Chapter Title: Introduction: Meaning in Architecture and Literature

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# Introduction: Meaning in Architecture and Literature

*Architektur als wichtigstes Zeugnis der latenten "Mythologie"*

In the monumental collection of fragments known as *Das Passagen-Werk,* Walter Benjamin remarks that architecture bears the most important testimony to the hidden "mythology" of a society (1002). As in so many of the remarks tossed out by the German critic in his seemingly offhand manner, there is matter for a book in this idea. If we understand mythology, in this modern sense, to be the set of symbols and narratives through which society gives meaning to itself, then the idea of architecture as testimony to a latent mythology offers one way of seeing architecture in relation to literature. What Benjamin claims is not simply that architecture is passive evidence of mythic content, but also that it "bears witness" (*zeugt*);[1] in other words, it speaks a language that bears testimony to a hidden mythology by making it available to interpretation in concrete form. His examples are the commercial arcades of nineteenth-century Paris, in which the fantasy world of burgeoning consumer capitalism, with its dreams of exotic luxury and domestic bliss, can be read in the luminous passages newly fashioned of iron and glass. In architecture this mythology remains latent to the extent that its form speaks only indirectly of its content. The novels of Balzac, by way of contrast, make this mythology manifest when they ex-

pose the ruthless ambition of parvenus, the greed of would-be inheritors, and the secret crimes of the ruling class. Each of these cultural forms nonetheless bears testimony in its own way to the underlying conditions of meaning belonging to its historical moment.

There exists a philosophical tradition that puts architecture and literature into relation with one another according to the particular question of what art is and how it functions. This tradition is distinctly modern and dates from a moment—roughly located in the eighteenth century—when the aesthetic dimensions of both cultural forms began to take precedence in the discourse surrounding them, that is, when architecture could be conceived as a fine art rather than essentially the science of building and *literature* began to refer to those particular forms of writing that make a claim to consideration on aesthetic grounds. For Hegel, architecture and literature are diametrically opposed in their respective manners of giving expression to the individual and collective human spirit. In his Berlin lectures on aesthetics in the 1820s, he says that of all the arts, architecture was the first to come into the world because the first task of art consists in giving shape to the objective, physical world of nature. However, since the material of architecture is solid, inanimate matter, it remains a purely external reflection of what Hegel calls spirit. On the other hand it is poetry, and by extension literature in general, that stands opposite to architecture as the "absolute and true art of the spirit": more than any other art, poetry has the capacity to bring before the imagination everything of which the mind is capable of conceiving. Architecture is the first art, but literature is the total art in its pure expression of inner spirit (*Aesthetics,* 2:627).

In the twentieth century, Hans-Georg Gadamer defines the difference between the arts in somewhat different terms. For him, the essence of art lies neither in the expression of spirit nor in an aesthetic autonomy abstracted from the world but rather in the meaning that it produces in the world. Because the architectural work is always the solution to some problem, its meaning is a function of its place in the world, in the relation between its form and the surrounding context. To this spatial conception of architectural meaning can be added a temporal one, for a building, as it is "borne along by the stream of history," acquires a historical meaning by virtue of its mediation between the present and the past from which it emerged (*Truth and Method,* 157). As for literature, Gadamer takes a similarly pragmatic view. Literature occupies a borderline position between sheer aesthetic contemplation and the material mediation in space and time represented in architecture (159). Nonetheless, literature comes into

being as meaningful only by being read; our understanding of literature "is not specifically concerned with its formal achievement as a work of art, but with what it says to us" (163). In this sense the mode of being of literature, like that of architecture, is historical: it brings the past down to us in the space of the present; the reading of literature accomplishes, almost magically, "the sheer presence of the past" (164).

For the purposes of this study, we need to retain two essential points from these philosophical discussions. The first concerns the importance of both arts in defining the world in which we live. Architecture, as the art of building, gives concrete form to the external world according to the structures of imagination; whereas literature, as the art of written language, gives symbolic form to the same world. In their respective manners architecture and literature are potentially the most unlimited of all art forms in their comprehension of human existence itself, and this fact alone justifies the task of putting them into relation with one another. The second point concerns the nature of art in general as a culturally significant phenomenon—as an ordered presentation of social and cultural meanings, whether as the pure expression of mythology, as the contestation of it, or as a symptom of the contradictions inherent in the conditions under which meaning is to be produced. In all of these cases, the artwork bears the marks of its own production as something indissociable from the larger culture, here understood in the anthropological sense of a set of values and practices particular to a given place and time. In other words, we want to know what the artwork means as a cultural artifact and how that meaning is produced.

The present work explores a series of instances in which architecture and modern literature come together in ways that appear to break down the barriers between the two art forms, or at least to construct bridges between them. The particular mode of this exploration is to ask the question of how meaning is produced by architecture and literature, respectively, and by their interaction, particularly in the context of modernity. *Modernity* is used here in historically limited terms to refer primarily to the social, cultural, and economic conditions of urban industrial society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although such conditions have their origins in the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, and earlier forms of capitalism and imperialism, I hold the view that beginning in the early nineteenth century the scale of such conditions was increased to proportions that could not have been imagined a century earlier, and that one of the consequences of these changes was to throw into disarray whatever harmony may have existed among the arts.

In order to seize the points of intersection between architecture and literature in the modern context, much of the material studied here consists of the literary representation of architectural forms, such as Proust's fictional impressions of the baptistery of Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice. In a case like this, the layers of meaning are multiple and interconnected. There is first of all what we might call the architectural meaning of the baptistery, itself a fourteenth-century interpretation of the various Gospel narratives of Christ's baptism and of their subsequent institutionalization as a sacrament of the Church. This space within the basilica, however, was interpreted in the nineteenth century context by Ruskin, whose work of architectural criticism informs the impressions of Proust's narrator, and by Proust himself, who visited Venice eight years before writing this passage. The literary meaning produced in Proust's work is thus itself a re-presentation of other meanings produced by architectural form, criticism, and authorial reminiscence. When we consider that the architectural form that inspires Proust's narrative is itself inspired by biblical narrative, the interdependency of literary and architectural meanings becomes most evident. In cases like this the production of literary meaning may be theoretically distinct, but in practice it remains inseparable from the production of architectural meaning.

Architectural theory, like literary theory, has many ways of approaching its subject, but one of these is to understand an architectural work in terms of three factors: *site, type,* and *architectonics.* As we have seen in Gadamer, every architectural work intervenes in a given site in such a way as to give a new shape to that space while also establishing a new relation between the newly formed space and that which remains outside it. The notion of architectural type, introduced in the eighteenth century, classifies architecture according to figures that develop independently in themselves.[2] Originally conceived in terms of basic archetypes such as the cave, the hut, or the tent, architectural typology by extension includes such universal categorical forms as the temple, the fortress, the bridge, or, in another register, the arch, the door, the wall. *Architectonics* has come to mean that aspect of architecture specifically concerned with construction, such as the interaction of the forces of load and support. Siegfried Giedion uses the word to describe Le Corbusier's definition of the relations between architecture and construction as consisting of load-bearing pillars, of the mutual independence of wall and frame, of the free-standing facade, and so on (*Espace,* 304). More recently, Kenneth Frampton has argued in favor of the term *tectonics* (from the Greek *teknè*) to designate the "expressive potential" of

constructional technique, the "poetics of construction" (*Studies* 2), thereby seeking a synthesis of the artistic and the purely analytical understanding of the architectural work.

The point of this brief excursion into architectural language is to demonstrate the potential for literary analogies. The architectural site can thus be compared to the historical and cultural context, or what Pierre Bourdieu calls the field of cultural production in which a literary work intervenes. Architectural type corresponds to literary genre, while the essential question at stake in the contemporary understanding of architectonics is analogous to the attempt in literary theory to reconcile structure with style or to disengage the specifically literary quality of a given text. In both arts, the production of meaning is a function of the relations between the respective sets of vectors outlined here: in architecture among *topos, typos,* and *tectonic;*[3] in literature among context, genre, and text.

However, the study of the relations between architecture and literature needs to go beyond mere analogy in at least two respects. One is to examine the rivalry, or even the outright opposition, between the two arts in their respective responses to certain historical conditions. The closest example at hand is that of modernity itself. Many of the most striking elements of modernist architecture—its extreme rationality, its pure functionalism, its brutal break with the past—have been seen to embody precisely the objective conditions of modernity that modernist literature calls into question. Certainly the functionalist and rationalist elements of twentieth-century architecture appear diametrically opposed in spirit to the value that so much of twentieth-century literature places on subjective, nonrational experience. Suggested by this difference is the fragmentation of meaning within the realm of modernity itself, or what Theodor Adorno calls the negative dialectic between art as imaginative production and the experience of objective reality. The other way of reading literature with architecture is, as I have already proposed, to study the representation of one art by the other. If the architectural representation of literature is rare, the representation of architecture is everywhere in literature, precisely because of what Hegel identifies as literature's capacity to bring before the imagination every object of the mind's conception or the senses' perception.

Many of the cases studied in the present work identify an ambiguous relation between architecture and literature in the modern era. The story of this relation, which can be offered in only the most tentative form, can nonetheless be told along the following general lines. In the formal classicism of the eighteenth century, poetry and architecture have in common

an aesthetic designed to reproduce the classical values of proportion, reason, and the justice of natural order. To the extent that this common aesthetic represents a relative harmony between the arts (at least in their neoclassical manifestations), the nineteenth century literary interest in Gothic architecture signals, in important writers, both a break with classical values and an estrangement from what these writers perceive as the objective and subjective conditions of modernity. Against these conditions stands the purity of spirit that is thought to lie at the origin of the great medieval cathedrals, marooned like great albatrosses in the midst of European industrial cities. In the twentieth century, this experience of rupture is transformed into architectural rationalism, on one hand, and literary fragmentation on the other. These two modes of artistic production constitute very different responses to the modern condition, even if they share certain aims, such as the breakdown of barriers between inside and outside. In contrast to these positions, the art more contemporary to our own time approaches a "postmedium" condition in which architectural and literary elements are combined in the same work. As Fredric Jameson has written, in a world saturated with aesthetic codes, the specificity of any artistic mode or genre is systematically put into question. The focus of the present work, then, as well as its general thesis, concerns the manner in which the relations between architecture and literature are symptomatic of modernity as a crisis of meaning. Before treating this question further, however, I first wish to look backward at certain representative instances of the relation between architectural and literary meaning in a range of cases from antiquity to the threshold of modernity.

## II

## Foundational Myths

In the penultimate book of the *Odyssey,* Odysseus has returned to his house in Ithaca after an absence of twenty years. The familiar story is beautiful enough to be worth retelling. Odysseus has killed the suitors who importuned his wife, dishonored his family, despoiled his household provisions, and mistreated his servants. However, at the long-awaited moment of his reunion with Penelope, she fears an impostor and is therefore unable or unwilling to recognize him. In her caution, she requires proof that this strange man, twenty years older than the husband she knew, is indeed Odysseus. She orders her servant to prepare a firm bed for the stranger, the

very bed that Odysseus himself built, and to place it outside the nuptial chamber. Overhearing these orders, Odysseus is overcome with emotion. He demands to know what man could have removed his bed from its original place, where it was literally rooted in the earth. When he built the bed, there was an olive tree in the courtyard of the house, "with long leaves growing strongly . . . and it was thick, like a column (*kion*)" (340). He constructed the nuptial chamber around this tree and made a bedpost of its living trunk. The bedpost being thus immovable, Penelope's orders to the servant must be impossible to carry out, Odysseus says, unless someone has severed the trunk of the olive from its roots.

> So he spoke, and the knees and heart within her went slack
> as she recognized the clear proofs that Odysseus had given;
> but then she burst into tears and ran straight to him, throwing
> her arms round the neck of Odysseus. (340)

This scene is the culmination of Homer's epic; after years of voyage and suffering, Odysseus is finally reunited with home and family, and as if to consecrate the event, he has penetrated to the most intimate interior of the house to find the nuptial bed rooted in the earth, exactly where he left it twenty years earlier.

The constellation of symbols is powerful: the nuptial bed is the place of conception of Odysseus's progeny; thus it is the source of the continuity of patriarchal order as well as being the center of intimacy within the domestic space of the house. Its placement is therefore temporal in the successive order of generations but also spatial in two senses: in the horizontal order of the distribution of the house as arranged around the central point of courtyard and chamber, and in the vertical order that connects the house to the earth and to heaven by means of the column of the tree. To be thus literally connected to the earth is important symbolically, because in the patriarchal and agricultural world of Ithaca, the earth guarantees the prosperity of the house of Odysseus as well as its continuity in the generational sense. In another sense, the immovability of the marriage bed and of the house itself marks the end of Odysseus's wandering. It thus signifies the supremacy of a sedentary over a nomadic way of life and the security of an agricultural and domestic economy in contrast to the economy of war. Homer gives us the first figure of the *house* as a figure of stability and permanence, symbolic values it will retain even in the modern era, when the nature of human dwelling will be called into question by architects, poets, and philosophers alike. For Gaston Bachelard the house even in the twen-

tieth century is a world unto itself from cellar to attic, a symbol of the in-
terior life of the psyche, and the very place of reverie: "La maison est une
des plus grandes puissances d'intégration pour les pensées, les souvenirs et
les rêves de l'homme" (26) (the house is one of the great forces for com-
bining the thought, memory, and dreams of man).

