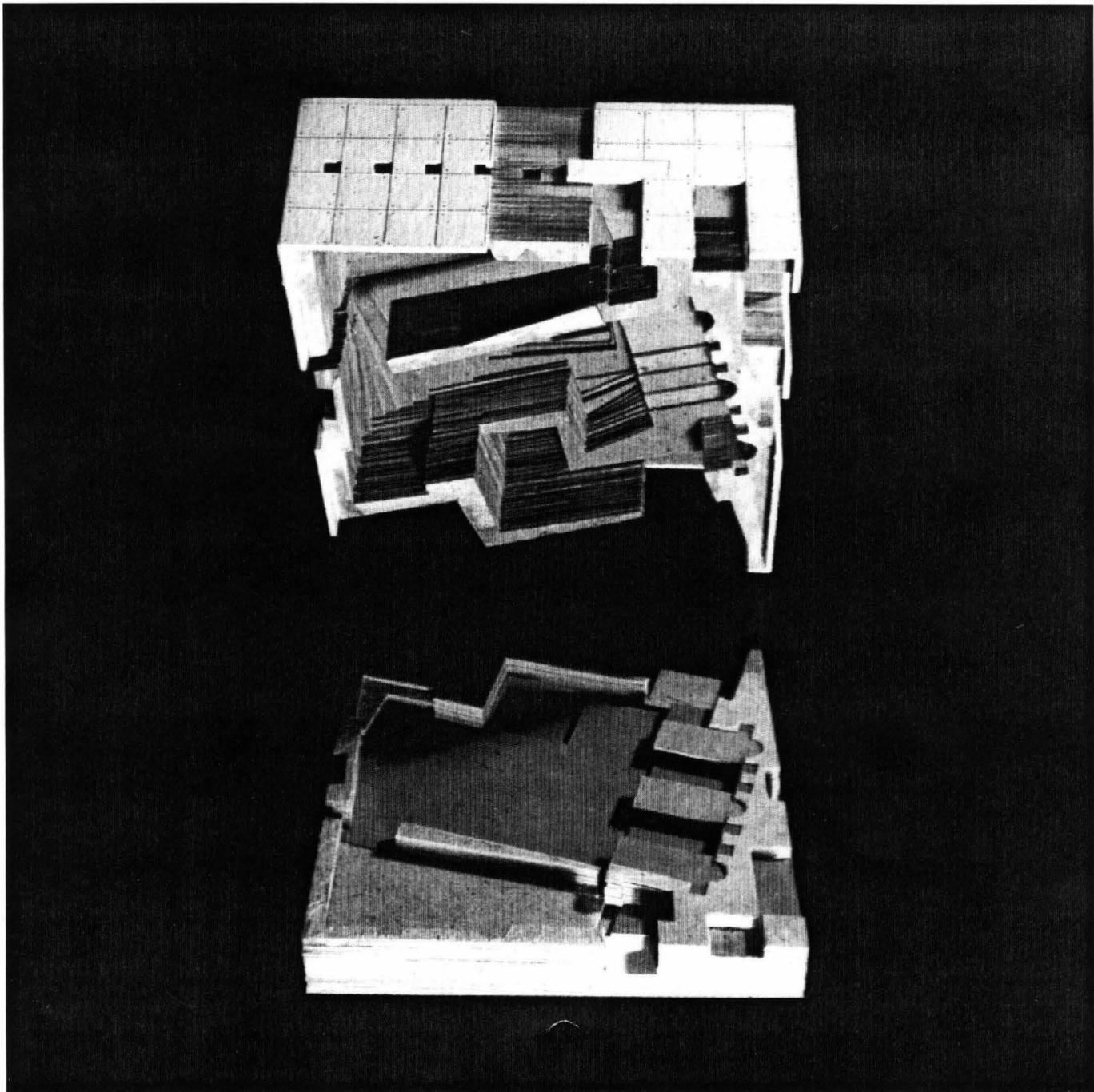
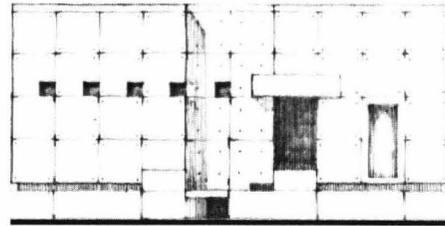
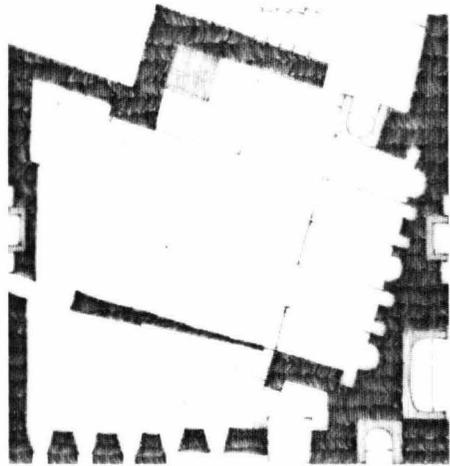
T H E P A V I L I O N S



