Architecture and Philosophy
New Perspectives on the Work of Arakawa & Madeline Gins

Jean-Jacques Lecercle and Françoise Kral

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In memory of Arakawa –

who crossed borders between continents, disciplines, and, ultimately, life and death itself.

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Preface

Jean-Jacques Lecercle and Françoise Kral

It is trivially true that philosophy has always attempted to read architecture—to find a space for it in a general theory of aesthetics, to account for it within a general theory of spatial experience, to assess its contribution to the understanding of our daily life. And it is equally true, and equally trivial, that philosophy has had to acknowledge that architecture thinks, that is, produces its own concepts, and that such concepts, in return, may help to read the philosophy that claims to read architecture. This reciprocal relationship, which is not a case of fusion, may be thought in the philosophical language of Gilles Deleuze, as the creation of a disjunctive synthesis, whereby the two heterogeneous series of philosophy and architecture form an assemblage, without losing their heterogeneity: such assemblage is rich with the promise of lines of flight, deterritorializations and the emergence of various haeccities.

The usual view of the relationship between philosophy and architecture, there lies its triviality, still reasons in terms of two independent disciplines, that is two independent series, which are somehow assembled, at a certain stage of their development, to produce new mixtures. But what if the two series are entwined from the very beginning, what if the architect is, at the same time and indissolubly, a philosopher (and also, why not, an artist and a linguist)? Such a situation will probably induce in the professional philosopher corporative reactions of the "keep off the grass variety": there is a specificity of philosophy, and an architect cannot be a true philosopher, only a kind of philosophical *fou littéraire*. One of the weaknesses of the Sokal hoax, and its attempted theorizing by Sokal and Bricmont, is that when they left the safe territory of their specialism, theoretical physics, to venture into philosophy, their incompetence became painfully obvious.

But such dismissal by the specialist is not so easy to achieve in the case of Arakawa and Gins, and it will take the combined efforts of an array of specialists of several disciplines, philosophers, linguists and literary critics, to resist their philosophical onslaught—this is indeed what this book is about.

Arakawa and Gins are undoubtedly architects, even if both first experimented with other artistic fields, where their work also gained recognition, before turning to architecture: Arakawa's relationship to Duchamp is well-known, and his paintings have been celebrated by Lyotard; as for Madeline Gins, she is a name among avant-garde writers, in a scene dominated by the school of language poets. Their early works, whether it be Arakawa's abstract paintings or Madeline Gins' poetry show signs of the themes that were later to be central to their architectural project. Arakawa's move away from monochrome painting in the 1960s to a growing interest in and research into the three dimensions in the 1980s can be read as a sign of a growing interest in architectural structures, in particular those reflecting on the position of the subject in relation to the painting. As for Madeline Gins, her reflection on the temporality of writing in her poems—in which fragments, erased and written over suggest the palimpsestic nature of art and its development through time—can be read as the first step towards a reflection on temporality which underlies a work such as *Architectural Body*. The block of flats they erected in Tokyo was recently given half a page in the French newspaper *Le Monde* (the irony of it, for whoever is aware of their insistence on reversible destiny, was that the article dealt with their architectural work as an attempted solution to the problems of an aging population in Japanese cities).

Since the publication of *Architectural Body*, we have discovered, and had to acknowledge, that they are genuine philosophers, that they have produced a body of work that cannot be dismissed as the feeble effort of mere amateurs. There is an undeniable grandeur in *Architectural Body*, the grandeur of the archetypal philosophical gesture that abandons *doxa* to indulge in paradox, the outcome of which is the production of philosophical truths, or rather, since Deleuze has taught us that such is the object of philosophy, the creation of new concepts, with duly picturesque names such as *landing sites, bioscleave* or *organism that persons*: the result of this work of

philosophical creation is nothing short of a new mapping of our experience and of the construction of our lived world.

Such weaving together of heterogeneous series, this disjunctive synthesis of theories of space, of perception, of language and of literature needs, in order to be read, that is to be understood and put to work in various fields, the collaborative assessment of specialists of each of those disciplines: you will find in this volume essays by philosophers of language and of literature, specialists in linguistic pragmatics and enunciation theory, literary critics and poeticians, as well as theorists of architecture. Architectural poetics, autopoetic event matrices, biotopian architecture, architecture as generative utopia, architecture and postmodernist literary experiments, transgeneric manifestoes, down to the materialism of space on which Arakawa and Gins's philosophy might be based: the volume seeks to do justice to the sheer scope and diversity of their intervention in many fields.

Since all this is a little abstract, let me take three examples, in three different fields. There is a sense in which the philosophy of Arakawa and Gins is not only materialist, but Deleuzian: their interest in the paradoxes of sense, rather than meaning (the fixed meaning of *doxa*) echoes the Deleuze of *Logic of Sense*; their *organism that persons* seeks to do the philosophical work the classical concept of subject (as centre of consciousness and of agency) is no longer able to do in our post-modern conjuncture, and echoes of the Deleuzian concepts of haeccity and collective assemblage of enunciation can be perceived in their work. As indeed Artaud's body without organs, of which Deleuze and Guattari make systematic philosophical use, is not far from the processual concept of the *organism that persons* (the body without organs does not deny the existence of organs and organisms, it seeks to make them the results of the freezing of a process of becoming, even as the *organism that persons* emerges in a process of tentativeness). We understand, when we read Arakawa and Gins, why Deleuze considered architecture as "the first among the arts," and why his work is obsessively concerned with rhizomatic connections between the concepts of philosophy and the percepts and affects of art: of such connections is the work of Arakawa and Gins made.

There is also a sense in which their conception of language (and their version of architecture can always be phrased in terms of language, as is manifest in the famous phrase, "the tense of

architecture") is close to the form of linguistics that is influential in France (although hardly anywhere else), under the name of "enunciation linguistics" (the name of Benveniste and Culioli must be mentioned here); the tentativeness of architectural procedures, the insistence on process as opposed to result imply a new form of language, true to the event that the reversible destiny project seeks to capture. This new concept of language involves an extensive and unheard of use of the marker of the imperfective aspect, as in another famous phrase, which may be used to sum up their entire project, "a tentative constructing towards a holding in place": we cannot avoid noticing that here the "ing" marker of the imperfective is used twice, a nightmare for would-be translators.