When Bachelard's insight is directed toward classical antiquity, what it
suggests in the case of Homer is that the *oikos,* or domestic economy, of the
house is the condition for the epic itself. Odysseus, in telling the story of
how he built the marriage bed, compares the trunk of the olive to a col-
umn, or *kion.* This word has been used before, in Book VIII, to designate
the place of the singer Demodokos at the feast held for Odysseus in the
house of Alkinoös. Let us recall that in that episode Odysseus, shipwrecked
on the island of the Phaiakians, is received by the "hallowed prince" of that
island, whose palace is the symbol of divine favor, of the prosperity of his
kingdom, and of the justice with which he rules over its inhabitants.

> For as from the sun the light goes or from the moon, such was
> the glory on the high-roofed house (*dôma*) of great-hearted Alkinoös.
>     (113)

Homer lingers on the architectural detail of the interior: brass walls of
rooms encircled by a cobalt frieze, golden doors with silver doorposts. The
richness of the material appointments reflects the harmony and prosperity
of life on the island: the leaders of the Phaiakians hold their sessions in the
light of torches held by golden statues standing on their "strong-com-
pounded bases" (113). The island is known for its bountiful orchards and
olive groves and for the skill of its women at weaving. These combined el-
ements of architectural splendor, flourishing industry, and social harmony
make the house of Alkinoös an ideal symbol of domestic economy; they
define the high standard to which Odysseus's house at Ithaca must one day
be restored. Seeing all this, Odysseus prays that he may live to see once
more "my property, my serving people, and my great high-roofed house
(*dôma*)" (117).

It is at the center of the scene at Phaiakia that Homer places the figure
of epic poetry. During the great feast held for Odysseus at the palace, De-
modokos, the blind singer (*aoidos*) is led into the middle of the room and
is seated on a silver-studded chair leaning against a tall column (*kion*). De-
modokos's lyre is hung on a peg in the column above his head, where he
can reach it when he has done eating and drinking. At the end of the meal
Demodokos sings movingly of the Trojan War, including the quarrel be-

tween Odysseus and Achilles. Hearing the song, Odysseus himself, his identity still unknown to his hosts, quietly weeps at the story of his own sufferings and those of his companions. The scene is as richly symbolic as that of the marriage bed of Odysseus and Penelope, with the difference that in this episode Homer connects the art of poetry quite literally to the supporting structure of his architectural and social ideal. Demodokos, loved by the Muse, is also revered by the Phaiakians and given a place of honor in the middle of their assembly. In a figure joining poetic art to architectural strength, the poet's lyre is hung on the column that holds up the roof, and his chair is propped against the same support. The song of Demodokos, which takes the narrative and poetic form of the epic, provides the occasion and the house itself with a sense of history, human community, and a relation to the gods. In Hegelian terms, it gives voice to the spirit without which the splendors of Alkinoös's palace would remain little more than a show of riches. The performance of Demodokos is Homer's manner of paying homage to his own art and its capacity to endow life with meaning. When we come to the scene of the marriage bed late in the narrative, the *kion* of the bedpost sends us back to the *kion* of Demodokos in order to remind us that the restoration of order and meaning to Odysseus's universe is the work of the poet himself. Literary meaning here works in harmony with architectural meaning as the foundation of cultural memory and value, and of their transmission from one generation to the next.

The houses of the *Odyssey* need to be balanced against that other primordial architectural text, the story of the Tower of Babel in the eleventh chapter of the book of Genesis, which implicitly proposes a different kind of relation between architecture and writing. Although the story has been reinterpreted over the centuries in innumerable theological and philosophical works, perhaps I may be permitted to retell it once more in light of the particular perspective afforded by my subject. Readers of Jacques Derrida will understand that my interpretation would not have been possible without his reading of the same biblical passage in "Les tours de Babel," although his main preoccupations and his conclusions are different from mine. The dream of a universal and common language at the story's foundation—"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Gen. 11:1)—is heretical to the spirit of the Law in that such a language establishes the strength of the human race independent of its relation to God. For the redactor of the tale, the common language is a condition for the construction of the tower, which in turn symbolizes precisely

this linguistic universality. Beyond that, the tower can be considered as an original instance of writing in the broad sense of the word, as the trace or inscription of meaning in material form: "[L]et us make a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (11:4). The Tower of Babel is thus the concrete institution of the name erected against the permanent danger of effacement; it bears the same relation to an original human diaspora as writing does to memory. But in addition to this centripetal force through which the tower would maintain community through geographical unity, the tower is also intended to establish the temporal continuity of the name, that is, to secure a unified genealogical descent of the human race as a single nation against the declension of the race into different peoples that will meet only to wage war on one another. The building of the tower, though presented as an act of hubris, is, at least from a modern perspective, heroic in the way that it testifies to humankind's supreme effort to escape its tragic destiny. The nature of this effort is that of the *translation* of a common language into the concrete form of the tower; in other words, the story gives expression to the dream of an ideal unity of the purely symbolic medium of language with the concrete medium of architecture. The aim of this union is to endow linguistic meaning with the fixity and permanence of a solid edifice. It is in effect a dream of truth in its character both as the unity of a universal language and as permanence, as the imperishable monument to that unity. The intention is thus to make of human solidarity a truth, independent of that received in the Law, that will protect mankind from dispersion, difference, and enmity: "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." The tragic irony, of course, is that humankind's attempt to prevent its own dispersion is the very cause of that dispersion.

The abandonment of the tower shatters not just the dream of human solidarity but also the dream of permanent meaning symbolized by the translation of language into brick. As the universal language of truth cannot be "written in stone," mankind is condemned to an infinity of approximations to that truth in the form of literary production. The story can thus be read as an allegory of the origin of literature, for in the resulting confusion of languages we find the fundamental conditions of literary meaning. The multiplicity of languages condemns humankind to an eternity of translations from one language to another. But this state of affairs also implies the multiplicity of meanings even in a single language, thus giving possibility to figuration, allegory, metaphor, ambiguity, and all the elements of discontinuity and difference, as well as the ceaseless striving for

unity, that constitute literary expression. The destruction of the tower adds to this logic of difference one of incompletion: the literary work is never fully achieved, never totally unified and finished in the production of its meaning, just as the architectural work reaches its state of divine perfection in the sky only in the holy city of biblical Revelation. On earth, the artwork still strives, like the tower of Babel, to touch heaven.

And yet the meaning of the story remains ambiguous: the divine imposition of confusion that it relates is itself confusing. If, according to Judeo-Christian doctrine, the story should teach us humility before the will of God, it also fails to suppress a counterdoctrinal motif that affirms the possibilities of human solidarity based on a common language that renders humanity capable of constructing its own future. But this is not the only source of confusion. Yet another dimension of the story corresponds to a particularly modern vision of the human condition. Maurice Blanchot calls "tragic thought" that form of thinking that is conscious of all the contradictions of our existence. In his own tragic and eloquent formulation he speaks of

> le malheur d'une pensée qui n'a rien où commencer et qui se dissipe d'un infini à l'autre, cette ambiguïté dans laquelle nous nous disséminons, ne demeurant pas, allant et venant sans cesse, toujours ici et là, et cependant nulle part [. . .], c'est la suite d'une obscurité dispersée, répandue et comme errante, que nous n'avons pas eu la force de fixer. (*L'Entretien* 138)
>
> *the ill-fortune of a thought that, having no bearings, loses itself in one infinity after another; this ambiguity by which we waste ourselves in a coming and going without rest, always here and there and yet nowhere. . . , it comes from a surrounding, widespread, and wandering darkness that we have not had the strength to master.*

The story of Babel gives ancient expression to this tragic thought; the active presence of a jealous God does little to dissipate the sense of darkness and confusion as the people, their city and tower abandoned, are scattered abroad on the face of the earth (11:9). This tragic thought lies at the origin of poetic expression and remains as a kind of latent content that, as we shall see, comes to the surface in the modern literature of ruin, the fragment, and homelessness.

The story of Ithaca and the story of Babel are the two universal, foundational myths in the human architectural imagination. They also present

two essential but distinct analogies between architecture and the literary
text. In the first instance, as we have seen, Homer's epic in its transmission
of cultural value has a function analogous to that of the ancestral house
rooted in the earth, like the Black Forest house that Heidegger will cele-
brate as ordered in such as way as to "let earth and heaven, divinities and
mortals enter *in simple oneness* into things" (*Poetry* 160). When we remem-
ber the *Odyssey* as a book of wanderings, we may forget that only the first
part recounts the voyages of its hero, and much of it is told by Odysseus
himself in the safety of the house of Alkinoös. The entire second half of the
epic takes place at Ithaca, and concerns the lengthy work of reestablishing
the order of patrimony, patriarchy, conjugal rights, and domesticity—in a
word, the entire social order that has deteriorated during Odysseus's ab-
sence. The *Odyssey* is at the origin of a conservative literary tradition that
affirms the place of the master of the house, fidelity of the wife, veneration
of the elderly, peaceable succession of property from father to son, defense
against foreign decadence, and respect for law and the gods. The bed-
chamber rooted in the earth is an architectural synecdoche for all of these
values that one finds, in one form or another, in the history of literature
from Vergil to Jane Austen. To borrow another formula from Heidegger,
Homer gathers the world together and takes the measure of humankind's
existence between heaven and earth; the epic represents an act of building
(*bauen*) designed to "cherish and protect, to preserve and care for" social
being (*Poetry* 147).

The implied analogy between writing and architecture in the Babel
story gives no such reassurance. The construction of the tower as the mak-
ing of a name may be understood as literature's fundamental project of
fixing the truth of human existence as durable meaning, but the name
given is Babel, confusion, a name that cancels the name and confounds the
construction of language as an adequate measure for existence. Moreover,
it is not just the construction of the name told by the tale of Babel that
provides an analogy between the tower and writing; it is also the tale itself
that remains in a sense unfinished, unable to resolve the inherent conflict
between a jealous God and a people aspiring to do "everything they have
imagined to do" (11:6)—unable, finally, to master the darkness toward
which it gestures. In its dream of an ideal unity arising out of invention
and daring construction, the story of Babel stands at the origin of a long
literary tradition of revolt but also one of disillusion and exile, and of the
truth of the absence of truth, from the *tour abolie* of Nerval's "El des-

dichado" to the ruins against which T. S. Eliot has shored the fragments of *The Waste Land.*

## Analogical Constructions

My reading of the *Odyssey* sees an allegorical relation between, on one hand, the building and habitation of the house and, on the other, the recital and transmission of the epic. My reading of the Babel narrative takes the position that the abandoned tower allegorizes not just the problem of meaning in language but also the problem of truth in literature. In both cases the allegorical relation is made possible only by means of reference to art's "symptomatic" relation to other cultural forms, such as the institutions that ensure social continuity or those, more enigmatic, that express an essential uncertainty concerning the nature of man's relation to the metaphysical realm. However, another mode of the relation between literary and architectural meaning is provided by the Middle Ages. In his classic study, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (1951), Erwin Panofsky has shown how medieval scholastic writings such as Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum* (The Mind's Road to God, 1259) and Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (1272) are written according to a set of ordering principles that makes them analogous in form and content to the religious architecture of the same period.

The *Summa,* for example, provides a systematic exposition of Christian theology in a series of treatises on subjects ranging from the Creation to the Last Things. Aquinas's work is the culmination of a scholastic tradition based on the rhetorical procedures of enumeration, articulation, and interrelation. The *enumeration* of a sufficient number of elements of the subject, for example, the various forms of fortitude and temperance, ensures the *totality* of the work in its scope. The *articulation* of the work organizes its subjects according to a system of homologous parts, whereas the *interrelation* of elements ensures both the proper distinction among things and the rational process of deduction. In the thirteenth century these elements of division were refined, so that the successive chapters of a work treated not just different aspects of a subject but also followed a disciplined order that led the reader from one proposition to the next so as to make the progress of the argument clear. Far from being a soulless machine of exposition, however, scholastic prose is often infused with rhetorical figures, suggestive analogies, balanced periods, and elegant turns of phrase. Panof-

sky selects for admiration the following passage from Bonaventure's *Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (1252), arguing for religious images to be admitted into places of worship as a way of focusing and concentrating faith, "propter simplicium rudimentatem, propter affectuum tarditatem, propter memoriae labilitatem." The brilliant condensation of these lines can hardly be rendered in English: "because simple persons have only rudimentary skills, because the affections are slow to take form, because memory is unpredictable" (*Architecture gothique* 92).[4] As these formal procedures suggest, scholastic writing was fundamentally based on the principle of *manifestatio* or the clarification of its subject. Faith itself was to be made clear by an appeal to reason, reason by an appeal to imagination, and imagination by an appeal to the senses (99).