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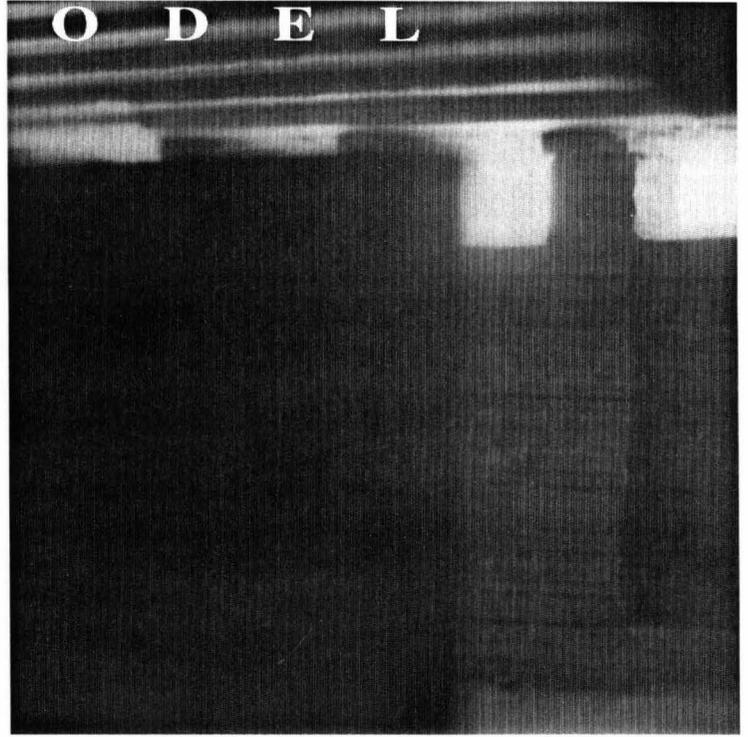
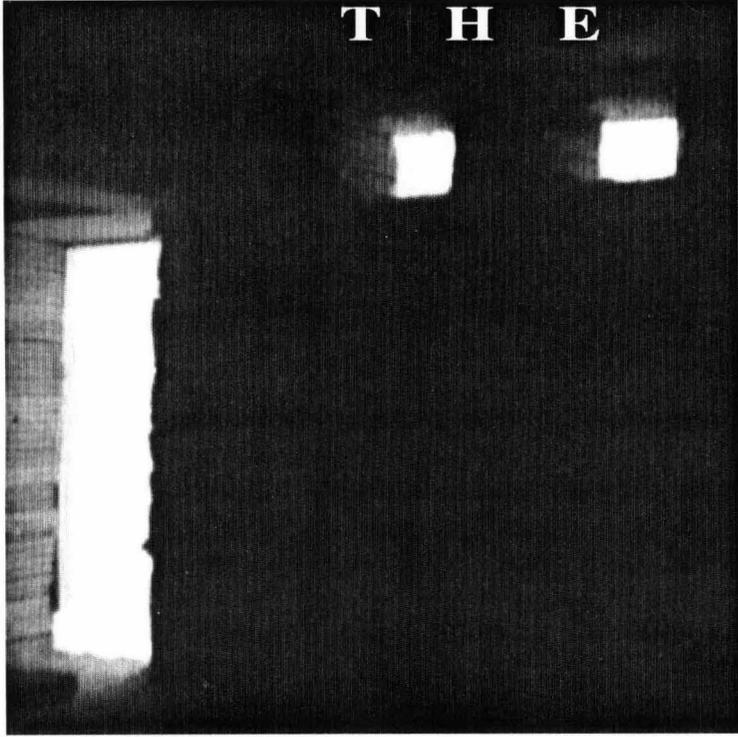