Lastly, there is a sense in which their architectural *cum* philosophical concepts may be of interest to the literary critic, and allow her to reach parts of texts, which other theories cannot reach. Since Deleuze was an enthusiastic and inventive reader of *Alice in Wonderland* (he is, after all, the only philosopher to have taken Carroll seriously as a thinker), we might attempt to read the adventures of Alice in the secret garden in the light of *Architectural Body*. Such a reading will yield amazing results: the garden itself turns out to be a piece of architecture worthy of The Site of Reversible Destiny—Yoro, one constructed along similar lines of systematic defamiliarization. And the heroine's experience in this reversible garden of Eden takes the form of a succession of landings, each square of the chess board functioning as a new *landing site*, each move forward in the garden involving the adaptation of her body to the architectural environment. This is indeed the best account I can think of Alice's repeated changes in size (far better than the standard psychoanalytical accounts that interpret such changes in terms of erections)—and we can easily compare it with the Brobdingnag sequence in *Architectural Body*, or the passage in which the reader is asked to treat the page as a piece of architecture and wander around the blanks between the lines of print.

It seems, therefore, that *Architectural Body* is a reading machine: it reads philosophy, it reads language and it reads literature. It is, according to Deleuze, the main characteristics of real philosophy that it obliges us to think, through the violence of a *coup de force*. *Architectural Body* is one such *coup de force*—a challenge for various specialists, in an array of different disciplines, an incitement to read back.

The first essay, by Jean-Jacques Lecercle, reads the work of Arakawa and Gins as a form of materialism, 'a materialism of space as opposed to a materialism of time.' Then, Jed Rasula explores the convergences between the 'architectural body' of Arakawa and Gins and the architectural design theories of Frederick Kiesler, in particular his project of an 'endless house.' Alan Prohm takes a different approach to the work of Arakawa and Gins and explores the literary background of the Reversible Destiny project. Fionn C Bennett's philosophical approach seeks to appraise to what extent the concept of bioscleave absorbs, even negates the notions of subjectivity and objectivity. Joshua Shuster's essay envisages the implications of Arakawa and Madeline Gins's architectural body as predicated on a non-dualistic theory and therefore as set against metabiological models of life. Françoise Kral's paper seeks to situate *Architectural Body* in the history of ideas and to assess the apparently utopian stance of their project, which Kral reads as a critical reassessment of the project of modernity. Chris L Smith, on the other hand, is interested in what precedes the *Architectural Body* and the logic of its con-figuration. Jondi Keane's bioscleave report discusses the specific architectural features within the Biocleave House that allows persons to interrogate historically reinforced cognitive configurations such as the external observer or the affective phenomenal perceiver. Ronald Shusterman examines the relation between *Architectural Body* and certain literary experiments of the last few decades and shows that some of them are procedural tools in the sense developed by Arakawa and Gins. The last two papers look at *Architectural Body* from the vantage point of linguistics and seek to understand the complex and pivotal role played by language in *Architectural Body*. Simone Rinzler focuses on the hybrid nature of *Architectural Body* which she reads as 'transgeneric manifesto.' Finally, Linda Pillière focuses on the link between the way Arakawa and Gins restructure the mind/body relation and the restructuring of syntax and semantic functions in *Architectural Body*.

Gins and Arakawa,
or The Passage to Materialism

Jean-Jacques Lecercle

This essay describes the central philosophical gesture of Arakawa and Gins as a form of materialism, a materialism of space, as opposed to the idealism of time. Such materialism becomes manifest in their definition of architecture as 'a tentative constructing towards a holding in place'; it shall be analyzed by way of a spatial reconstruction of the workings of language based on the work of Guy Deutscher and the concept of sense in Deleuze, and a detailed account of architectural procedures.

1. Being Haunted by Gins and Arakawa

The genitive must be taken in its subjective acceptation. I do not know whether Arakawa and Gins are haunted, but I do know that they, or rather their philosophical work, haunt me. The word is chosen carefully: it is not a question of conversion. I do not come to the Reversible Destiny project as one who has seen the light, and I do not think I am suitable material for membership of a sect. But, as I shall be arguing, Reversible Destiny cannot be a sect, because of the philosophical materialism it embodies. And I am certainly haunted by it.

It all began, of course, years ago, out of the blue. The post brought me a thick volume, with a strange title, two names on the cover that to me were utterly unknown and a myriad of rather inventive architectural designs. I did not know who had sent it (the obvious explanation, that it was the authors, must have been repressed, either by my unconscious or by my modesty), and I did not know what to do with it, as architecture was not one of my best subjects. So I put it on a shelf and forgot about it. A few years later there was, again out of the blue, a phone call, just as I was leaving the house to rush to the dentist. I had no idea who that woman was, but she said she was Madeline Gins and that she and Arakawa were very

radical. So, in order to get rid of her and attend to my toothache, I agreed to read their book. It duly arrived by the post and I read it, at one sitting. And I decided that those people were completely mad. For the obvious reason: they seemed to be serious about their project, they took it literally, not as a metaphor or aesthetic pose. And yet I knew, as opposed to 'believed', that I, like everyone else, was destined to die. So I thought I had another instance of a text written by *fous littéraires*, the name for people moved by an *idée fixe*, in more vulgar terms people with a bee in their bonnet, who believe that they can square the circle, that the earth is flat, Shakespeare was a Frenchman, and Lewis Carroll a secret Jew, a closet gay, or Jack the Ripper.