It is at this point that the analogy between scholastic thought and religious architecture also becomes clear. The cathedrals of the thirteenth century, like the scholastic treatises, were constructed in order to make *visible* the whole of Christian faith through abundant enumeration in the form of saintly images and scenes from the life of Christ, as well as through functional architectural elements such as the baptismal font, the tombs of the faithful, and the altar on which the bread and wine of the host are placed. As Dominique Iogna-Prat has shown, this material realization and spatialization of the sacred became possible only after the long controversy over the meaning of the Eucharist was resolved in favor of its transformation into the real substance (rather than the symbol) of the body of Christ, a sacrament whose ritual nature required an edifice worthy of its miraculous nature. Thus it was not until the ninth century that the sacraments of the Church were thought to require a church building consecrated for the purpose of their celebration.[5] The interior space of this edifice had to be ordered and "ritualized" to accommodate the various elements of liturgy entailed by the sacraments (176). The Church as an institution, like its doctrine, thus became real in the "petrified" form of the church building (275). There is, moreover, a similarity between the ritual of Baptism and the ceremony for the consecration of a church, and medieval discourses on the nature of the individual Christian compare this person to the architecture of the Temple or Tabernacle (582). The relation between ecclesiastical thought and architecture is here more profound than one of simple analogy: the church building is doctrine substantialized, the word made stone.

Like the elements of scholastic thought, the architectural elements of the cathedral are articulated according to formally homologous orders such as statues, stained-glass images, arches, vaults, lateral chapels,

columns, and capitals. This division of architectural space is strict and precise; chapels, columns, and windows, for example, are uniform in size and symmetrically arranged, then subdivided into smaller but equally uniform components. Finally, the interrelation of these elements is organized in order to favor the movement from one point to the next in a manner intended to reconcile the logic of reason with the mystery of faith. Let us briefly take the example of Notre-Dame d'Amiens. The principles of order and clarity are initially announced in the approach to the western facade, which is divided into three porches devoted (from left to right) to Saint Firmin as the first Christian missionary to Amiens, to Christ as Emmanuel or "God with us," and to the Virgin Mary as the figure of merciful intercession in human life. Architecturally, these three porches function as a cross section of the sanctuary, its nave flanked by arcades on either side. One enters the main portal under the statue of Christ, whose body and princely bearing signify the *way* of faith. Inside the nave, the strong vertical thrust of columns and vaulting carries the eye toward the light, whereas the forward thrust of the axis directs one's steps forward toward the altar. On the way one passes over the gravestones of Evrard de Fouilloy and Geoffroy d'Eu, the two bishops who built the edifice, thus coming into contact, as it were, with the history of the cathedral and its great examples of faith. Halfway down the center aisle, one steps onto the labyrinth of inlaid marble. In *The Bible of Amiens* Ruskin affirms that to the Christians of the thirteenth century this design was "an emblem of noble human life, strait-gaited, narrow-walled, with infinite darknesses and the 'inextricabilis error' on either hand—and in the depth of it, the brutal nature to be conquered" (XXXIII:136).[6] In the narrative logic produced by this eastward movement through the cathedral, there is an element of suspense belonging to this passage "into" the labyrinth and out the other side. For once one has left this space of confusion behind, one stands directly before the altar of Saint Denis, apostle to the Gauls, and the place of the sacrament, which represents the essential function of the cathedral. The entire movement from the western entrance to the central altar constitutes a performance, in time and space, of the measured narrative and logical movement of a work like Bonaventure's *The Mind's Road to God.* In the book the spiritual journey is a figure, but in the cathedral the light of heaven shining through the clerestory literally shows the way to the place of communion with Christ.

Examples of the analogy between spiritual and natural light abound in scholastic writing, as in the verses of the Abbé Suger devoted to his renovation of the Basilica of Saint-Denis, frequently cited as the first great ex-

ample of Gothic architecture. Some of these verses celebrated the brilliant light that Suger's tall new windows let into the basilica.

> Aula micat medio clarificata suo
> Claret enim claris quod clare concopulatur,
> Et quod perfundit lux nova, claret opus Nobile.

> *The Church shines from its illuminated center*
> *For luminous is that which enlightenment joins with light*
> *And luminous is the noble edifice filled with the new light.* (quoted in
>     Panofsky 42)

As Panofsky points out, the richness and beauty of Suger's renovations flew in the face of the Romanesque asceticism of the monastic tradition. But figurative language of the kind employed in his verses enabled Suger to defend his architectural renovations on more than just aesthetic grounds; a formula such as *lux nova* interprets the new clarity and visibility of Gothic architecture with the new light of Christ's advent announced in the Gospel. This interpretation of architectural form in a spiritual sense belongs to the scholastic mode of "anagogical" interpretation, literally that which sees the things of this world in the light of a higher truth. Dante writes in the *Convivio* (1307) that the anagogical mode elevates the things of literal apprehension to a level beyond the senses so that they signify "le superne cose de l'etternal Gloria," the supernal things of eternal glory (II:1).

Dante's *Commedia* (1304–21) also shows its sources in the scholastic tradition through its systematic articulation of space according to an orderly exposition of divine justice that nonetheless recognizes that divine grace, like the being of God himself, is beyond human reason. In the tradition of scholastic discourse, the *Inferno* aspires to totality in its enumeration of every kind of sin, with the division of sins into different classes according to the nature of the offense against God, mankind, or self; it organizes the various forms of punishment corresponding to these sins into architecturally homologous spaces, and, by means of Dante's descent though these spaces, the passage from one point to the next figures as a series of stages in the poet's progressive understanding of divine judgment. The successive terraces of hell correspond to the deadly sins; their relative depth in the earth, or distance from God in heaven, is determined by the gravity of offense to Him represented in the sin, whereas the same sins in reverse order but repented give a similar meaning to the series of ascending terraces on

the mountain of purgatory. Dante's verse is everywhere dedicated to the lucid exposition of this architectural topography, which in turn illuminates his understanding in measurable ways as he advances through each stage of his journey.

As if to emphasize its architectural otherness, the City of Dis, or lower hell, is built of mosques (*meschite*) illuminated not by the light of heaven but by that of the flames that torment its sinners—here those who have sinned not from weakness, like those in the upper hell, but wilfully, through violence, fraud, and treachery. The fraudulent suffer in a concentric series of ten ditches (*bolge*) dug into descending terraces connected by bridges over which Dante passes, marking out in architectural form his successive comprehension of each punishment. In the eighth *bolge* of this region Dante finds a Ulysses who has not returned home and who burns in hell for false counsel, that is, for convincing his men to flee from their duties in the pursuit of experience for its own sake: "a divenir del mondo esparto" (XXVI:98). As the space of hell narrows with Dante's descent, the light grows dimmer and the movement of the sinners is ever more restricted. At the very bottom, the poet Dante has put an architect: the giant Nimrod (Gen. 10:8–10) stands half buried in a ditch, from which he utters savage, incomprehensible syllables. This is his punishment for having, according to medieval exegesis, designed the Tower of Babel, through which "wicked device" the world is linguistically divided. For Nimrod, "every language is to him as his to others, which is known to none" (XXXI:80–81).[7] One imagines that the depth of his place in hell is at least equal to the height of the tower he tried to build. In hell Nimrod is one of the guards of Satan, who is perceived only through what appears to be a thick fog. Once the "bright star" of heaven, Satan is now paralyzed, frozen in the ice of Cocytus. All of these images show the extent to which the architecture of the *Inferno* constitutes an anticathedral. The space made for the sinners in hell is in every way antithetical to the space reserved for the faithful in the sanctuary of a Gothic church. The downward movement of hell into ever narrower and darker space, where the sinner has ever less freedom of movement, is in direct opposition to the freedom of horizontal movement in a cathedral penetrated by light, and the thrust upward toward the source of that light. The symmetry of these antithetical spaces, however, is entirely in keeping with scholastic writing in its comprehension of the universe as a systematic order.

In the postface to his translation of Panofsky, Bourdieu notes that the great art historian was not content simply to draw parallels and influences

between scholastic thought and Gothic architecture. Rather, he identified a way of thinking common to both endeavors that existed at an unconscious level in the individual as well as in medieval culture at large. Bourdieu, however, takes a step beyond Panofsky's "synthetic intuition" when it comes to the question of how scholastic writing and architecture respectively produce meaning. Ultimately, Bourdieu says, meaning is a function of the patterns of thought, perception, and action in which the work is produced and interpreted: the *habitus.* These patterns themselves belong to a concrete system of social relations that define which objects need to be interpreted as well as the conditions under which interpretation takes place. Scholastic thought and Gothic architecture were thus intimately related movements that had a concrete, identifiable cause in the institutions that taught scholastic thinking (*Postface* 147). In contrast to the monasteries of the early Middle Ages, most of which were isolated in rural regions, schools like that of Abélard at Sainte-Geneviève were attached to bishoprics in the urban centers of Europe. The urbanity of such schools, as well as a rational way of thinking more suited to the secular world than the mystic tradition of the monks, contributed to the formation of a cultural *modus operandi* that can be seen not just in architecture and poetry but, as Robert Marichal has shown, even in the style of manuscript copying (Panofsky 152–56).

The objection that can be made to any such socially deterministic view is that art always preserves a measure of autonomy that is essential to its very definition as art. Bourdieu himself makes this objection in *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* published just four years after his translation of Panofsky, where he points out that not everything in artistic production is available to interpretation into other codes, that something in art always consists of "pure practice," as in dance or ritual, and always contains something "ineffable" and "pleases (or displeases) without concepts" (2). This objection, however, does not discredit the theory that the interpretation of art, and thereby artistic meaning, is conditioned by social relations; it only says that something in the work always escapes such interpretation. We are then faced with the paradox that modes of thinking and acting perfectly meaningful in themselves, like those of the scholastic tradition, can produce something that cannot be fully explained within the interpretative framework of those codes, like the poetic art of Dante's *Commedia* or the effect of the light that streams in through the clerestory at Saint-Denis. There need be no mysticism here; rather it is enough to recognize the fact that certain elements of the artwork escape interpretation because of their

unique or exceptional nature, that is, they remain unavailable to existing models of interpretation simply because of the limitations of those modes and because of the singularity of the artwork itself. Bourdieu's understanding of individual artistic genius is similarly demythologizing: each artist occupies his own *habitus* of creative activity, whose function lies in the unification and unfolding of the ensemble of practices that constitute his or her own existence (164); the very singularity of this creative practice alone may account for whatever degree of alterity it possesses in the context of prevailing models of interpretation. Dante's singularity lies not just in the brilliance of his poetic invention but also in his singular existence at the intersection of the various systems of meaning produced by scholastic philosophy, the lay teachings of Brunetto Latini, the poetic traditions of the troubadours and other lyric poets of the *trecento,* Florentine politics, and the history of the Holy Roman Empire. If the architecture of the *Commedia* and the distribution of its inhabitants are inspired by scholastic thinking, the exceptional nature of Dante's art lies in the way he is able to combine that tradition with the world of the thirteenth century as seen from the unique vantage point of his personal trajectory through that world.

## House Ideologies

The English country house poem, a minor genre best represented by Ben Jonson's ode "To Penshurst" (1612), celebrates the architectural and landed estate of a person of rank to whom the poet wishes to pay homage for his patronage. As material for examining the kinds of meaning produced by bringing literature into relation with architecture, this genre has the advantage of being limited in time and space to England in the seventeenth century.[8] In contrast to the material considered so far in this introduction, the country house poem, along with its architectural subject, represents neither a foundational myth nor an institutionalized system of thought but rather an *ideology.* The concept of ideology has its own history, beginning with Destutt de Tracy's study of "the generation of ideas" in 1796 and acquiring new importance in Marx's *Die deutsche Ideologie* of 1845. However, if we take Louis Althusser's well-known twentieth-century definition of this concept, ideology is the representation of the imaginary relation between individuals and their real conditions of existence. Insofar as this representation consists in the production of language, practice, and other concrete manifestations, ideology also has its own material existence (38–41).