T H E M O D E L



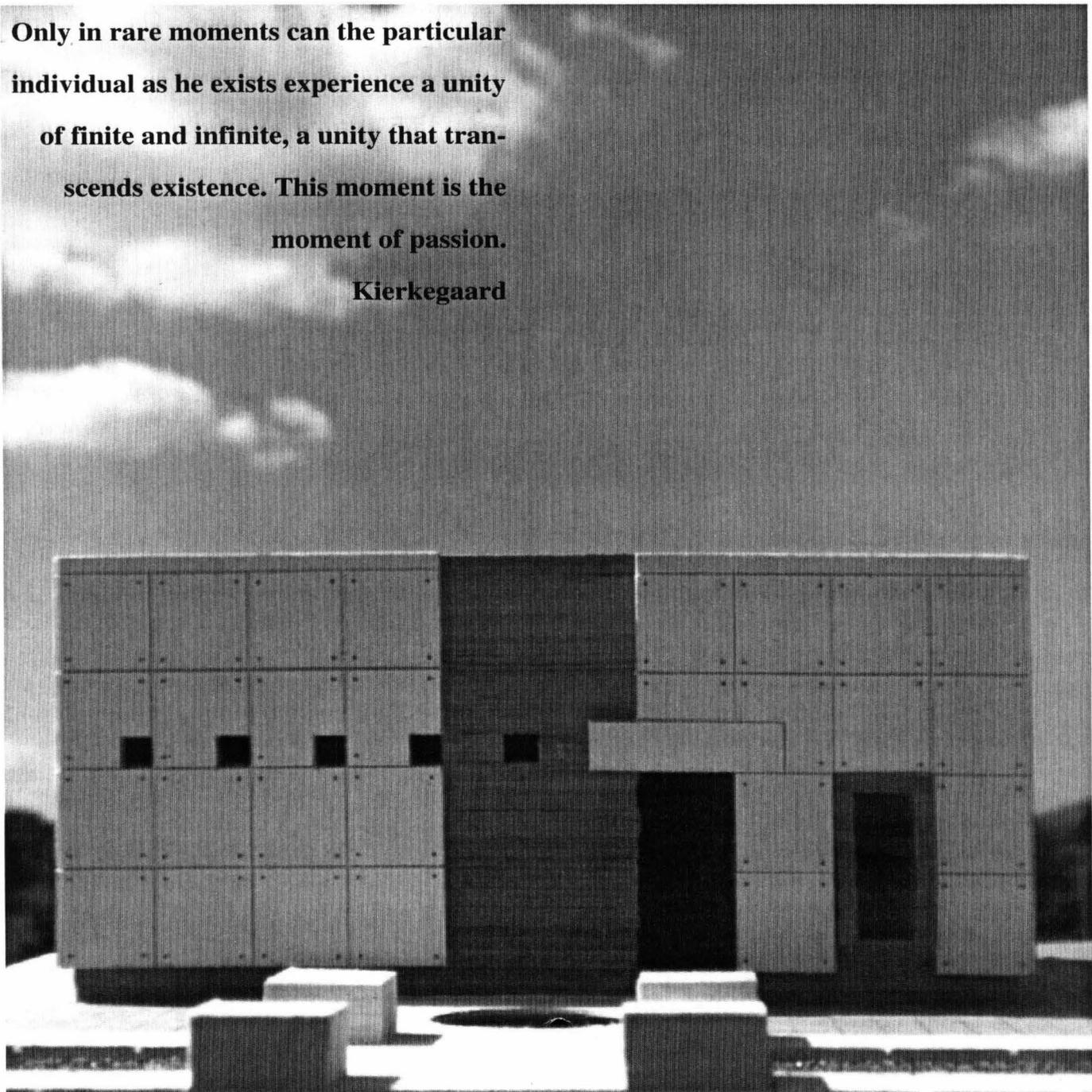
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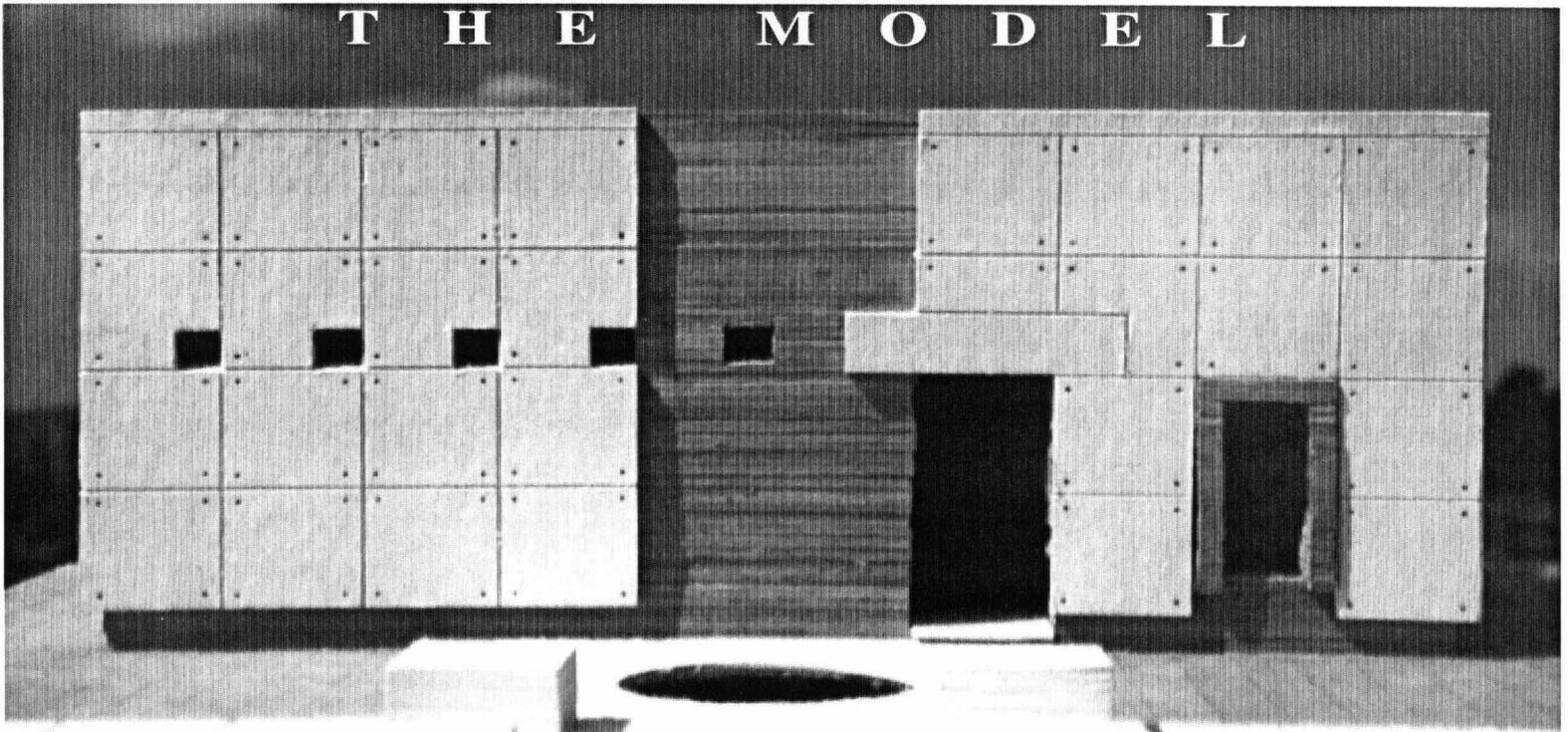