But I am rather fond of *fous littéraires*, and I have devoted a lot of my time trying to understand how their minds work, and admiring the insights they offer about the workings of language (Lecercle and Riley). So I re-read *Architectural Body*, and realized that what I was dealing with was not the effusions of *fous littéraires*, but a work of philosophy, and an important one at that. And it has haunted me ever since: this is the third time I write a text on that book, I played a minor part in its translation into French, and of course, I decided to organize this conference, in order to assess and celebrate the philosophical importance of Arakawa and Gins. In my first essay ("The Tense of Architecture") I defined their starting point as a fundamentally philosophical gesture, the breaking away from *doxa* as a passage towards truth. My task today is to define and celebrate this passage as a philosophical gesture of fundamental importance. And here the genitive becomes objective: it is my conviction that a specter haunts Arakawa and Gins, as another specter famously haunted Europe. Not the specter of communism, but the specter of materialism.

2. Paradoxes

The first and most obvious paradox I have already mentioned, as it was my own starting point: how can you decide not to die (or to make it illegal), how can you go against the grain of common knowledge and beggar belief? Well, as we know, they all do it, from Plato's prisoner back in the cave, to Descartes haunted by the *malin génie*. So we can leave this paradox for what it is: a point of entry into first philosophy. Then, there is what I would like to call Arakawa and Gins's external paradox, to which I have also alluded: how can their

architectural gesture, their venturing into first philosophy, be sustained without consigning them to the realm of art, of aesthetic gesture, since to that realm they so obviously belong. Or again, to phrase it in the philosophical language of Gilles Deleuze, how can we turn what is an obvious metaphor ("reversible destiny"—more of an oxymoron, in fact), into a metamorphosis? And lastly there is Arakawa and Gins's internal paradox, which concerns the very consistency of their philosophical discourse: destiny being by definition irreversible, how can we attempt to reverse it, without falling into one of those philosophical errors caused by an elementary grammatical mistake, one of those moments when, to use Wittgenstein's famous phrase, "language goes on holiday"? My answer is that this paradox (which, as you have realized, is merely a more exact formulation of the first two), must be understood as a very precise philosophical gesture, a passage to materialism, effected through a displacement from time to space. I shall argue that Arakawa and Gins's philosophical position is a materialism of space. Their fundamental philosophical gesture is a denial of the centrality of time, using (there lies the paradox) the vocabulary of time, or what appears to be a vocabulary of time, to achieve it. Arakawa and Gins deny time while seemingly talking about it: it is destiny they are talking about, but this destiny becomes reversible—by which I understand not that the arrow of time is inverted, but that they effect a shift from time to space. It is in space, of course, that reversing direction makes sense. So that this paper (this is the present form of my own paradox), will try to effect a shift of focus, or a reversion if you like, from "destiny" to "reversible." I shall draw for this on the immemorial wisdom of language, which, as we know, metaphorizes time in terms of space, a state of affairs notoriously disapproved of by Bergson. And I shall describe this shift as expressing Arakawa and Gins's passage to materialism, that is from a form of thought in which time is of the essence (both in the doxa of our daily life and in the dominant philosophical tradition—the tradition of idealism) to a form of thought in which space is central. After all, such passage is only to be expected from architects, and especially architects who are not interested in building landmarks, monuments, which are literally *aere perennius*, but in defining sets of architectural procedures.

3. The Idealism of Time

Both our daily *doxa* and the philosophical tradition construct the meaning of life, of our lives (for this is the question addressed by all philosophy, and certainly by Arakawa and Gins—their purpose is not merely to glorify the erection of buildings), around a concept of time. Making sense of our lives means understanding our origins and our ends (and note that already, in its immemorial wisdom, language can only say this in terms of space, either etymological, as is the case with the words I have just used, or explicit, as appears if I re-phrase my sentence in more common terms: where we come from and where we are going). And the second question, "what is our end?," "what is our destiny?" assumes particular importance, due to the sad fact of our announced death, of the encounter with the Real that will proclaim the meaninglessness of it all (of our life, of the world we have constructed to live in, or by), and the religious impulse whereby we seek to deny the relevance of this ultimate encounter. This centrality of time holds both at the collective, or cultural, and at the individual level. At the collective level, this involves the traditions of our community, our roots, our collective destiny as a nation, a class, a species: from the *lendemains qui chantent* to the manifest destiny of the chosen people, a destiny we must deserve and towards which we strive in teleological tension, because time, or history, is on our side. At the individual level, this involves the construction of identity through memory, from Locke to Proust (need I remind you of Reid's paradox of the young lieutenant who remembers the boy he once was, who was whipped for stealing the pears, and of the old general who remembers the young lieutenant he once was but has completely forgotten the mischievous boy who, in Lockean terms, he cannot have once been). The two levels are fused in our belief, both traditional and individual, in an afterlife, the consolations of religion being culturally offered to each individual as a form of life insurance. And come to think of it, the belief that we are destined not to die is the most widely held and the most ancient, it animates both suicide bomber and saint. But that is precisely *not* what Arakawa and Gins suggest in their concept of a destiny that is reversible: reversible destiny has nothing to do with destiny (the bullet on which the soldier's name is inscribed, and which will speed him towards the great beyond), because it has nothing to do with transcendence, being a thought of the centrality of space, not time.

And here we must note that one of the consequences (perhaps the major consequence) of the idealism of time is the centrality in our thought of a concept of a personal subject, as centre of consciousness, meaning and action. For even the lay subject of liberalism (the rational actor of economic or ethical decisions) is a scion of the personal soul, which is only what it is because of the firm belief that it will survive death (some would say, and this would be the essence of the idealism of time, that the human being is human because it buries its dead, in other words because it believes that their souls, or their ghosts, survive). I am a subject because there is a guarantee (call it transcendence) that I am who I am, because my personal destiny makes sense—this is the limit that the Kantian revolution in philosophy could not transcend.