Ideology differs from the universality of Homeric or biblical myth in belonging to a particular set of social relations in a historically specific context. It differs from a system of thought like medieval scholasticism, however, in its unsystematic character, its relative independence from rational thought, and its capacity to tolerate internal contradictions; as Althusser emphasizes, it represents an imaginary, not a real, relation between the subject and the conditions of his or her existence. The meaning of *ideology* here is close to the specifically modern sense of *mythology* that we find in Benjamin. The ideology of the country house poem gives literary form to an entire series of imaginary relations: between the poet and his patron, between the patron and his estate, between the estate and the natural landscape, between the estate and the surrounding social and political universe. All of these relations are real in themselves, but they figure in the poem in imagined ways made possible by an ideology to which the poem is able to appeal as something beyond its own invention. The house that the poem takes as its subject is already a three-dimensional representation of the ideology on which the poem will draw. In this sense the architecture of the house, though material in the most substantial sense, also represents the imagined relation of its owner to his world and time. A familiar problem in the study of ideology lies in what we might call the bagginess of its contents, which lack well-defined limits as to what they include and whose relative weight cannot be precisely measured. Nonetheless it is possible to identify in the country house poem a few central ideas: those, for example, of property, propriety, legitimacy, domestic harmony, and a productive relation to the natural landscape and the peasantry. In keeping with other strains in Renaissance philosophy, this little utopian world is built very much on the scale of man and has an exemplary man at its center. The house and its estate are understood to be extensions of his noble person and qualities. As we shall see, however, this representation of imaginary relations can reveal internal tensions arising out of its difference from real conditions.

Penshurst, in Kent, was in 1612 the country seat of Sir Robert Sidney, Viscount Lisle, a member of the court of King James. The original house, built by a wealthy draper in the 1340s, consisted of a feudal Great Hall, which now stands at the center of the edifice. The Sidney family was granted title to the house by Edward VI in 1552, and it was only then that were added the outer constructions, including crenellated fortifications that were more ornamental than a practical means of defense. These additions conformed to the traditional "English" style, what would later be

called Gothic, while resisting the classical style of new houses like Longleat in Wiltshire (now an African safari park). In "To Penshurst" Jonson portrays Penshurst Place as the center of an ordered, harmonious world that reflects the virtues and especially the hospitality of its lord and lady. Beginning with a general survey of the property, Jonson addresses the house as an "ancient pile" not built for "envious show" but nonetheless "reverenced" while more ostentatious houses are merely "grudged" admiration. Here Jonson enumerates all that Penshurst lacks: rich materials of marble and touchstone, a row of polished pillars, a roof of gold, a noble stair and courtyard. Instead the house is made "fair" by its natural surroundings of soil, air, woods, and water, including the tree planted to celebrate the birth in 1554 of the house's most illustrious inhabitant, the poet and courtier Sir Philip Sidney. In calling the house an "ancient pile," Jonson willingly participates in the fiction that the Sidneys are a family of ancient lineage, whereas their nobility and title to the house are of recent date (1552) and the only part of the house itself that can be considered "ancient" is the Great Hall at its core. At the same time, Jonson shifts the poem's attention away from history and onto the house's favorable position at the center of a concentric universe whose spheres include garden, pond, forest, fields, and river. The principle is that the culture of an ordered English tradition emanates from the center outward, from noble house to tamed wilderness.

In a manner similar to the poem's opening apology for the house's lack of outward splendor, its construction of humble "country stone," limestone quarried nearby, finds compensation in the fact that such stones have been raised without ruin or suffering and that "There's none that dwell about them wish them down." Here we move inside the Great Hall, where the goodwill of the Sidneys is reflected in their hospitality toward neighboring countrymen and the poet himself, relieved to find that no one counts the cups he drinks and that he is free to eat his fill without having to suffer disapproving looks. The general order being celebrated is one in which distinctions between culture and nature, as well as those of the social order, are maintained without being erected as barriers: the relation between house and field or lord and gardener is certainly hierarchical, but it is also one of mutual benefit. By the same token, the largesse of which the poet so freely partakes may be measured in proportion to the praise he lavishes. The poem concludes with praise of the family's piety and domestic economy, while returning to the rhetorical mode of the opening by making a final comparison with other houses.

Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee,
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells. (99–102)

The language of "dwelling" imparts a sense of permanence not otherwise obvious, while the qualities of domestic economy, hospitality, and decorum possessed by the Sidney household grant the family a legitimacy that makes up for the newness of their title. Jonson's poem belongs to an age in which personal and social merit have begun to count more than ancient lineage; we are, after all, at the home of Sir Philip Sidney, the consummate Renaissance man.

Several commentators have observed, however, that the idyllic vision of Penshurst conveyed in the poem is rather at odds with the real circumstances under which it was written, and that the poem's congenial tone is marked by subtle misgivings.[9] What stands out most clearly is Jonson's thinly veiled opinion of the mediocrity of Penshurst as an architectural structure, despite the efforts of its present and former owners to improve it. Throughout the poem, the material and design of the house are presented as difficulties to be overcome rather than as things to be celebrated in themselves. The poet's own place in the house, moreover, is evidently ambiguous. His relief at not having every cup of wine counted bespeaks his position as a guest rather humbler than those of Sidney's own rank and suggests that he is accustomed to being treated less well at other noble houses. Finally, the poem's picture of abundance and prosperity created by wise economy is directly contradicted by what we know about Robert Sidney's affairs at this time. His letters show that he believed himself to be on the brink of ruin and that in order to improve his prospects he considered enlarging his estate in the hope that the king could be persuaded to hunt there. The scheme was discouraged by his steward, Thomas Golding, who reminded him of his "great and continual wants" while observing that "this part of the country is not pleasant nor sportely" and therefore not likely to attract royal hunters (Riggs 184–85).[10] Like the poem, the architecture of the house itself represents an imaginary relation to its own history. The crenellated towers, for example, call up images of the chivalric Middle Ages, whereas they were added in the mid–sixteenth century when such fortifications were no longer needed; they are thus merely "decorative and deliberately anachronistic" (Wayne 101). Don Wayne also points out that the asymmetry of the North Front is based on Henry Sidney's decision at

the same period to move the main gate and King's Tower slightly east of center in order to provide a clear view through a series of arches from the outer entrance to the Great Hall at the center of the building. The visitor is thus led to look past the relatively recent additions to the house, while directing his or her attention to its most ancient and authentic part (100–101). Finally, a coat of arms and inscription placed in 1585 above the arch of the main entrance commemorates the granting of the estate to the family by Edward VI. Wayne argues that through this device the Sidneys' pedigree and property rights are implicitly attached to those of the House of Tudor; the recent lineage of the Sidneys is metaphorically extended into the more ancient and prestigious lineage of the Tudors, thus supplying whatever degree of legitimacy might be lacking in the inhabitants of Penshurst (104). When Jonson's poem is added to Sidney's house, the ideology of the country house is shown to consist of a double-layered representation: the poem represents the house, which is already a representation of a mythic past. This representation of representation is the essence of ideology. As for the production of meaning, it takes place at two stages in two respective media. While the architecture of the house reinterprets the past in its own terms, this interpretation is reinterpreted in turn by the language of the poem. The production of meaning, however, does not move only in one direction, for as history has shown, the poem provides the basis for yet other interpretations of the house, as witnessed by the text of a modern tourist brochure in which traces of Jonson's vision remain: "Penshurst Place is one of England's finest historic houses set in the Weald of Kent's peaceful rural landscape. Built of local sandstone, the medieval house with its magnificent Barons Hall dates from 1341 and is one of the finest examples of fourteenth century architecture. Later additions have seen Penshurst Place grow into an imposing defended manor house, containing staterooms filled with a remarkable collection of tapestries, paintings, furniture, porcelain and armour."[11]

A century later, Jonson's poem served as inspiration for a variation on its genre in a more modern cultural and architectural context, in which the ideology of the country house gave way to the ideology of the suburban villa. Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington" (1731) was occasioned by Burlington's publication of the architectural drawings of Andrea Palladio, but it also celebrated the spirit of Chiswick House, the Palladian villa that Burlington had recently built on his estate outside of London. The form of the verse epistle, borrowed from Latin models, was relatively new in English, but was particularly suited to Pope's subject and

circumstances. Pope's epistle is both private and public, being addressed to a person of eminence but intended for publication insofar as that person is a public figure whose works and manner of life provide a model for the cultural values that the poet seeks to promote. The tone of the epistle is at once informal and philosophical. It has the character of urbane conversation, yet it remains highly ordered both in its argument and in its verse form of rhyming couplets. In these respects the verse epistle imitates both the form and function of the Palladian villa, conceived as a place of occasional retreat from the pressures of the city but also as a semipublic place where guests could be invited for enlightened conversation. Like the poem, the architecture of the villa combines informality with rational order. The design of Chiswick House was based on two of Palladio's villas, La Rotonda at Vicenza and the Villa Foscari near Venice. Burlington's villa has an air of informality in its modest size, its festively decorated rooms, its rusticated podium, and its pavilionlike openness onto the surrounding park. The rational order of the house, however, is communicated by its symmetrical distribution, its hexastyle portico in the Corinthian order, and the octagonal drum of its stately dome. In the spirit of lively conversation among neighbors, Pope's epistle is in fact written from one suburban retreat to another, as the poet himself had built his own villa in nearby Twickenham a dozen years earlier.

The ideology of the villa shares with that of the seventeenth-century country house the values of propriety and decorum, but it treats these concepts more in terms of taste and rational judgment than in those of property and domestic economy. The emphasis is on creating an architectural counterpart to enlightened human understanding rather than on a house that reflects the position of its owners in the social and natural order. In keeping with this distinction, the villa is a *maison de plaisance,* recently constructed and more visited than lived in, in contrast to the country house as an ancestral home and a durable habitation with its own economy. Chiswick House, for example, has no kitchen or proper bedrooms; in Burlington's day the business of living had to be carried on in the adjoining house, to which the villa is connected by a gallery. Finally, the neoclassical values of decorum, moderation, clarity, and reason embodied in the Palladian villa were best expressed in a suburban setting, a position of relative neutrality with respect to the ways of court, the town, and the rural countryside. Both its form and its geographic situation made the Palladian villa a fitting symbol for the values that Pope wished to convey. Architecturally, the villa was independent of traditional English style, instead com-

bining references to classical antiquity and Renaissance enlightenment. Geographically, it stood between but outside of the traditional centers of power in London and Hampton Court. It was thus ideal for the representation of a new way of thinking and living: cosmopolitan and free of faction and thus capable of serving as the model for a new cultural order.

Formally modeled on the Horatian satire, much of Pope's epistle directs its irony at the newly rich, who follow architectural fashion without understanding or "good sense." Burlington has too many imitators who are

> Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door;
> Conscious they act a Palladian part. (70)

In what amounts to a catalog of bad taste, the most ruthless lines are reserved for the immensely wealthy "Timon," in whom some have seen a caricature of the Duke of Chandos, owner of the ostentatious Cannons House in Middlesex, built at incredible expense by five different architects and representing a barbaric union of the baroque and Palladian styles. At Timon's villa everything is grand in scale, but "Soft and agreeable come never there" (70). In this villa the poet finds a study with expensively bound books but no signs of learning; a chapel with lavish decoration but no signs of piety. The great marble hall of the dining room is the scene of abundance without pleasure or hospitality.

> Is this a dinner? this a genial room?
> No, 'tis a temple, and a hecatomb. (72)

What distinguishes Burlington's projects from this vulgarity is his good sense, in which the rational imperative of function or "use" is combined with a taste for the pleasing variety found in nature.

Thus far the poem is a particularly witty and amusing expression of neoclassical principles already put forth more soberly in Boileau, and more urbanely in Addison. However, what distinguishes Pope's epistle is the manner in which he extends the qualities of Palladianism beyond the construction of the villa in order to envision the new construction of Britain itself. Such was the purpose of Burlington's various architectural projects and publications. The conclusion to Pope's poem recommends that the principles embodied in these projects be applied throughout the kingdom to the construction of churches or "temples," public ways, harbors, moles, and other "imperial works." Such "honours" bring peace to a "happy Britain." In order to understand the implications of what in these lines may seem at best an expression of goodwill, and at worst mere flattery, we

need to recall something of the context in which Pope, a Catholic commoner with Tory leanings, is writing to Burlington, a Whiggish Protestant nobleman. Britain in the early eighteenth century is slowly emerging from a violent past, recent in memory, of regicide, revolution, and disruption in the orderly succession of its monarchs. Pope's friend Bolingbroke, exiled for his Jacobite sympathies, had by 1730 returned to England, but factionalism and the threat of rebellion against the Hanoverian King George I remained real. The conflict between Hanoverians and Jacobites was complicated by those between Tories and Whigs and between traditional landed interests and the emerging mercantile class. Pope's call for "peace to happy Britain" would therefore have had a political, as well as a cultural, resonance for his immediate audience. In effect, his poem promotes an ideology of national reconciliation based on the principles of good sense and public service, with Britain itself as the new edifice to be built in the same congenial spirit that reigns in the Palladian villa. Like the villa, the nation must be free of constraining traditions, possess a rational harmony among its constituent parts, use its natural resources to advantage, and figure itself as one of the "pleasures of the imagination" defined by the genial Addison. In Pope's ideology, a peaceful and happy Britain can only be the constructed product of an enlightened understanding.