Only in rare moments can the particular individual as he exists experience a unity of finite and infinite, a unity that transcends existence. This moment is the moment of passion.

Kierkegaard



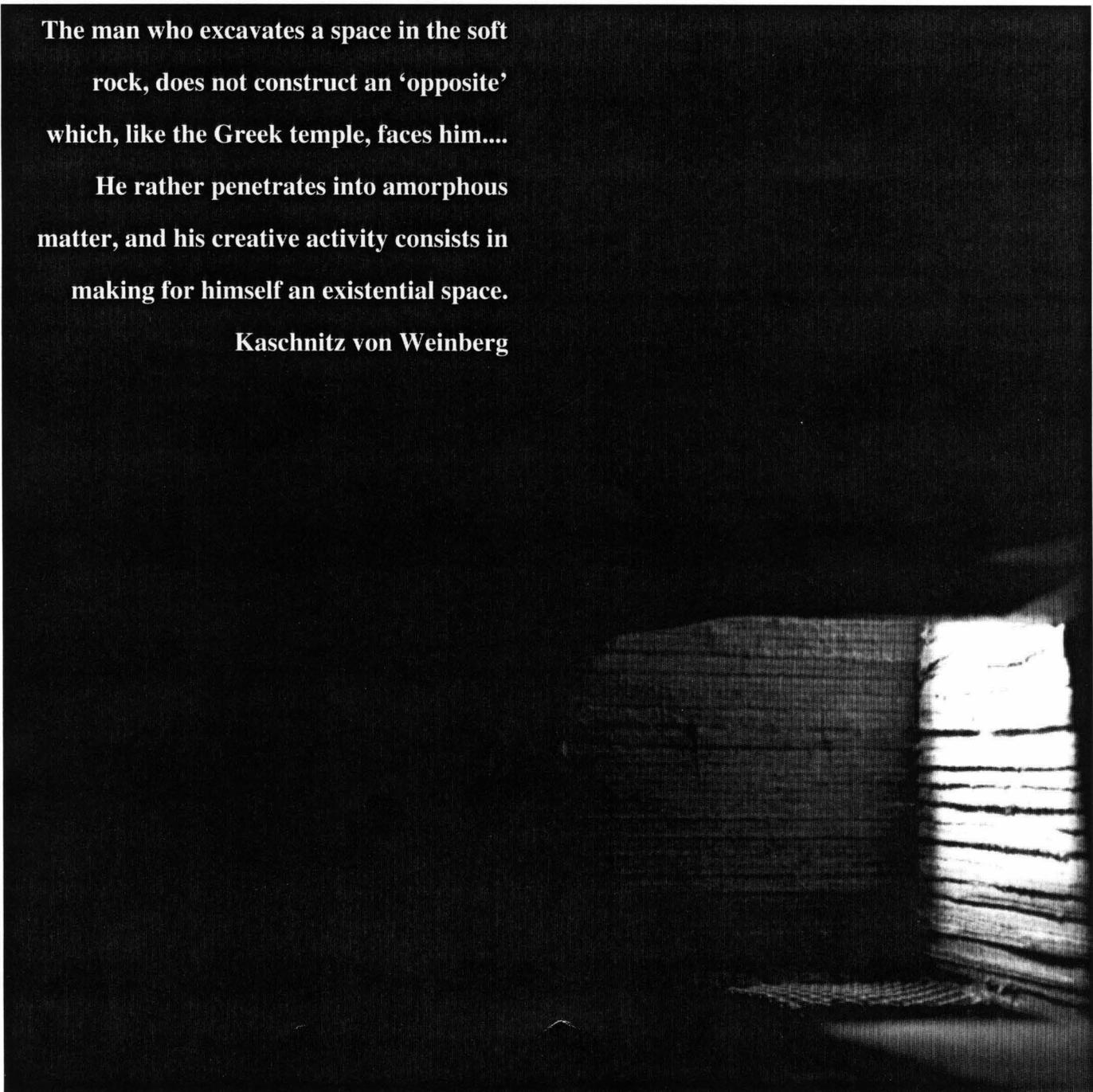