And this is why of course I have given it the name (which nowadays tends to have a bad reputation) of "idealism." Because the thought of time as destiny and of the subject as individual person needs a concept of transcendence, even if some of its supporters are ready to proclaim their atheism (for some an ethical realm, for others the unconscious will serve as a substitute for the transcendence that the idealism of time cannot avoid). Our time, the time of the construction of our personality, of the exercise of our free will and rational choices, of our destiny, is the time of transcendence. Whatever the form He takes, God dominates our lives, in so far as they make sense. But He is not up there, in the seventh heavens of the Pagans, but before, in the act of creation, and after, in the comedy of redemption, the Last Judgment, and the final separation of the good and the unworthy.

So what happens if we take the philosophically bold step of rejecting all transcendence? A tragic version would be that of consistent atheism: there is no life insurance, no guarantee of meaning, and life is absurd. In my pessimistic moments, I am ready to subscribe to that vision. Not so Arakawa and Gins, who are unreconstructed optimists. Rather than accepting the absurdity of a life without transcendence, they are prepared to go against the grain of common sense, to decide that destiny is reversible, by which they mean not the inversion of the arrow of time, or a mere stopping of time, but a philosophical *cum* linguistic gesture: the inversion of the metaphorical drift from space to time, the return to the immemorial wisdom of language, which gives space pride of place. Our architects

in their disguise as philosophers, are attempting to think space
seriously, that is to decide that space, not time, is the site of meaning
(the meaning of life as well as the meaning of the proposition).

4. Spatial Meaning

I shall first describe the shift from time to space using the Deleuzean
device of a correlation. The rest of the paper will be devoted to the
development of that correlation. My correlation has two rows and six
columns:

1	2	3
Idealism	Time	Transcendence
Materialism	Space	Immanence

4	5	6
Past/Future	Teleology (origin/destiny)	Personal subject
Open present	Construction/Procedure	Species/ Haeccity

Columns 1 to 3 have already been accounted for. Column 4 is
probably the most interesting: how can we think time, since we some-
how must, in a conception of life and meaning centered on space? I
take it that this is the philosophical task Architectural Body ascribes
itself, so I shall go back to it in my last section.

Column 5 marks the Utopian value of the Arakawa and Gins
project. It also hints at its specific form of materialism. What it
suggests is that the project is akin to that of the young Marx: men, we,
construct our lives and their meanings against or in spite of the falsely
natural conditions in which we find ourselves. For Marx, there is no
natural destiny of humankind because there is no human nature
outside history. For Arakawa and Gins, there cannot be human nature

in so far as there is no fixed destiny, but there is no teleological trust in historical development either: it all occurs in space, the space of the architectural body. This is a profoundly materialist stance: making sense (of our lives) does not involve any transcendent guarantee, not even the guarantee of history, it does not involve the contemplation of ideas, *sub specie aeternitatis* (eternity is just a way of reintroducing time), or any communion with God, but a praxis, in their case a series of procedures, "a tentative constructing towards a holding in place." (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 23)

Column 6 spells out the consequence of this turn to a materialism of space. The two substitutes for the central concept of subject that are evoked here are the one explicitly mentioned by Arakawa and Gins, the passage to the point of view of the species, not the individual subject of liberalism, and the one to be found in the philosophy of Deleuze, where the scholastic concept of haeccity does the philosophical work that the subject is no longer capable of doing: a haeccity, the best examples of which are a haiku or a shower of rain, is an entity that is non-subjective, a-personal, pre-individual. It is a single entity, and as such it bears a name, but it is not a subject. Even as, in Arakawa and Gins, the entity that is capable of adopting the point of view of the whole species is the organism that persons, not a subject or a person, even if, for reasons of ease of exposition, they soon revert to the traditional term.

The various elements that constitute the two rows are coherent. Philosophical or everyday idealism involves a belief in the centrality of time in the constitution of meaning (this is called the question of identity—a question that Arakawa and Gins superbly ignore as a false question); a belief in a form of transcendence, of whatever kind (for transcendence is wily and does not always reside in the bearded figure often seen in paintings of the Annunciation—a typical scene of alliance between the centrality of time and the need of transcendence); an intense interest in origins and in our future, conceived as a destiny; and a firm belief in the centrality of the individual subject *qua person*, as the basis of morality, rationality and society. Arakawa and Gins's materialism of space, on the other hand, involves the active exploration of space as our plane of immanence, as what there is for us to act in and develop our human potential; the consequent rejection of any form of transcendence; an intense interest in architecture, not *arche*, in procedures, that is in *praxis*, not the contemplation of theory;

and a re-thinking of life through procedural architecture, ignoring the individual subject.

The passage to materialism, the shift from space to time, is, I believe, a philosophical gesture of paramount importance. Let us try to describe it more precisely.

5. Space Without Time

What happens if we attempt—very much against the grain of common sense and our usual modes of thought—to think our life, and the meaning of it, in terms of space without time?

The immediate consequence is the dissolution of meaning: there is no longer a source for it, nor is there a teleological guarantee that the meaning we may construct is the right one. This applies both to the meaning of life, and to the meaning of the proposition: in Deleuze's theory of sense, signification, one of the three components of good sense and common sense (with manifestation and designation) presupposes the guarantee of meaning that only the system, or God, can give (whereas the other two presuppose an individual subject and a coherent world respectively).

The first consequence of this consequence is that, if meaning there is to be—for I am prepared to grant you that I will not dwell in the tragedy of an absurd world and an absurd life if I can help it—it has to be constructed. And it has to be constructed architecturally, that is in space, by deploying a number of procedures, as one lays out the various modules that constitute a Arakawa and Gins house.

The second consequence is that the single path, the straight and narrow path, the one-directional arrow of progress, must be abandoned. For by renouncing transcendence, by deciding to dwell on the plane of immanence, we accept the necessity of the exploration, a tentative process, of an unlimited number of paths. Space has become rhizomatic, what we have is a garden of forking paths, a labyrinth. And again, of course, we find ourselves within the compass of architecture. But not any architecture: the kind of architecture best exemplified by the project for the Museum of Living Bodies, with its central labyrinth, its erratic paths, its strangely shaped modules, its extraordinary, and exploratory, deployment in space.