<div align="center">III</div>

If a certain apocalyptic tone marks much of what is written today on architecture and culture at large, the sources of what has been called the modern crisis of meaning are commonly located somewhere near the end of the eighteenth century. One of the important urban phenomena of that time was the opening up or outright destruction of the walls and gates that divided the city from the surrounding countryside. Such formations had for centuries served the ends of both military defense and taxation by exacting tolls on countrymen entering the city to sell their produce. The French Revolution destroyed or rendered inoperative such barriers around Paris. The destruction of these barriers, along with architectural symbols of the ancien régime such as the prison of the Bastille, was accompanied by the effacement of boundaries and the dismantling of hierarchies in every sphere of modern life. Paul Virilio notes the effect of the literal and figurative "city without gates" on the writing of history, where "the grand narratives of theoretical causality were displaced by the petty narratives of practical opportunity, and, finally, by the micro-narratives of opportunity"

(389). The "crisis of modernity" thus begins with the deterioration of common values and of the notion of the universal meaning of history, giving way to narratives of individual development. In a second stage of this breakdown, the problem becomes that of narrative form itself as mode of representation capable of describing and inscribing reality. Immediate reality is replaced with a *reality effect,* and the boundary is replaced with the screen (389). Virilio's analysis resonates with that of the architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri, who locates the onset of a "semantic crisis" marked by the disappearance of "public meaning" in architecture beginning in the late eighteenth century, one which continues to plague architectural theory today (231).

In the analyses of both Tafuri and Virilio one can sense a certain nostalgia for architectural and narrative meanings whose coherence derived from their reliable reflection of established order in the realms of politics, religion, economy, education—that is, all of the conditions under which architectural and literary forms are constructed. For Derrida, however, it is precisely the constructed nature of architecture and literature as concepts that needs to be brought to light. His essay on the Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi is worth citing here for the manner in which, by deconstructing the concept of architecture itself, it contributes to an understanding of what we mean by meaning in architecture. Given that architecture must have a meaning, this meaning is experienced in four principal ways. It is first experienced as the habitation of the *oikos,* the economic law that determines the way a building is ordered, occupied, and given value. Second, architectural order, whether of a house, a monument, or a city, is organized around a myth of origin—that of the founding fathers, the gods, and so on, and this myth continues to function as a centering principle even when it has passed out of conscious memory. Third, the economy of architecture remains tied to a teleology of the habitus: it is built to further some end, to render some service toward some ultimate goal of the polity. Finally, architecture belongs to the fine arts, whatever their fashion at the moment; it must reflect the values of beauty, harmony, and wholeness (*Psyché* 481–82). Derrida's point is that these attributes of architecture are too often mistaken for its essence. The architectural object, the mass of stone or the standing arrangement of glass or steel that we take for the thing itself, is in fact a kind of inscription that we can read only as part of a massively layered text of other written signs: "le texte volumineux d'écritures multiples" (486). The realization of this condition signals the end of architecture as it has been known and its assimilation to the larger universe of textuality.

What I want to suggest here is that the first signs of this realization, and of the end of traditional forms of architectural meaning as such, go back to the period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Among the effects of an emerging modernity in this period are a variety of manifestations that call both literary and architectural meanings into question. These include the aesthetic of the fragment, the value placed on subjective interiority, the significance given to the human body, the development of new materials and techniques, and a conception of the past in terms of stock or reserve. I shall consider each of these subjects briefly in turn.

## Ruin and Fragmentation

The cult of architectural ruins can be traced at least as far back as the excavation of Herculaneum in the 1740s. It figures prominently in the visual arts and literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it survives long enough to provide striking images in poems like Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) and films like Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1966). On one hand, the images of ruin so widely disseminated in pictures and literature themselves provide a metaphor for the breakdown in institutional structures of meaning that is characteristic of modernity. On the other hand, architectural ruins are nothing if not ambiguous, making it difficult to assign them any universal metaphorical value. The proliferation of meanings assigned to them is symptomatic of the fragmentary condition of architectural meaning itself. What artistic interpretations of ruin generally have in common, however, is a sense of modernity's enigmatic relation to the historical past. For example, Piranesi's *Le Antichità romane* (1756), an encyclopedic series of engravings of Roman ruins, is manifestly dedicated to the archaeological project of documenting the grandeur of ancient Rome in its concrete forms. However, even here his images have a suggestive power that ranges beyond their ostensible historical and scientific purpose. In these engravings, the Roman ruins are often juxtaposed with the hodgepodge of more recent structures that constitutes modern Rome, monuments from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and baroque periods lacking any coherent relation to one another. Such scenes are populated with figures of merchants, laborers, and domestic animals pursuing their daily rounds in evident ignorance of the sublimity that surrounds them. The overall effect is of a chaotic and fragmentary modernity that has lost the grandeur of the Roman past.[12] However, the confusion of the modern scene has to be considered apart from the monumental fragments of the

ruins themselves. Piranesi treats various fragmentary forms—ruined walls, inscriptions, paving stones—as architectural objects in their own right. These, combined with drawings of the huge pulleys and iron grips by means of which marble blocks were lifted, give his work a strong sense of weight and volume, and of the dynamic relation between masses and surfaces. This concentration on the interrelation of geometric forms, volumes, and surfaces as concrete values in themselves works against a hierarchical tradition in architecture, which subordinates all the parts and forces of a building to a single, dominant principle. It marks an interest in the pure materiality of construction that will later prove important to modern architecture.

Chapter 4 of this work treats the subject of architectural ruin in relation to literary notions of allegory. Here it will be enough to point out that ruin's product, the fragment, has its counterparts both in the literary image and in literary form. Following a formulation introduced by Lucien Dällenbach, we can identify three historical forms of the modern fragment. The *classical* fragment of the eighteenth century is what remains of a lost totality, like the broken columns that Piranesi finds littering the Roman landscape, or, in the language of Diderot's *Encyclopédie,* "pieces detached from a whole, such as a capital, a cornice, part of a statue or bas-relief, found among ruins" (7:273). According to this conception, the literary fragment similarly is a piece missing from the whole, whether of an unfinished work or a completed work that cannot be wholly reconstituted. In both cases the fragment is the product of destruction, whether of the work itself or of the creative process that has left the work unfinished. The classical fragment is the residue or the vestige of time in its character as decline, chance, and catastrophe.

At the end of the eighteenth century, a new literary genre was introduced in the form of the *romantic* fragment as it appeared, for example, in August and Friedrich Schlegel's *Athenaeum* (1798–1800). The *Athenaeum* fragment was, paradoxically, created *as* a fragment. It remains a fragment in the sense that it belongs to some greater work not yet achieved but which exists, at least potentially, either in an ideal future or in a transcendent realm of being that our condition in time and space prevents us from fully realizing. Though made to be incomplete, the romantic fragment cannot be compared to the fake ruins, follies, and *fabriques* that dotted the grounds of eighteenth-century chateaus; it gestures not out of the past but toward the future, and its function, far from merely decorative, is to signify a collective human destiny. The romantic fragment is found elsewhere

than in Germany, for example, in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream: A Fragment,* first published in 1816. What is important about this form for our purposes is that at a historical moment of crisis in various domains—political, religious, social—the romantic fragment puts into question the notion of the work of art as a unified object. It does so through its willed incompletion and absence of development, through its lack of any obvious connection to other fragments with which it might be put together, and through the notion that its unity lies outside the object and even beyond the somewhat chance assemblage of fragments that made up a single issue of the *Athenaeum.*

What distinguishes the *contemporary* fragment from the classical and romantic forms is the absence of a totality, either past or future, real or ideal, of which it is part. If such a whole is conceivable, it nonetheless remains enigmatic, impossible to constitute. Blanchot's essay "Parole de fragment," on the poet René Char, is practically a manifesto for this form as being the most adequate to human reality in the twentieth century. Char's sentences consist of "islands of sense" juxtaposed rather than coordinated with one another. His images are extremely condensed, and succeed one another in an order lacking in apparent sequential logic. In these lines aptly named *paroles en archipel,* "words in archipelago," the overall sense is of the breaking apart and dislocation of language, but not in a negative sense. Blanchot compares Char's language to the exile and *dépaysement,* or "disorientation of meaning," rather than its negation or alienation, often resulting in a dazzling if enigmatic brilliance: "Le poème est l'amour realisé du désir demeuré désir" (the poem is the actualized love of desire that remains desire) (Char 73). It is Char who defends the difficulty of his poetry as the only possible form of response to what he calls "la nature tragique, intervallaire, saccageuse, comme en suspens, des humains" (the tragic, intervaled, wrecked, suspended nature of human beings) (Blanchot 451). But he also asks the rhetorical question "La réalité sans l'énergie disloquante de la poésie, qu'est-ce?" (What is reality without the dislocating energy of poetry?) (452).

An architectural counterpart to this kind of fragment is to be found in the twenty-five *folies* of Bernard Tschumi that punctuate at regular intervals the vast expanse of the Parc de la Villette in Paris. These constructions, not unrelated to the pagodas, pyramids, and other decorative buildings that decorated eighteenth-century gardens, are spaced at 120-meter intervals in a vast grid across the entire surface of the park, the former grounds of the Paris stockyards. Each *folie* consists initially of a concrete cube mea-

suring 10.8 meters across on each side and covered with bright red steel plates. This form is then split into components that can be recombined or grafted onto ramps, canopies, stairways, and so on in a series of variations on a theme (Lavalou 24). The logic of the fragment works both at the level of the deconstruction of each *folie* and at that of the 55-hectare (136-acre) site, across which the objects are scattered but also unified by their color and material composition, as well as by the geometric uniformity of their form and placement. The analogy with Char's poetic compositions lies in the archipelagic nature of the project, consisting of a series of fragments held in suspension. Derrida comments on this project: "Une force ajointe et fait tenir ensemble le dis-joint comme tel. . . . Les points rouges espacent, ils maintiennent l'architecture dans la dissociation de l'espacement" (A force joins and holds together the disjointed as such. . . . The points of red space things out, they maintain the architecture in the dissociation of its spacing) (*Psyché* 490–92). Like Char's "words in archipelago," Tschumi's follies effectively render irrelevant the conventional distinction between fragment and whole.

## Interiors

Architectural historians tell us that the nature of interior domestic space underwent a significant change in the period between the Renaissance and the nineteenth century. The fifteenth-century ideal of convenience favored an interior plan that allowed as much communication as possible between parts of the house. In *The Ten Books of Architecture* (1450), Leon Battista Alberti recommends placing doors "in such a manner that they may lead to as many parts of the edifice as possible."[13] As Robin Evans observes, rooms were thus connected to one another *en enfilade;* as paths within the house continually intersected, every activity was physically open to intercession, not to say interruption, by every other. Beginning in the seventeenth century this "matrix of interconnected chambers" was completely transformed by the introduction of hallways and passages to ensure privacy and independent access (64). The ideal of convenience now was for each room to have only a single door, so that the domestic interior changed from being "an architecture to look through" to being "an architecture to hide in" (74). By the eighteenth century, the notion of the self as being fashioned through cultivated intercourse with others, one that we see reflected in the Palladianism of Pope and Burlington, for example, was challenged by the rival notion of the self as a pri-

vate entity to be cultivated in itself and as being in danger of contamination by contact with others.

In the eighteenth century the most striking example of this simultaneous intensification of subjective and architectural interiority is the series of etchings produced by Piranesi entitled *Invenzioni cappriciose di carceri* (Fanciful Images of Prisons).[14] In these extraordinary images, the vast interior spaces of the imaginary prisons are saturated with a profusion of sinister objects and frenzied human figures. The frontispiece of the 1761 edition is representative: the title of the work is shown engraved in the prison wall, where it is partly obscured by the machinery of torture in the foreground (fig. 1). On the wall above the title rests a human figure chained to a ledge, perched in midair, among a forest of beams, ropes, pulleys, wheels, spikes. A disturbing sense of disorientation is produced by extreme foreshortening, by chiaroscuro effects of light and shadow, and by catwalks and stairways crisscrossing spaces of immense height and depth. It is impossible for the viewer to grasp these interior spaces in the rational form of Cartesian space understood as the measurable extension of the object-world. Moreover, the *Carceri* brought about a striking contrast between conventional form and original content, using the large-format (545 × 410 mm) plates traditionally reserved for academic architectural designs to produce images that were to become paradigmatic figures for the depths of the unconscious (Ficacci 56).