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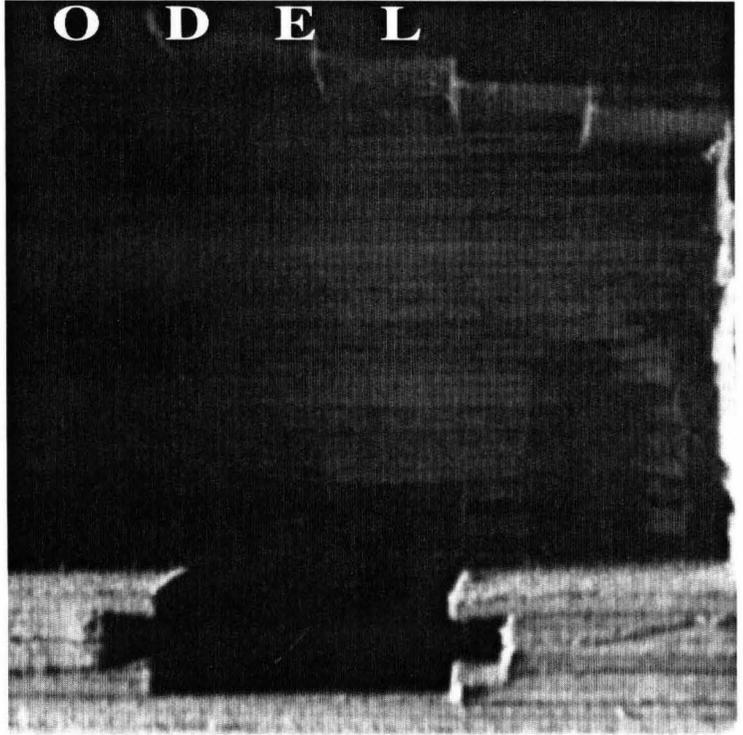
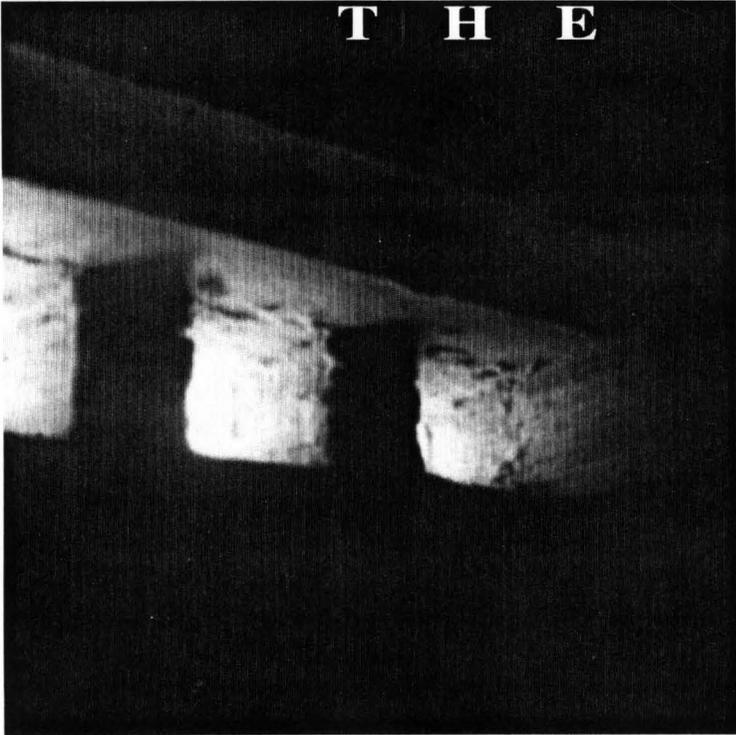
The man who excavates a space in the soft
rock, does not construct an 'opposite'
which, like the Greek temple, faces him....