This is where I must go back to their definition of architecture, in what is the central philosophical formulation of the book:

> Here is what architecture means to us: *a tentative constructing toward a holding in place*. Walk into this building and you walk into a purposeful guess. The built world floats a hypothesis or two as to how and by what the apportioned out comes to be everywhere, the everywhere. (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 23)

What interests me here is the rhetorical emphasis (for Arakawa and Gins also write: there is an element of artistry in their philosophical developments) on space, when "everywhere" becomes "the every-where," and with the clausula of their definition, which falls—and it is not a dying fall—on the word "place." This emphasis on place is supported by the central verb, "hold," which indicates a capture, a settlement: the meaning of life is a function of a site, it is situated. But such a place is not any place, and the holding is not a form of stasis, but the result of *praxis*, of a constructing, of a bifurcation of paths that lead "towards" and must be explored, hence the other crucial word of the definition, the word "tentative." I have suggested elsewhere (Lecercle, "Préface") that this tentativeness is Keatsian, that it evokes the "snailhorn perception" of the poet (and we remember the use of Char's poem in Architectural Body, and the character of the human snail): it involves the necessity of spatial exploration, but also the risk taken in the construction of meaning. This is space in all its vastness, its irredeemable openness, not time, with its foregone conclusion in destiny. And this is why the constructing is not a construction, why the tentativeness is expressed by using a form of the present participle: the only time I need (if time is indeed one of the two Kantian forms of experience and I cannot entirely avoid it) is the present in which space is given. And lastly we note the absence, in this definition, of any mention of a person in the form of a grammatical subject that would be a noun or personal pronoun: the grammatical subject of the sentence ("a tentative constructing") is the name of a subjectless process, for my present participle is also the mark of a verbal, or adjectival noun, a form of impersonal gerund.

Here, a detour through language is necessary for us to understand exactly what is at stake, how such crucial philosophical choices are made through a form of writing, a certain use of language.

6. The Immemorial Wisdom of Language

So far, I think I have explained how the fundamental philosophical gesture of the passage to materialism involves a conception of architecture, even if I have not yet given full justice to the notion of an architectural body: the self creation of the organism that persons takes the form of an architectural body because such creation, being self creation, is not given by transcendence but through a collective practice. This is why the construction of the architectural body is often, in Arakawa and Gins, accounted for in terms of language: in their latest opus, *Making Dying Illegal*, a short section is even devoted to the rehearsal of the relevant passages in *Architectural Body* (115-8). The gist of their position here is given by one of the titles of that section: "the tactically posed surround as a sentence (Phrase, Paragraph, Text)."

We might think that the reference to language is due to the fact that language is the medium and site of human self-creation through collective *praxis*, in other words that we are in the realm of the Marxist myth of the development of language, as sketched, for instance, in *The German Ideology*, where language is famously defined as practical consciousness, and where the origin of language is to be found in the collective process of work (Lecercle, *Une philosophie*). Arakawa and Gins are materialists, but not Marxists (nobody is perfect), and their concept of the architectural body is not a myth of origins, and not a myth at all, in so far as it is not concerned with time (the site of all myth is the time of arche), but is deployed in space. This is the story of the self-creation of the human species in space, and it is not a history. This is where I must take notice that the architectural body is a body.

Elsewhere (Lecercle, "The Tense of Architecture"), I analyzed the architectural body by comparison with the four bodies that we may concurrently or sequentially inhabit: the biological, the erotic, the laboring and the phenomenological body. My account was still rather hesitant, as it was unable to adjudicate between the laboring and the phenomenological bodies, with a slight advantage given to the latter. But a re-reading of *Architectural Body* and a reading of *Making Dying Illegal* has convinced me that I need not adjudicate, for all I need in order to understand Arakawa and Gins's spatial materialism is the body of the human being, of the organism that persons as a member of

the human species. What I need is a body situated in space, and the word "body" as a source of metaphors, which will turn into meta-morphoses: indeed Arakawa and Gins take every advantage of the metaphorical drifting of the term, as this body is not only an individual body, but a collective body (as in "a body of troops") and even a de-materialized body (as in "a body of ideas"). In short, the body I need, which subsumes all the others, is the body as the fount of language, but not in Chomsky's sense, where the biological body contains universal grammar in its genes or neuron circuits: in a purely spatial sense. Because bodies (the body of the species) are situated in space, this situation is the source of language as instrument of location and collective construction of a surround.

This is where the immemorial wisdom of language helps. The analytic tradition of philosophy has taught us that ordinary language is a fount of wisdom, but also a source of philosophical errors, from Ayer's concept of nonsense (i.e., language beyond the bounds of sense impressions) to Wittgenstein's concept of philosophical problems as caused by a misuse or misunderstanding of language and its workings. There is a long tradition of mistrust of language, Locke, Nietzsche and Bergson being notorious exponents. But let us try to take the opposite path, not the path of language as site of philosophical problems, but the path of the celebration of the wisdom of language, where problems are raised and sometimes already solved. I call such wisdom "immemorial" not because it is ancient, but because it has nothing to do with memory and time, and everything with space.

Here I shall follow Guy Deutscher, a linguist who studies language from a diachronic point of view, a position traditionally neglected since the advent of structuralism (Deutscher). His aim is to produce a model of the unfolding of language, starting from an elementary form of language, which he calls the "Me Tarzan" stage, and deriving from it, with the help of a number of simple principles, the actual complexity of our natural languages. What he needs to construct his "Me Tarzan" model is three elements (object-words, action-words, and deictics of space, "this," "here"—the latter, of course, brings to mind the page in *Making Dying Illegal* where Arakawa and Gins invent two other deictics, "thit" and "thas" (81)—and four organizing principles, a principle of proximity (what "goes together" semantically, such as the action and the object of the action, occupies close positions in the sentence), a principle of iconicity (of

the *veni, vidi, vici* type), a principle of economy ("don't be a bore," i.e., don't unnecessarily repeat the word if its absence does not create ambiguity) and a principle of precedence (known in pragmatics as the me-first principle: what concerns the speaker most has pride, i.e., priority, of place, and the agent normally precedes the patient). From these elements and principles, the whole of language as we know it, in all its complexity, can be derived: it is only a question of spatial ordering (on the "chain of words") and recursive re-ordering.