This is the space that seizes Thomas De Quincey's imagination in his *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* (1856). There, he tells of how Coleridge described Piranesi's "dreams" (i.e., the *Carceri*) to him as a series of "vast Gothic halls; on the floor of which stood mighty engines and machinery . . . expressive of great power put forth, or resistance overcome" (*Works* 2:259). This fantastic vision has Piranesi himself hopelessly climbing stairway after stairway, like some lost romantic Sisyphus in the prisons of his own imagination. De Quincey comments, "With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams" (2:259).[15] It is fitting that Coleridge should have introduced De Quincey to this work, as the imagery of fathomless depths already belongs to the poet's repertoire in poems such as *Kubla Khan,* which evokes a dreamlike landscape with "caverns measureless to man," a mighty fountain amid whose waters burst "huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail," and a visionary pleasure dome whose imagined construction stands as a metaphor for the ideal object of the poet's art. What Piranesi, Coleridge, and De Quincey have in common is a highly architecturalized conception of the inner world of the imagination, one that demonstrates in an ex-
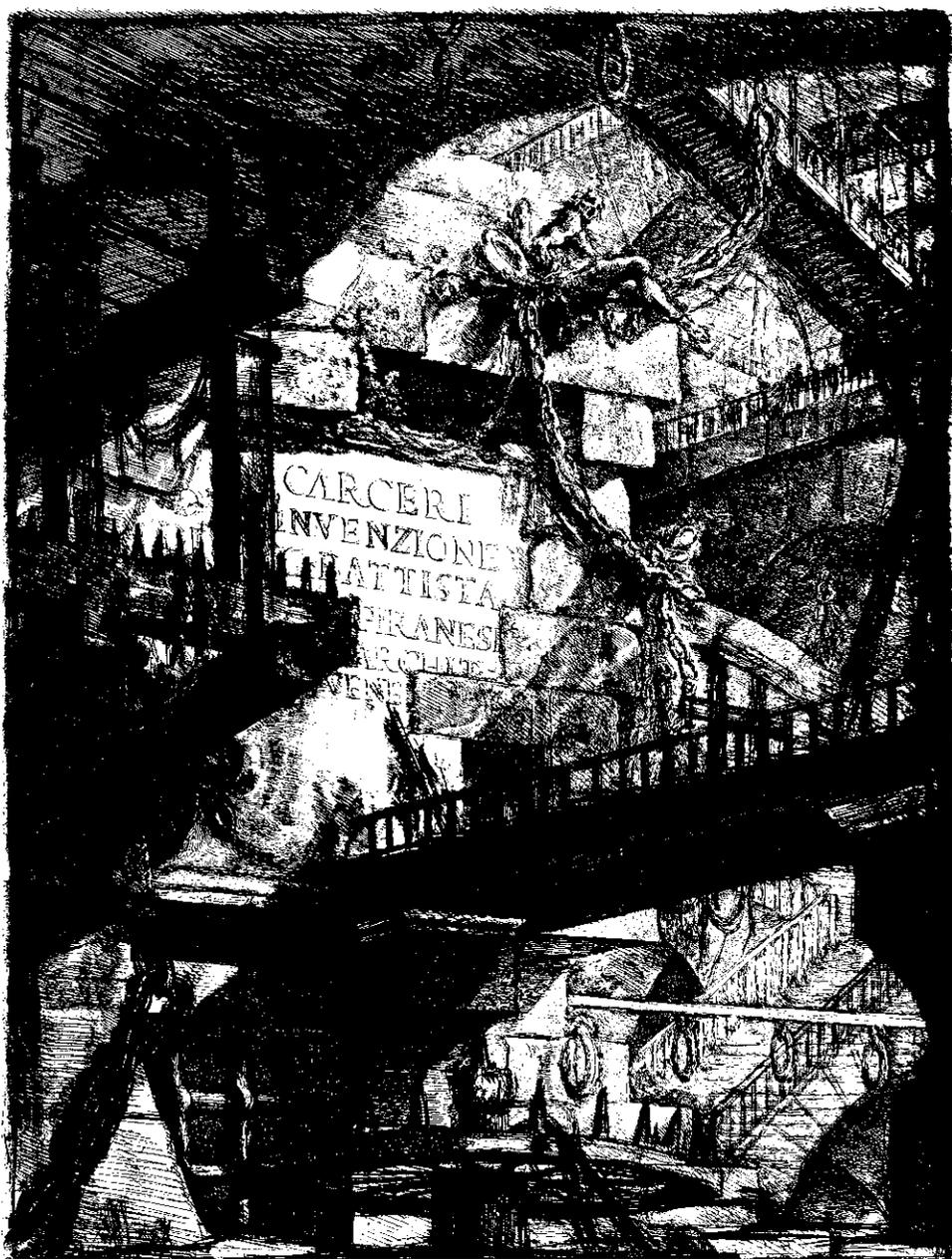
Fig. 1. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'invenzione di G. Battista Piranesi,* from *Carceri in Opere varie di architettura, prospettive, grotteschi, antichità,* frontispiece, 1761.

tremely vivid manner the reflective freedom of romantic art in contrast to the classical imitation of nature. In effect, this architectural imagery gives a kind of objective, concrete form to an inner world that is in fact wholly subjective and ontologically indistinct.

The oniric flights of imagination that we witness in romantic art can be understood in the general context of a modern condition based on the primacy of the individual subject in such disparate domains as those of political rights, the juridical order, philosophical discourse, and artistic creation. As Jürgen Habermas shows, however, the institution of the subject as a self-reflective entity developed in Kant's philosophy failed to function as a force of social and cultural unification. On the contrary, human knowledge was divided into the distinct realms of science, morality, and art, each with its own form of truth, while all of these "spheres of knowing" were separated from both the sphere of faith and that of everyday, practical life (19). In this sense the impulse toward an ever deeper interiority in romantic art can be seen as the effect of a more general fragmentation in the structures of human thought. In the architectural order there were analogous phenomena both of fragmentation and of the separation between interior and exterior spaces. Increasingly, for example, artisans in the cities no longer lived over a shop, but instead traveled to a factory in order to earn their daily wage. For the working class, the place of domestic life was thus to be forever separated from the place of work. For the bourgeoisie, the domestic interior was increasingly compartmentalized for its different activities, while also individualized according to a private taste designed to reflect the image of bourgeois subjectivity back onto itself and to cushion individual sensibility from the harsh realities of the urban world outside.

In his critique of Kierkegaard, Adorno finds in the work of the Danish philosopher a convergence of three forms of interiority: as philosophical construct, poetic figure, and architectural design. In works such as the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846), Kierkegaard describes subjective reflection in its search for *inwardness* (*Inderlighed*) as the condition for an apprehension of the truth.[16] In the chapter "Truth Is Subjectivity," Kierkegaard writes, "The subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject, and desires in this intensification of inwardness to realize the truth" (*Concluding* 175). The truth spoken of here is that which is "essentially related to existence," which can only be attained through inwardness or subjectivity (178n.). The substance of Adorno's critique is that Kierkegaard evaluates truth solely by reference to the thinker's subjective

existence, or "inwardness." The problem is that this inwardness lacks a meaningful relation to the object-world; it is "only an isolated subjectivity surrounded by a dark otherness" (Adorno, *Kierkegaard* 29). In the form of the concrete individual, this subjectivity "rescues only the rubble of the existent," while it mourns the loss of "meaning" in the world of things (30).

The relevance of this philosophical debate to our subject is that both Kierkegaard and Adorno rely on architectural images in their respective expositions of inwardness. In the *Attack upon "Christendom"* (1854–55) Kierkegaard employs the romantic figure of the castle as a figure of inwardness: "When the castle door of inwardness has long been shut and is finally opened, it does not move noiselessly like an apartment door which swings on hinges" (Adorno, *Kierkegaard* 40). The metaphor is intended to enforce the idea of the rigid separation between the pure inner world of subjectivity, "the world of the spirit," and the debased external world of reified objects, where everything is subject to possession by worldly wealth (40). In another figure of the architectural interior, the Johannes of "The Seducer's Diary" in *Either/Or* (1843) playfully addresses the breezes outside his bourgeois Copenhagen apartment.

> What have you done all morning but shake my awnings, tug at my window street-mirror and the cord on it, play with the bellpull wire, push against the windowpanes—in short, proclaim your existence as if you wanted to beckon me out to you? Yes, the weather is fine enough, but I have no inclination; let me stay home. (354)

Even allowing for the possibly ironic distance between Kierkegaard and a personage who represents a purely aesthetic outlook on life, Adorno cites this as one of many passages in which the bourgeois interior is the real place and condition for the existence of the "subjective thinker": "Just as in the metaphorical *intérieur* the intentions of Kierkegaard's philosophy intertwine, so the *intérieur* is also the real space that sets free the categories of the philosophy" (41). In the passage cited above, the detail of the "window street-mirror" reinforces this point. In the nineteenth century this device consisted of a mirror attached at an oblique angle to the window of a house in such a way that the length of the street could be viewed from a position well inside. It was commonly called a "spy." Adorno finds it to be a perfect figure for Kierkegaard's thought, for "he who looks into the window-mirror . . . is the private person, solitary, inactive, and separated from the economic processes of production" (42). Chapter 1, on "dwelling," will have more to say on the bourgeois interior in modern literature. Here it will

suffice to say that much of modern literature, from Poe and Baudelaire to Woolf and Musil, demonstrates a preoccupation with precisely this problematic relation between the inward life of the domestic interior and the external realities of urban space.

## The Architectural Body

From antiquity, the human body has been both a measure and a metaphor for architectural form. In *De Architectura* (ca. 15 BCE) Vitruvius studies the form of the body and provides a detailed set of measurements derived from it for use in the construction of temples to the gods. He commends those architects who in designing temples "so arrange the parts that the whole may harmonize in their proportions and symmetry" as they do in the human body (III:1). Vitruvius's model establishes the body as an architectonic reference, while also placing it within a larger order that defines its visible relation to the constructed environment and the divine. This conception of the architectural body prevails in the Renaissance, as witnessed by Leonardo's famous drawing of Vitruvian man, as well as in Alberti's analogy between the house and the state, each of which is held together by the organic concept that "as members of the body are correspondent to each other, so it is fit that one part should answer to another in a building" (I:9).[17] However, at the time of the Renaissance there began to emerge an alternative to this visual and highly rational concept of the architectural body. We see it in the fifteenth-century *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Dream of Polyphilo),[18] in which the title character wanders through a series of marvelous palaces and pavilions, where, sporting in richly decorated fountains with nymphs and damsels, he struggles to contain his erotic impulses until he meets the young woman of his heart's desire, who teaches him of love. Alberto Pérez-Gómez has written a contemporary version of the tale in which the wonders of classical architecture encountered by Polyphilo are replaced with the more modern projects of Etienne-Louis Boullée, John Hejduk, and Daniel Libeskind, and where the woodcuts of the original are replaced with photographs. Pérez-Gómez's theoretical interest in the *Hypnerotomachia* has to do with the manner in which the fifteenth-century work shows how architectural meaning is not a rational or formal question of proportions but rather something that "originates in the erotic impulse itself"(5). Architectural space is experienced by the sentient body that moves through it, whereas the making of art and architecture is ultimately a response to human desire.

This alternate conception of architecture, however, remains somewhat underground until the publication of the drawings of Piranesi and a later series of theoretical formulations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One of these is Heinrich Wölfflin's *Prolegomena for a Psychology of Architecture* (1886), which argues that the human body and psychology are related to one another in their common apprehension of the ambiance (*Stimmung*) of an architectural work. Wölfflin writes that our intuitive response to architectural space comes indeed from the body's own resemblance to architecture but also from our sensory appreciation of such qualities as weight, balance, hardness, texture, and so on, because such qualities belong to the body itself. Even beyond this, we have an emotional response to architecture based, for example, on our freedom of movement through it, in the satisfaction with which we follow the contours of space in a dynamic trajectory. This principle allows Wölfflin to relate the sensory experience of architecture to the aesthetic sense: "The laws of formal aesthetics are none other than the conditions under which organic well-being seems possible to us. The expression of these laws, manifested in the articulation of the horizontal and vertical, is given according to organic human principles" (30). Wölfflin's formulation helps us to understand the bodily relations to architectural space that are particularly important to modern literature—in the taut nerves of Baudelaire's *flâneur,* in Whitman's doors unscrewn from their jambs, in Pater's palpable excitement in the Cathedral of Amiens, in the "dark freshness" of Proust's narrator's room at Combray (*A la recherche* 1:82), in the "mouldy air" of a ruined medieval abbey visited in Joyce's Dublin (*Ulysses* 189).