He rather penetrates into amorphous
matter, and his creative activity consists in
making for himself an existential space.

Kaschnitz von Weinberg



T H E M O D E L



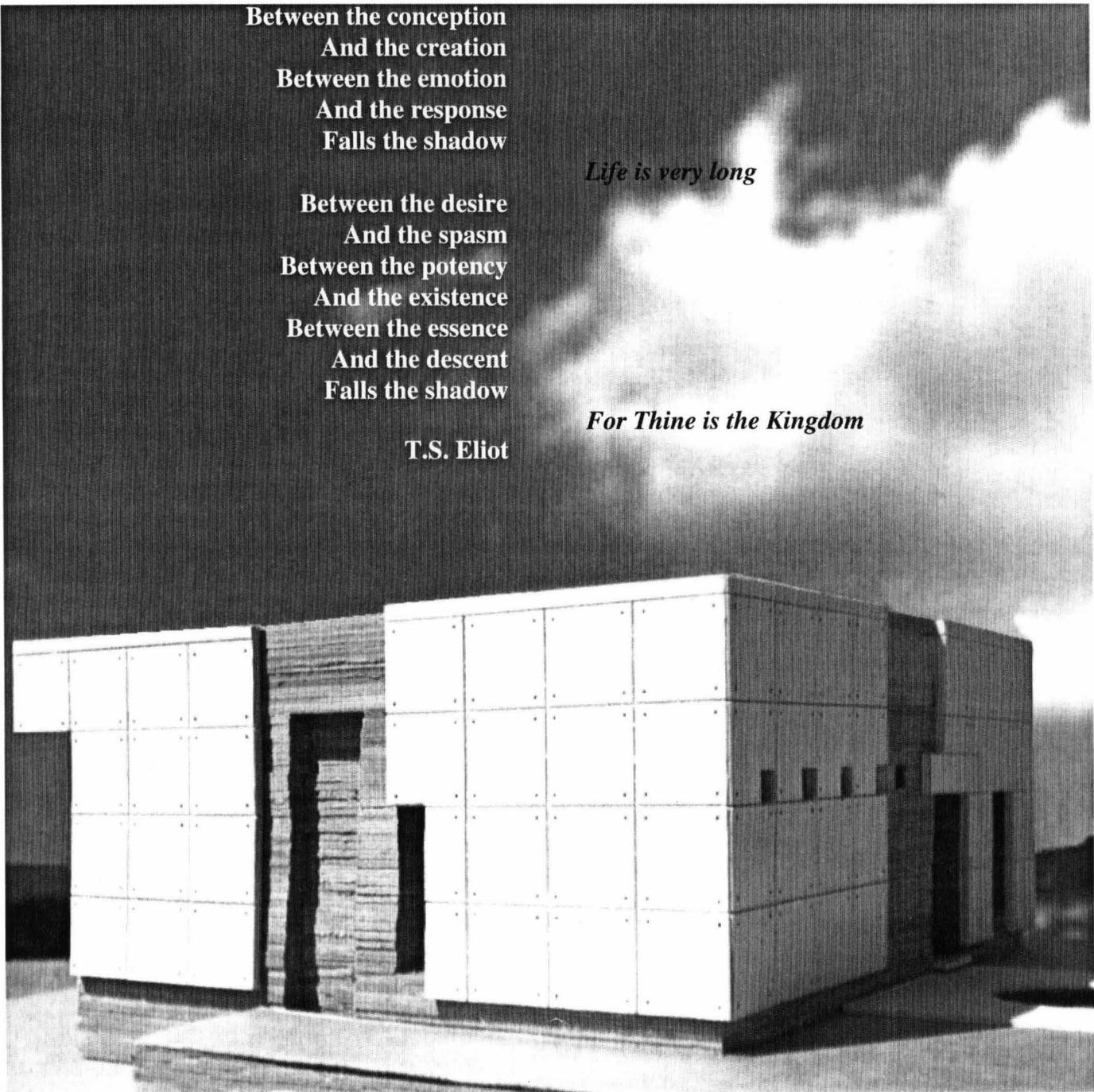
Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the shadow