I find Deutscher's story fascinating, not least because it is a story, not a history (although it is, of course, deployed in history): an unfolding of language in space, a spatial development, even if it takes all the time in the world. But what really interests me in the context of Arakawa and Gins's architectural body and materialism of space is that the story finds its source in the human body, around which the lived world and the language that expresses it are constructed. Dia-chrony is in reality a story of spatial development, mainly through metaphorical shift or drifting. Take, for instance, prepositions: it is widely known that their core meaning is spatial, and that it has developed along the axis of metaphorical drifting, space → time → abstract (cause, effect, etc.): the cigar is in the box, it will be smoked in two hours, in due course. But where do prepositions themselves come from? Deutscher suggests, by considering a whole range of languages, that they come either from verbs of movements (action-words in the "Me Tarzan" model) or from the names of parts of the human body: object-words, but not the words of any object. Thus, we say that people are ahead of us, and we find ourselves back of beyond. In the terms of Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphor, orientational metaphors are the original metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson): for the architectural body is indeed a collection of landing-sites.

What the immemorial wisdom of language tells us is that time is a derivation from space, through metaphorical drifting, and that space is bodily space. These are the two basic propositions of the materialism of space that *Architectural Body* develops.

7. The Senses of Sense

We understand why making sense of life, reversing destiny, involves an architectural body, a materialism of space. We understand why Arakawa and Gins's first philosophical work, *The Mechanism of*

Meaning (which was also a work of art) was a first version of what we might call their first philosophy (*philosophie première*) and why it had to be developed and completed, if not superseded. Because what it dealt with, in a not entirely explicit way (the work was duly entitled "work in progress"), was not meaning but sense, in the three acceptations of the term: bodily senses (we find an analysis of perception in *Architectural Body*—landing sites have an obvious connection with perception), direction (meaning deploys in space), but also, through a form of philosophical coincidence, Deleuzean sense, even if nothing suggests that they had read or at least used *Logique du sens*. In Deleuze, sense, we remember, is the fourth dimension of the proposition, which takes us out of *doxa*, i.e., out of meaning, good sense and common sense, into paradox as the site of truth. Yet there is more than merely one similarity between Deleuze's theory of sense and Arakawa and Gins's first philosophy (see Lecercle, "The Tense of Architecture").

As early as *The Mechanism of Meaning*, we find elements of a quasi-Deleuzean theory of sense, beginning with the very title, where meaning *qua mechanism* takes on Deleuze-and-Guattari overtones. What we have in fact is a series of procedures for the construction of meaning, and this construction occurs in space, as the headings of most of the sections make it clear: 1) materialization of subjectivity (this is itself is a Copernican revolution in the concept of meaning: meaning is no longer a function of the intentions of meaning of the individual subject—there is no methodological individualism in Arakawa and Gins; 2) localization and transference (meaning is constructed by localization—this is close to Culioli, the French linguist's concept of *repérage*—and configuration, which is a way of taking metaphor literally as a form of spatial removal); 3) generalized ambiguity (meaning implies exploration, forking paths, overlapping zones); 4) meaning as energy (which I take to be a fundamental materialist position, to be repeated in their latter work through the concept of "mass energy"); 5) degrees of meaning (meaning deploys through metaphorical shift from concrete to abstract, and this movement towards abstraction is described in geometrical terms: angles, degrees of angles, positions, perspective); 6) meaning and scale (we remember the Brobdingnag episode in *Architectural Body*); 7) meaning as ramification and splitting (a topography of meaning emerges, which is not unlike Deleuzean rhizome); 8) meaning as

reassembling (this is a mechanistic view of meaning as artifact, that is as the result of a collective practice deployed in space). And so on and so forth, culminating in the eleventh section, where meaning is defined as a form of mapping. It is only in the last five sections (sections 12 to 16) that space is abandoned and time is introduced (most notably in section 14 ("Construction of the memory of Meaning")—but we note that section 13 is entitled "The Logic of Meaning." I take this to be a temporary limitation of their thinking, superseded in *Architectural Body*, but also, and most importantly, the indication of a problem, which I shall have to address myself, and which they address in their later work: how do we reintroduce time in a conception of life and of meaning that is exclusively spatial? For, of course, I haven't mentioned the most striking aspect of *The Mechanism of Meaning*: a full-fledged theory of meaning takes the form of a series of visual displays, which naturally emphasize the spatial construction of meaning. And we do find a deictic, "this" and "that" display, in the first step of the "Localization and transference" section.

Of course, Arakawa and Gins's spatial materialism, a first philosophy of life and of sense, comes into its own in *Architectural Body*, where it animates the concepts and makes them systematic, from the program developed in the introduction ("An architecturally guided and sustained organism-person should then be able to reverse that destiny known to have been the lot of billions of other members of the species; when it becomes possible for an organism-person simply to go on indefinitely, a reversible destiny shall have been achieved"— Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* xxi) to the concepts and concrete analyzes that spell it out. Here, I should rehearse the main concepts of Architectural Body, but for reasons of brevity, I shall just remind you that their very names indicate their spatial nature: organism-person environment, landing-sites (of which the third, the dimensionalizing landing-site, is for me the most interesting, because the most explicitly territorial), biocleave (with the constituent ambiguity of the term, which indicates both spatial separation and spatial adherence), sited awareness hypothesis, etc. And I note that the latest opus develops this even further: the core of *Making Dying Illegal* is the essay on "biotopology," the foundation of a science *cum* art the field of which is explicitly spatial, as this

"science of life" is meant to be a topology. And here is how their central concept is newly defined in the essay:

> The term architectural body floats, by definition, a concept of a something or other that resembles an entity but that occurs as sequences of actions and interactions and loci of activities and agencies; it denotes not an entity in and of itself but a three-hundred-sixty-degree-around extension of an entity, and it swirls or otherwise verbs here, there and everywhere in the vicinity of an entity that can be human or transhuman. (73)

In this passage, everything is made explicit: the centrality of space in the constitution of the lived world (need I make a list of all the spatial metaphors?—except they must be taken literally, as movements in space), the rejection of the centrality of the individual subject, the insistence on the communal construction, in collective *praxis*, of the lived world, and the part played by language, which is no longer a mere instrument of communication, in such construction, through a consistent homology between buildings, bodies and sentences—you have noted, no doubt, the coinage of the verb "to verb."