The phenomenological approach to architecture is again taken up by one of the classics of twentieth-century architectural theory, Steen Eiler Rasmussen's *Understanding Architecture* (1957). For Rasmussen, "[I]t is not enough to *see* architecture; you must experience it. . . . You must dwell in the rooms, feel how they close about you, observe how you are naturally led from one to the other" (33). Like Proust, Rasmussen is concerned with "impressions" of architectural spaces and materials. He tells the story of watching a group of boys playing a ball game against the eighteenth-century wall of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and reflects on how their physically active relation to the space must have given them, at least unconsciously, a different sense of it from that of the tourist who merely takes a picture. Rasmussen is also one of the first theorists to give systematic attention to acoustic phenomena, observing that architectural spaces resonate with sound in different ways, according to their shape and materials.

The concrete experience of acoustics, however, has always been known intuitively. For example, the enormous interior spaces of medieval cathedrals required a certain rhythm and pitch of vocal expression in religious liturgy to prevent the reverberation of spoken syllables from becoming a confused jumble (227).

If Rasmussen's work suggests that the human body is always capable of adapting freely to its architectural surroundings, there is ample evidence to the contrary in the literature of the last two centuries. A modern tradition of social critique has noted that new forms of urban space in particular—wide boulevards, tall buildings, crowded commercial centers—contributed to the deterioration of the social fabric and to the well-being of individual psychology. Readers of Georg Simmel are familiar with his notions of the "intensification of nervous stimulation" (*die Steigerund des Nervenlebens*) and the "blasé attitude" (*Blasiertheit*) (*Metropolis* 410–13) of the modern city dweller. Benjamin's analysis of shock experience (*Choc-Erlebnis*) in the same context is equally familiar (*Paris* 182). Similar analyses have been made by Marc Augé of the cheerless spaces of transient life—airport terminals, subway stations, strip malls—that he calls *non-lieux.* More recently, Anthony Vidler has furthered this discussion in his study of the relation between architectural space and modern anxiety, or the "psychopathologies of urban space" (*Warped Space* 25). Vidler shows how, since the nineteenth century, the concrete conditions of modernity have given rise to specifically modern psychic disorders related to the sufferer's perception of his or her own body in space. These include agoraphobia, first diagnosed in 1871. Originally referring to the fear of open spaces, this disorder was associated in the popular imagination with "all urban fears that were seemingly connected to spatial conditions" (30). Other symptoms of "phobic modernism" (46) have included claustrophobia, the fear of closed spaces, and the more general neurasthenia, which still figures in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases as a nervous disorder involving constant mental and physical fatigue, loss of concentration, "distracting associations or recollections," and "feelings of general instability."[19]

It is worth noting that Eliot was diagnosed with and treated for neurasthenia when he was writing *The Waste Land,* that high modernist classic of warped spaces and urban alienation. This is not to suggest that the poem be read as a symptom of the disorder but rather that Eliot's documented interest in neurasthenia and its related disorder, *aboulie,* could have inspired his writing of certain scenes and personages in the poem. For example, in the assignation between the typist home at teatime and the small

house agent's clerk, her complete indifference to his sexual assault could equally be a symptom of *Blasiertheit,* neurasthenia, or *aboulie*—an incapacity to act, which is how Eliot diagnosed himself (Gold 526). In any case, Eliot puts an emphasis on the scene of this unwholesome encounter as one of weakened bodies—the house agent is "carbuncular," the typist "bored and tired"—in an urban environment where distinctions between exterior and interior spaces are nullified by a general desolation.

## Materials and Forms

The material transformations of the arts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have a doubly signifying relation to the collective phenomena of modernity: they serve both to represent symbolically a series of changes in the larger social and economic orders and, in large measure, to embody those changes. This is particularly true of the two arts under consideration here. In the first part of this essay I advanced the notion that the relative harmony between architectural and literary forms of meaning characteristic of the neoclassical period later broke down in such a way as to constitute diverse if not formally opposed responses to the modern condition. This notion gains considerably in nuance from a more pointed consideration of material forms. Even a simple enumeration of certain formal changes in architecture and literature can suggest the extent to which these changes themselves are productive of meaning, or rather of the crisis of meaning that I have designated as the sign of modernity.

If transformations in architectural form historically have been driven by social and economic forces, this principle was never more true than in the machine age, which for our purposes begins with the nineteenth century and extends into the twentieth. Among the terms in which these transformations can be documented are those of typology, materials, construction techniques, function, and context. To take the first of these categories, the last two centuries have seen the proliferation of types of buildings that never existed before: commercial arcades, railway stations, large-scale industrial plants, office towers. Many of these types have been made possible by the introduction of new building materials such as cast and wrought iron, steel cables and sheeting, plate glass, reinforced concrete, and more recently, synthetic materials made from polymers, resins, ceramics, cement composites and metal alloys. The availability of new materials favored new construction techniques. Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, centrepiece of the first international industrial exhibition in Lon-

don (1851), was prefabricated of fully modular iron and glass sections that allowed the immense structure to be assembled at Hyde Park in eight days and later to be dismantled and reassembled at Sydenham Hill in southeast London. The invention of reinforced concrete slabs allowed Le Corbusier to design open-plan houses without interior load-bearing walls or posts. Steel frame construction, along with Elisha Otis's safety elevator, made the urban skyscraper possible, as well as such elegant structures as Philip Johnson's Glass House at New Canaan, Connecticut (1949), "a steel cage with a glass skin" (Johnson 223). In the electronic age, computer software such as Conception Assistée Tridimensionnelle Interactive Appliquée (CATIA), originally developed for aviation, has enabled architects like Frank Gehry to design sculptural forms for buildings such as his Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao (1997), which consists essentially of a smooth, curvilinear titanium sheathing over a metal frame. The movement away from traditional materials like stone and wood toward more technologically complex synthetic materials has obviously increased architecture's possibilities, while it has also been cause for alarm by conservative art historians like Hans Sedlmayr, who writes that "the shift of man's spiritual centre of gravity towards the inorganic . . . may indeed legitimately be called a cosmic disturbance in the microcosm of man" (cited in Frampton, "Rappel" 91). Although such a statement needs to be read in the context of the place, time, and circumstances under which it was written (Vienna, 1941, under the influence of National Socialist doctrine), it serves nonetheless as an example of how building materials themselves can be loaded with enigmatic meaning.

The proliferation of new types in modern architecture has been accompanied by a remarkable adaptability of traditional forms to new functions. The geometrical forms of neoclassical architecture, for example, proved perfectly suited to the demands of new commercial and industrial construction. Early in the nineteenth century, the French architect Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand developed a system in which classical forms were treated as freely combinable modular elements in the construction of military barracks, covered markets, or libraries.[20] Many factories and warehouses were modeled on the Renaissance *palazzo,* with four or five stories of brick masonry stories rising symmetrically in a block punctuated by rows of large, uniform windows and topped with a cornice and balustrade. A particularly fine example is H. H. Richardson's Marshall Field Warehouse (1887) in Chicago, where one can see the efficient use of space and relative openness to air and light made possible by a modern adaptation of neoclassical form.

In a rival spirit of formal adaptability, nineteenth-century Gothic architecture represented a liberation from the geometric orders of the classical. George Gilbert Scott did more than any other architect to extend the Gothic style to nonecclesiastical building. His *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture, Present and Future* (1857) is a manifesto for this extension, defending the Gothic style as the most adaptable to contemporary materials, as closest to nature in its decorative detail, and as most in keeping with native English traditions. Gothic architecture was seen as modern in its freedom of structural form, as well as its use of materials, allowing for the great variety of invention that we see in a building like Scott's St. Pancras in London (1868–74), which combines the specifically modern functions of hotel and railway station.

Whereas neoclassical architecture was concerned with geometric volumes and surfaces, neo-Gothic architecture was concerned with structural support and the exposed armature of form. The great strength of the modernist movement of the early twentieth century was that it successfully combined these two approaches, affirming the values of surfaces and open volumes while articulating a visible supporting armature. In the catalog that accompanied the 1932 International Exhibition of Modern Architecture in New York, Alfred Barr defines four principles that unite architects as diverse as Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. They are (a) *volume* as space defined by planes and surfaces rather than as mass and solidity—"a skeleton enclosed by a thin light shell"; (b) *regularity* as opposed to bilateral symmetry; (c) *flexibility* and repetition as opposed to fixed form; and (d) a fourth comprehensive principle that combines technical perfection, proportion, composition, and absence of ornament (14–15). The use of steel frames, glass walls, and flat roofs to realize such construction suggests a modernist aesthetic that is materially based on "standardized construction made possible by mass production" (Eisenman, "Introduction" 15). Should we see this reliance on industrial production as an inherent tension between modernist aesthetics and pragmatism or is this a false distinction to make in judging an aesthetic according to which form follows function? The answer to this question is far from being made clear even in the 1896 essay by Louis Sullivan that made the latter expression famous. In that essay Sullivan poses the architect's problem of imparting a higher sensibility of beauty and culture to the modern office building as the product of the "new grouping of social conditions" that constitutes modernity itself, where "all in evidence is materialistic, an exhibition of force, of resolution, of brains in the sharp sense

of the word" (105). Sullivan's solution to the problem lies in a romantic version of natural law itself, "the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic, or all things physical and metaphysical, . . . that the life is recognizable in its expression, that form ever follows function" (107). However, if this law applies to the material functions of modernity, described by Sullivan as "this crude, harsh, brutal agglomeration, this stark, staring exclamation of eternal strife" (107), there is no sublimity of form without the architect's artistic intervention. Paradoxically, Sullivan wants form to follow both function and the architect's higher aesthetic sense.

The tension in architectural modernism lies not just in the difference between aesthetics and pragmatics but also in that between, on one hand, the utopian social aims of such movements as Bauhaus, *das Neue Frankfurt*,[21] and *die Neue Sachlichkeit* and, on the other hand, the emphasis on artistic genius, originality, and uniqueness that characterized the design of elegant private homes for members of the bourgeoisie. As Eisenman puts it rather cuttingly, when the modern movement was reconceived as the international style, "a pluralistic conception of the good society" was transformed into "an individualistic model of the good life," thus reducing the potential cultural alternative represented in modernism to "a stylistic nicety" (16).

Although architectural postmodernism is beyond the scope of this study, it will not be irrelevant to my general thesis to make one or two remarks on this most recent stage of modernity's crisis of meaning. A quarter century ago Fredric Jameson translated his own sense of bewildered immersion in the lobby of the Los Angeles Westin Bonaventure Hotel into a definition of *postmodern hyperspace*, something that transcends the capacity of the individual human body to orient itself in space. This latest historical transformation in the nature of space he diagnosed as a "mutation of the object . . . unaccompanied by any equivalent mutation in the subject" (*Postmodernism* 38). What appears to differentiate this kind of experience from that of Vidler's "warped space" is that the latter produces pathological disorder, whereas the condition described by Jameson is perfectly normal in the cultural logic of late capitalism.

For Jameson, John Portman's hotel, in its banal self-referentiality, as well as its discontinuity from the surrounding urban context, stands as a perfect embodiment of that essentially consumerist logic. Some of these same issues are revisited in Hal Foster's 2001 essay on Frank Gehry, which makes a qualitative distinction between Gehry's early work—the provocative edginess and funky materials of his Santa Monica house, with its implicit challenge to the notion of architecture as a monumental form of cap-

ital—and the later stage represented by the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. The latter is ironically characterized as an example of "gestural aesthetics," with its regressive notion of architecture as corporate-style sculpture, its slick opacity, and its antagonistic relation both to the surrounding context and to the works it is designed to house. The difference between the early and late Gehry, Foster writes, is that between a material rethinking of form and space and an architectural ingratiation of a public "projected as a mass consumer" (3).

The contemporary success of architecture as consumer spectacle, as a kind of monumental image in itself, has opened a new chapter in the perpetual contest between literature and architecture for the title of primary and most enduring form of human expression. In *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), Victor Hugo famously addresses the general problem of meaning in terms of the traditional rivalry between the two arts. Interrupting his story at midpoint in order to contemplate the meaning of his own art in relation to that of the great cathedral, Hugo claims that architectural monuments are at the origin of writing. In ancient civilizations, when the burden of human memory became too much to bear and the spoken word could no longer hold it in place, it was inscribed in the earth in the most visible, durable, and natural manner: "On scella chaque tradition sous un monument" (Every tradition was sealed by a monument) (281). Architecture became the great book of humankind, such that every religious symbol and even every human thought had its page in this work. Until the age of the printed word, architecture was the principal and universal form of writing; the temples, fortresses, cathedrals, cities, tombs, and other buildings were the register of humanity, and of its cultural memories and aspirations. Hugo's claim that since the fifteenth century the printed word has "killed" architecture is based on the difference in modality, if not in essential cultural function, between literature and architecture.[22] Compared to a cathedral, a book is readily made, costs little, and can be disseminated widely with ease. No wonder, Hugo writes, that since the invention of print the great tradition of human thought has taken the form of literature instead of stone. Today, however, Hugo's judgment needs to be overturned. In the twenty-first century, culture at large has been transformed into the production of images, so that a new building by a star architect like Frank Gehry or Daniel Libeskind, to say nothing of the destruction of the towers of the World Trade Center in New York, creates a much greater symbolic and perhaps more lasting impact on the public consciousness than any new literary work can hope to achieve.

