

contemplative gaze of the *cogito*. The perspective view is available as well to the carnate subject who sees not infinity, but depth – finite and modulated. The world is not spread out before the embodied viewer; instead, in the perspective view, much of what is available to be seen can be only partially seen.

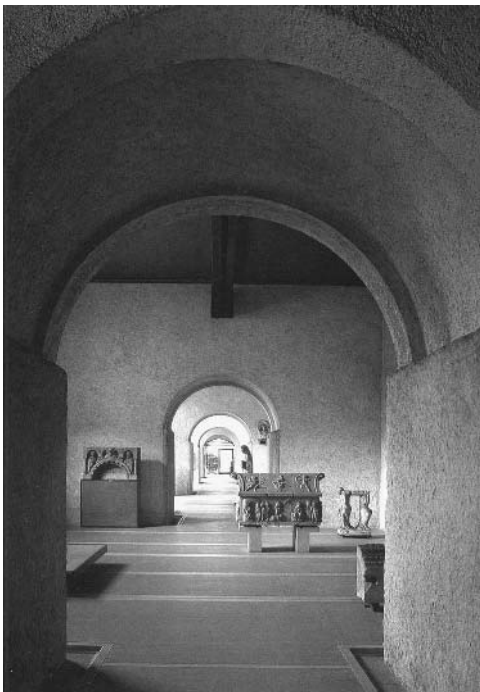
The ground that I do not see continues nonetheless to be present beneath the figure which partially hides it.

*Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sense and Non-sense*

This is not to say that the viewer consciously reconstitutes the objective totality of all that is perceived. An example is the classic technique of spatial connection in architecture known as *enfilade*, in which centrelines of doorways or openings to a series of spaces are aligned (Figure 1.10). This simple phenomenon, associated with one-point perspective, has been popularized by frequent recording in paintings and photographs; its perception does not require an intellectual comprehension of perspective techniques. Yet these depictions demonstrate that depth is visible even when the physical distances are compressed into two dimensions.

The trained eye can actually discern this phenomenon in an orthographic drawing (Figure 1.11). If, for example, a plan of a building shows a series of adjacent spaces, and the openings between these spaces are aligned and more or less equidistant, the experienced architect will mentally translate this plan notation into the compressed image of the resulting perspectival view. The plan provides a description of the whole, if only in two dimensions.

But a description of this visible phenomenon that produces depth is quite different. Multiple frontal planes phenomenally recede from foreground to middle ground and ultimately to background. While most of the surfaces of



**Figure 1.10** Carlo Scarpa, Castelvechio, Verona. Photograph © Antonio Martinelli, 1985.

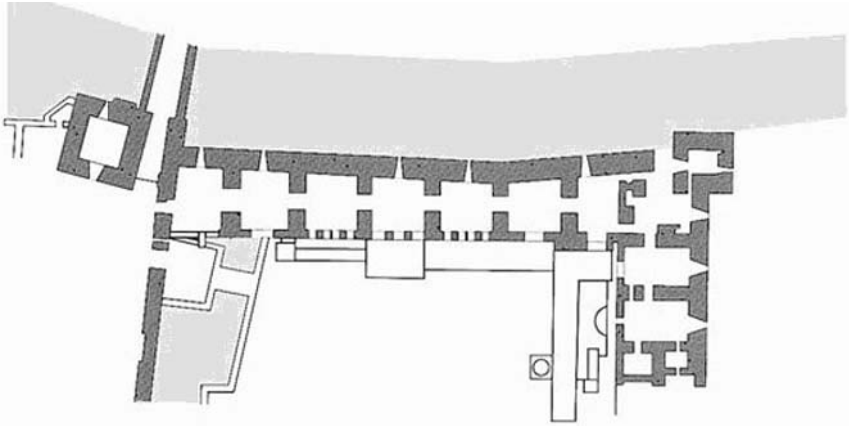


Figure 1.11 Carlo Scarpa, Castelvecchio, plan view.

these receding planes are concealed by the plane in front, the viewer nevertheless apprehends the series of spaces that are clearly laid out in the plan view. Further, most of the converging diagonals that usually convey depth are also concealed from view and must be inferred, consciously or unconsciously, by the painter, photographer, or viewer. In short, much of what is available in the objective world is omitted from this subjective view of it.

All perspective views depend on a fixed station point, or position, of the viewer. There exist a limited number of station points that allow the viewer to perceive architectural spaces in enfilade. One must assume a point of view near one end of the series, and the centre point, or vanishing point, must fall within all the openings to the space. In other words, to record this phenomenon, the viewer must place himself or herself in a position of “registration” with the architecture. The result of this registration is an abstracted visual axis that runs from the viewer, through all the openings, and is terminated in a frontal plane that is at the greatest distance from the viewer. If the viewer moves a few degrees laterally in either direction, the “registration” will be lost and the phenomenon will no longer be visible. The casual viewer, who is unlikely to be cognizant of the abstracted “visual axis,” will certainly recognize it as the axis of circulation. Thus the enfilade view is not a simple phenomenon for the contemplative gaze; it compels the viewer to travel through the perceived space, to travel along the axis to its end. So, too, is this experience reversible; the viewer will experience the same phenomenon on return.

One-point perspective is frequently used to represent architecture, especially architecture that is more or less bilaterally symmetrical. Here an equivalency arises between the line of symmetry, which is a geometric abstraction, and the visual axis between the viewer and the vanishing point. What then determines the choice of the viewer’s station point – the geometry of the object or the desire of the viewer to place himself or herself in “registration” with that geometry? Does the effect inhere in the object or must the subject actively engage the object to discover this registration?

An example of the ramifications of enfilade as a geometric technique is Louis Kahn’s Salk Institute in La Jolla, California. Kahn’s lectures and