So we have a better idea of what Arakawa and Gins's materialism of space consists of: the concepts of territory, of a-subjective quasi-entity, of collective praxis, of landing-site, of architectural body *qua* organism-person-environment form a system. The only question that remains is: what about time in this system? How can we conceive the temporal deployment of the architectural body?

8. Reintroducing Time

Since I am the author of an essay entitled "the tense of architecture," I cannot entirely ignore this question—nor do Arakawa and Gins ignore it. Even if their concept of architecture is not obsessed with monuments, that is not obsessed with time, even if destiny, by being reversible, becomes a spatial concept, there must be a time of architecture, if only the material time of construction of a building, from initial project to assemblage of modules. And, at a more abstract level, there is the time of procedures, the time of their algorithmic development. Our question, therefore, must be not: do we need time? but: what sort of time do we need? And the answer is: certainly not Bergsonian duration, not even the three syntheses of time in Deleuze,

not the time of teleology and *arche*, but the time of archi-(tecture), the time of the open present, the time of collective corporal *praxis*.

If we re-read *Architectural Body* carefully, we note a number of concepts, or of turns of phrase, which imply a concept of time. The most striking, and probably the most important, is the concept of tentativeness. It appears that the time we need is the time it takes to explore the world spatially, to establish a collection of landing-sites. But take the word "sequence" (a spatial word metaphorically used to denote time, as usual), and its conjunction, in the following passage with the imperfective aspect or present participle:

> A person as a moving body describes an ever-changing sequence of domains, associating herself with some more closely than with others. Surely personing is preferable to person—in the name of accuracy and in the name of tentativeness. (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 66)

What is interesting here is that the movement away from the individual person takes the form of inscribing the entity in question within a process grammatically expressed by an aspect (not a tense): the aspect of actualization and of opening up (hence its grammatical name of "imperfective aspect").

And this use of the imperfective aspect is systematic in *Architectural Body*. The action, the process expressed by the verb is systematically preferred to the result: architecture is a constructing, not a construction, procedures are defined in terms of knowing, not knowledge. This imperfective aspect is the grammatical marker of the two main temporal concepts: tentativeness (note the two "-ing" forms in the formula "a tentative constructing toward a holding in place") and procedure. For procedures take time, they are processual, and they enable us to negotiate the paradox of a spatiality, which is not static: Arakawa and Gins's is a materialism of process, not product—the collective human processes they call procedures.

How can we envisage such procedures? In two ways, I think: as collective human practices (they are defined in terms of "procedural knowing," that is not only instinctual sequences, but also habitual patterns of activity), and as linguistic practices, the construction of sense through procedures of grammar. This is the rationale for the constant homology Arakawa and Gins establish, as we have seen, between architecture and language. The following passage is typical:

> An architectural procedure resembles its predecessor, a word, in two respects for a start: first, it is a repeatable item that readily lends itself to discursive use; second, charged with conveying a specific experience or range of experiences, it can be evaluated as to how well it serves its purpose or how effectively it has been put to use. (*Architectural Body* 57)

To my mind, this strongly recalls the analogy often defended by Marxist linguists or semioticians, between the processes of work and of the construction of utterances (Rossi-Landi; Thomson). The time of architecture is not the time of the unfolding of meaning, along Markov chains interrupted by upholstery buttons, points where meaning is given retrospectively, but the mechanistic time of repeatable procedures and the laboring time of collective action. So that, when we find a definition of the tense of architecture through the formula "What's going on?" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 49), we understand the tentativeness of the question mark, the impersonality of the collective procedure of sense, in pragmatic exchange, and the presence of exclusively spatial words to express time, "go" and "on," symmetrically placed around the marker of aspect, "-ing." The immemorial wisdom of language is again at work here: in his "Me Tarzan" model, Deutscher suggests that markers of tense and aspect are derived from verbs or prepositions of movement and direction, which is precisely the case with the verb "go + -ing" in English, a marker of future time.

So the time of Arakawa and Gins's materialism of space is not the time of first beginnings, not the time of teleological future, but the time of the present of action and procedure, in so far as it is open through tentativeness. This, I wish to suggest, is the time of Utopia in the most positive sense of the term: a tentative constructing, in the present, towards a truly human future, in which dying becomes illegal—I take the title of their latest opus as the slogan expressing their procedural, spatial, architectural form of materialism.

And such open future may remind us, in the philosophical tradition, of two other concepts: Bloch's "Prinzip Hoffnung," and Derrida's *"messianicité sans messianisme."* There is undoubtedly *messianicité* in Arakawa and Gins, but no *messianisme* in the sense of waiting for the Messiah: the tentative constructing starts now. Hence the turn towards legal problems (which are really political problems) in the

latest opus: the task they assign themselves is nothing less than the elaboration of a constitution for the human species.

9. Conclusion

A Philosophical Assessment of the Passage to Materialism

What I have attempted to account for is a fundamental philosophical gesture that takes us from *doxa* into paradox. This movement is intimately linked to the question of sense, envisaged for the first time in Arakawa and Gins from a materialist point of view (sense is conceived as bodily, as spatial, as para-doxic). This in turn evokes a materialist concept of language as bodily, spatial, rhizomatic and procedural.