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the shadow

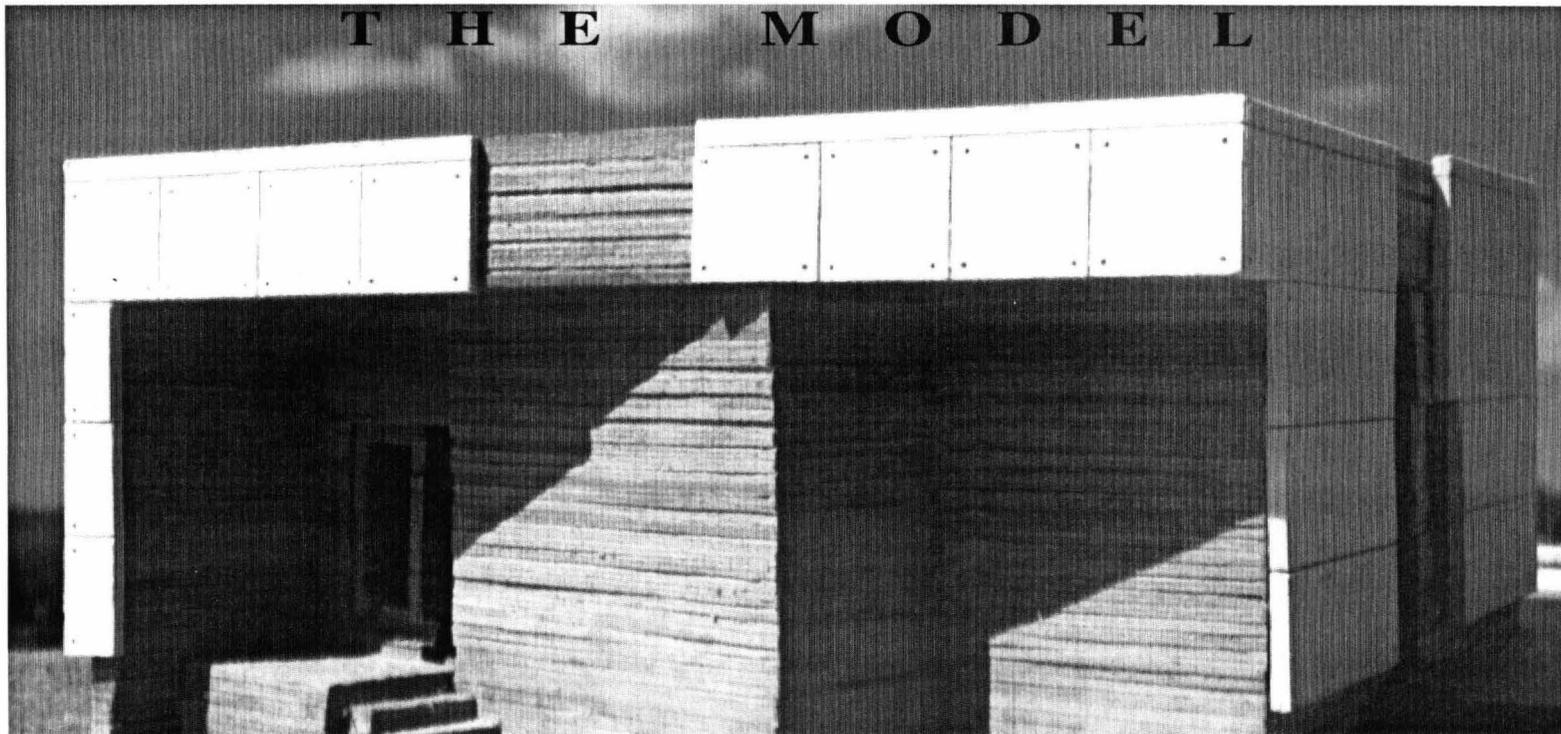
T.S. Eliot

Life is very long

For Thine is the Kingdom

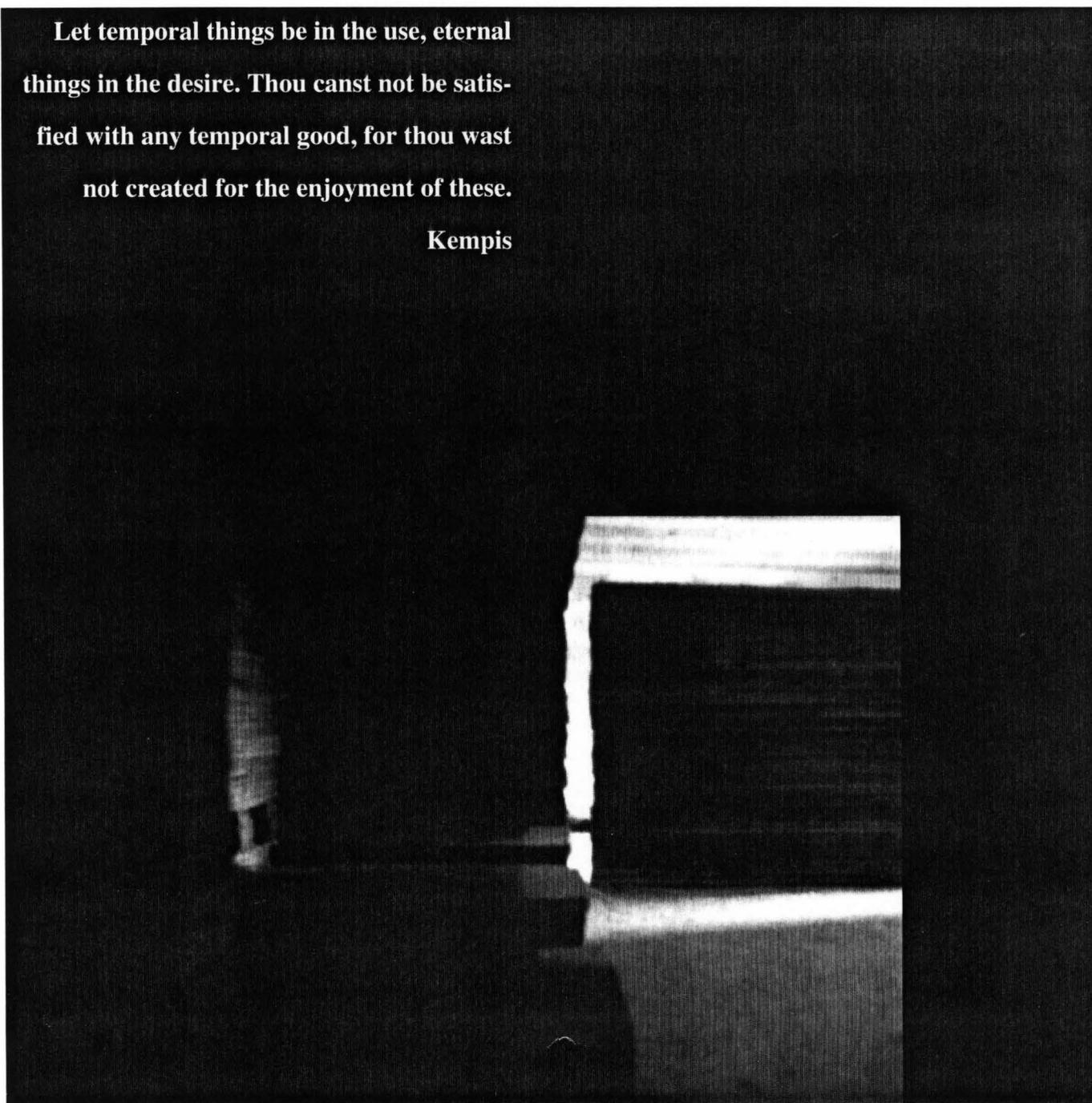


T H E M O D E L



Let temporal things be in the use, eternal things in the desire. Thou canst not be satisfied with any temporal good, for thou wast not created for the enjoyment of these.

Kempis



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ex nihilo nihil fit

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