The postmodern notion of architecture as image is a natural conse-
quence of Robert Venturi's definition of the "decorated shed," which re-
calls the Ruskinian idea of architecture as the support for ornament, but
without Ruskin's ethical fervor or his historical sense. Venturi's celebration
of consumerized kitsch, both in his influential *Learning from Las Vegas*
(1972) and in the playful adornment of architectural works such as the
Gordon Wu Hall at Princeton University (keystones, heraldic patterns, Tu-
dor-style bay windows, stone balls), comes closer to Jameson's idea of pas-
tiche as "blank parody" (*Postmodernism* 17) than to Victorian ideals of his-
torical revival. Still, one of the fiercest attacks on postmodernism comes
from Frampton, who sees behind the play of design a will to destroy style
and cannibalize form in the name of architecture as large-scale corporate
packaging (326–27). In another register, J. G. Ballard's novel *Super-Cannes*
(2000) portrays the gated communities and office parks of contemporary
corporate life as sinister architectural environments where high salaries and
sexual license are granted at the cost of more essential human freedoms. In
the corporate park of a multinational holding company, "the buildings
wore their ventilation shafts and cable conduits on their external walls, an
open reminder of Eden-Olympia's dedication to company profits and the
approval of its shareholders" (8). In what might otherwise be interpreted as
a postmodern aesthetic borrowed from original designs like Renzo Piano's
Centre Pompidou, Ballard finds the raw expression of a globalized capital-
ist ideology. If this assessment is valid, it may be that the most imaginative
possibilities for architecture lie in another direction, one represented by or-
ganizations like Philadelphia's Slought Foundation, which seeks to
redefine the built environment in response to changing populations, mi-
grations, uneven economic development, natural disasters, and climate
change. At the 2008 Venice Architectural Biennale, Deborah Gans, one of
Slought's architects, displayed her House with Roll Out Core, in which
columns of bamboo and reinforced cardboard support a light roof over a
frame of hay-bale walls. In such designs made to shelter the homeless, the
use of lightweight and flexible construction materials takes on new mean-
ing, reviving the utopian ideals of the 1920s while seeking to address the
urgent needs of the present.

Although surpassed by architecture today in its immediate public im-
portance, literary form has also proven adaptable to the empirical condi-
tions of modernity, even when that adaptability takes the form of an im-
plicit critique of those same conditions. One way to describe these
conditions is to name what Adorno calls "the reification of all relationships

between individuals, which transforms their human qualities into lubricating oil for the smooth running of the machinery, the universal alienation and self-alienation" (*Notes* 1:32). Balzac's *Illusions perdues* (1841) is the first literary work to document both the technical changes that made the mass production of literature possible and the social and economic contexts in which this production took place. The novel opens with an exposition of the iron Stanhope press, which in the early nineteenth century replaced the old wooden presses, making the process of printing cheaper, faster, and less labor intensive. In Balzac's novel, the mechanization of printing is accompanied by the wildly accelerated commercialization of literary production. Lucien de Rubempré, the callow but ambitious young writer newly arrived in Paris from the provinces, quickly masters the system, which links authors, publishers, booksellers, and reviewers in an unholy alliance of speculation, manipulation, and mutual betrayal. The center of the new book trade is in the Galeries de Bois, the prototype of the commercial arcades explored in Benjamin's *Arcades* project with so much insight into the commodity fetishism of modernity. The trade in new books (*la librairie dite de nouveautés,* 370) thus occupies commercial space alongside other shops of *nouveautés,* while the arcades also provide space for yet another kind of traffic, that of prostitution. Throughout the novel, Balzac compares the literary to the commercial product and literary work to prostitution. Lucien realizes, for example, that books to the booksellers are like cotton to bonnet makers: merchandise to be bought cheaply and sold at a profit (218). The publisher Dauriat, who "speculates in literature," tells him that a book is a capital risk, and the more beautiful a work the less are its chances of being sold (287). As for literary reputation, Lucien discovers the extent to which it is justly allegorized by different classes of prostitutes: popular works are like the poor girl shivering at the side of the road, secondary literature resembles the journalist's kept woman, whereas *la littérature heureuse* is like a brilliant but capricious courtesan who treats great men with insolence and skillfully puts off her creditors (261).

The novel, as the literary form specific to the bourgeois and industrial age, is particularly suited to the task of representing this society in which "human beings have been torn from one another and from themselves" (Adorno 32). Jameson writes that what differentiates the conditions of modern literature from those of the traditional epic is that the object-world of the epic was already endowed with meaning, which it was the function of the artwork to transmit in whole cloth. The problem for modern literature is that the object world, including the constructed environ-

ment, eludes the grasp of individual consciousness and undermines the quality of human relations. In modern art, therefore, "the elements of the work begin to flee their human center" (*Marxism and Form* 160). A centrifugal dispersal takes place "in which paths lead out at every point into the contingent, into brute fact and matter, into the not-human" (160). The novel, in its capaciousness, as a form that continually reinvents itself, as a process without formal guidelines given in advance, in its scope and its preoccupation precisely with the question of alienation—all these qualities make the novel better adapted than any other form to the task of restoring a semblance of coherence to the modern world. Georg Lukács calls it "the epic of a world abandoned by God" (87).[23] The best example of this role assumed by the novel is Balzac's own immense project, which attempts to embrace the totality of the modern social world. But unlike the *Divina Commedia,* the 137 works of the *Comédie Humaine* add up finally to a series of brilliant but discrete fragments of this world, which cannot be seized as an integral order emanating from a metaphysical center. The final verdict on the novel as a source of meaning for the modern world may already have been pronounced in 1923 by Eliot, for whom "the novel, instead of being a form, was simply the expression of an age which had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter" (*Selected Prose* 177).

The modern fragmentation of literary form can be understood as a consequence both of the material pressures of the conditions under which literature is produced and of literature's function as a critical response to those conditions. An initial form of this fragmentation was to segment literary production into parts of a series published over time. *Illusions perdues,* for example, was published in three parts from 1837 to 1844; it is the fourth novel in Balzac's *Scènes de la vie de province* and has a sequel in *Splendeur et misères des courtisanes* (1847). The publication of novels in sequence took place at the same time as the serial publication of single novelistic works, beginning with Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers,* which appeared in twenty installments during 1836–37. Serial publication provided a monthly wage for Dickens and greatly expanded the novel's reading public, reaching a circulation of forty thousand, as readers now could pay for a one-guinea novel in installments of a shilling per month. It also provided space for the advertising of consumer products, much in the spirit of Samuel Pickwick's own leisurely adventures pursued through a modern world of club dinners, cricket matches, bachelor parties, and tourist excursions to Bath.

The invention of the modern short story represents another innovation in literary production made in response to the conditions under which literature was received. Poe, in his 1842 *Graham's* magazine review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales,* defines the "short prose narrative" as the ideal form of fiction in that it produces the greatest intensity of effect on the reader. The short story is designed to be read in a single session, drawing the reader into its magic circle for an hour or so and giving the writer exclusive command over the reader's responses. To achieve its singular effect the story must be both completely unified and rigorously economical: "There should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design" ("Review" 299). The circle into which Poe's reader is drawn, free from all "external or extrinsic influences" (298), conforms in the architectural sphere to the ideal living space evoked in Poe's essay "The Philosophy of Furniture," with its picture of interior repose amid thick carpets, silk curtains, plush sofas, and soft lighting. The short story's formal adaptability to the market thus coincides somewhat paradoxically with Poe's idea of reading as a private act performed within a bourgeois interior safely removed from the harshly acquisitive world outside.

There exists a certain structural similarity between collections of short stories and novels originally published in serial form: to the extent that each consists of a series of more or less discrete entities, the end product has an empirically fragmentary nature, which, in works of literary modernism, will extend to literary form in the proper sense. The composition of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) began as a short story in the style of *Dubliners,* the collection Joyce had published in 1914. Although *Ulysses* was extended to novel length, it retains, in its series of episodes written in different styles, the fragmentary textual character we have already noted in René Char and constitutes the most prevalent formal feature of literary modernism from Eliot to Virginia Woolf. Throughout the modern era the literary language of internal disruption and discontinuity runs counter to the narratives of personal development, moral progress, and so-called social realism—those that deliver themselves over to a world presupposed, whether naively or disingenuously, as meaningful in itself. This countercurrent should not be understood as the abandonment of meaning but rather as the interrogation of the loss of meaning. As Adorno says of the essay form, "It thinks in fragments, just as reality is fragmentary, and finds its unity in and through the breaks and not by glossing them over" (*Notes* 1:16).

A similar observation might be made of the advent of free verse in po-

etry. Eliot's essay on this form looks back to the "close-knit and homogeneous" societies that produced the Greek chorus, the troubadour canzone, and the Elizabethan lyric and asserts that only in such contexts could the development of these traditional forms have been brought to perfection (36). As we see in Eliot's own poetic work, free verse is then the lyric form best adapted to the unraveled, heterogeneous conditions of modernity. It is the poetic form that reflects the fragmentary nature of reality while transcending that reality in both content and form: on the level of content, it resists the pressure to naturalize reality, by objectifying the subjective experience of that reality; on the level of form, it abandons regular rhyme and meter only for a more rigorous internal composition of sound and rhythm.

How, then, do we compare modern architecture and literature in their respective relations to the conditions of modernity, however the latter are defined? The problem is that this is the wrong question, if it presupposes modernity as a third term independent of those of architecture and literature. On the contrary, the examples discussed here should have demonstrated the extent to which modernity is constituted by cultural forms and that, among these, architecture and literature are in large measure responsible for the objective and subjective elements that we refer to in the concept of modernity. Even if these cultural forms are not exactly coterminous with the ensemble of social and economic conditions in which they are made, they are nonetheless irretrievably tied to those conditions by the materials out of which they are made and the contexts they inhabit. While this is immediately obvious in the case of architecture as the creation of modern space, it is equally true of literature by virtue of its grounding in language; through the conceptual medium of language, literature is inevitably grounded in the social. Our question is therefore better approached by thinking of architecture and literature neither in terms of their aesthetic autonomy, nor in terms of their appropriation by a third, external term, but rather as alternate discourses of modernity itself, as constructions of the modern through their respective conceptual and material forms. While this question is taken up more fully in the next chapter, we may anticipate that discussion here by mentioning a few ways in which the modern discourses of architecture and literature are comparable, simply on the basis of the formal transformations just reviewed. First, both arts have broken with traditional models of a formal unity whose elements are subordinated to a single dominant principle. Instead, those models have been replaced with systems of freely combined modular elements, with emphasis on repetition and variation rather than hierarchical order. Second, this

decentered notion of order has been accompanied by the breakdown of various barriers, including those between inside and outside. The glass-roofed arcades of Balzac's Paris already diminished the distinction between interior and exterior, as later the glass walls of Mies's office buildings would do. Modern literature has broken down the barriers between the objective and subjective worlds while in the latter case breaking the further barrier between the conscious and the unconscious. Third, both arts have moved toward the increased exposure of their respective inner structures, from the systems of support and armature on view in modern buildings to the various modes of reference in modern literature to its own methods of composition. Here I would include Joyce's conscious reference to the *Odyssey* as a framework for *Ulysses,* as well as Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land,* even if neither is wholly free of irony. More to the point is that both Joyce and Eliot freely expose the gaps and fissures of their compositions, refusing to paper them over with a semblance of narrative or conceptual continuity. Finally, the sense of historical continuity in both cultural forms has been replaced by a sense of historical forms as a vast warehouse from which objects can be freely chosen and combined in new ways.

In "Die Frage nach der Technik" (The Question Concerning Technology), Heidegger writes that in contrast to traditional methods of the cultivation of nature, modern technology treats nature as a vast standing reserve (*Bestand*) or stock of material from which materials and energy are drawn forcibly. The difference between an old-fashioned water mill and a hydroelectric plant is that in the former case the river drives the wheel at its natural rate of flow, whereas in the latter case the dammed river is "challenged forth" as the object of stockage, acquisition, transformation, accumulation, and distribution in a series of operations distant in form and meaning from their source (*Question* 16–17). As forms of cultural production, contemporary architecture and literature bear a relation to history similar to that which modern technology bears to nature: historical forms are there to be cited and transformed, at worst into consumerized kitsch, at best into something rich and strange. All of these cases remind us of the basic truth that the human world is literally structured as the built environment, and symbolically structured as language. The art of the built environment is architecture; that of language is literature. Here is reason enough to consider their common ground.