But it involves much more. It involves an anthropology, i.e., a tentative re-thinking of the self-construction of humankind.

And this, in turn, involves a break with common sense and the dominant philosophical tradition in three crucial matters:

It involves getting rid of the concept of individual subject as source of meaning and action, and its replacement by a material body (an organism) engaged in a process of self-constitution or self-creation (personing) through collective architectural practice (a layering of landing-sites, etc.)

It involves inverting the usual hierarchy between time and space, and going back in so doing to the immemorial wisdom of language (which has nothing to do with time), replacing the time of tradition and the time of destiny with the open present of Utopia.

It involves getting rid of the guarantee of meaning that transcendence offers and engaging in a strict practice of immanence. Spinoza and Deleuze are the main forebears here: their names are mentioned advisedly, for such rejection is the main philosophical gain of the inversion of the hierarchy.

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Endless House—Architectural Body

Jed Rasula

This essay explores convergences between the "architectural body" of Arakawa and
Madeline Gins and the architectural and design theories of Frederick Kiesler (1890-
1965), particularly his long-germinating but never-executed project, the "endless
house." Although Kiesler's work extends from high modernism to the postmodern, he
has only recently been accorded some recognition. As a pioneer in environmental art
and a substantial contributor to such apparently opposing trends as De Stijl and
Surrealism, Kiesler's consistently exploratory outlook resonates with the architectural
body understood as the organization of sentience and the engineering of contingency
for the human organism.

There is a haunting moment in Orhan Pamuk's novel of Istanbul, *The
Black Book*, that unfolds in a carefully delineated architectural setting.
Pamuk's protagonist, Galip, gains clandestine nocturnal access to his
boyhood apartment, now inhabited by a famous journalist whose
columns obsess him. He is shocked to find everything just as it was in
the past. "One could almost imagine that the dust in the globe lamps
had been arranged to replicate the shadows they had cast on the pale
walls twenty-five years ago" (Pamuk 242). Spending the night com-
bing through the journalist's files, Galip discovers that all his
legendary columns derive from Rumi's *Mathnawi*, and that it was a
salient feature of Rumi's narrative manner that the legendary poet
"could only begin to tell a story if he could say that he'd heard it
elsewhere." In short, "He told one story only to gain access to
another" (Pamuk 258). This is a veritable architectural truism as well;
one gains access to rooms by way of other rooms, and for every room
the means of coming in or going out are the same. Architectural space
is thereby endowed with a haunting—the somewhat archaic English
noun *haunt* refers to a domain—or the sense that, though I have not
been here before, I recognize the place. Such recognition is infused
with the sense of cohabitation, the uncanny supplement that has often

proven so enticing to fabulists, from Herman Melville's whimsical tale "I and My Chimney" to Henry James's "The Jolly Corner," and the grotesque multi-purposes spaces that abound in Kafka's *The Trial*.

Pamuk's nocturnal episode, infused with this sense of the architectural uncanny, provokes consideration of three terms that share something that speaks to the condition of cohabitation, however different their implications: symbiosis, plagiarism, and reincarnation. To put the work of Arakawa and Gins in the proximity of Frederick Kiesler—the quintessential magpie modernist—is to sense some unnamed convergence of these three forces on the site they call the Architectural Body. The salient features that make symbiosis, plagiarism, and reincarnation converge are outlined in the preface to *Architectural Body*. These are: the phenomenological obligation "to track how a world comes to be organized in the vicinity of the human organism"; the pragmatic estimation of "what coheres as sentience;" and the accompanying existential necessity, "the engineering of contingency" (Arakawa and Gins xiv, xii, xiii). Rather than recapitulate the elaborations and applications of these terms by Arakawa and Gins, I propose here to enfold their initiative, the architectural body, into a tantalizingly proximate concept developed by Frederick Kiesler, the "endless house."

The career of Frederick Kiesler is so multi-faceted and curious that it will be most expedient to touch only on the high points. (For a chronology, see the Appendix.) Besides, it is hard to estimate the "high points" of a man characterized by Phillip Johnson as "the world's best known non-building architect" (Phillips, *Frederick Kiesler* 30). It is customary to say of a figure like Kiesler that he was ahead of his time, but his case must be the archetype in this regard, with the illuminating proviso that being ahead of your time entails not only bad timing but bad luck. For example, a major wooden sculpture (prominently featured in magazines) was destroyed by lightning three years after it was built. A lucrative architectural project that kept Kiesler in New York after he was scheduled to return to Europe in 1926 turned out to be a political scam. Kiesler was never paid and could not even afford to go home. So the man who in short order had been a pioneer in innovative stage production, exhibition design and visionary architecture—to the extent that he was inducted into the De Stijl group as its youngest member—was to spend the rest of his life in New York, regularly producing audacious plans for buildings that

were never built, furniture that was rarely manufactured, and theatrical projects that were not often realized.

Admittedly, proposing horizontal skyscrapers and designing houses based on the morphology of human teeth were pressing the limits. Nor was Kiesler likely to win friends by calling architects "architectosauruses" and being generally iconoclastic ("Pseudo-Functionalism" 739). Kiesler never tired of challenging architectural orthodoxy. "They all speak of functionalism," he complained, "but they have forgotten … to examine the validity of existing functions" (738). "If form follows function then it remains buried in technology" ("Notes" 59). Consequently, "The dweller of today has become an architectural slave … invited to orient himself in this vacuum and make himself as comfortable as he can" ("Pseudo-Functionalism"741) in the omnipresent "cold-blooded glass boxes unconditionally surrendered to air-conditioning" ("Notes" 60), assuaged only by the consolations of décor. But, he cautioned, "the needs of the psyche should not be repressed and projected in surface decoration" ("Pseudo-Functionalism" 735). In Kiesler's barbed wit, "The question is: if I AM and not if I B.M." ("Inside the Endless House" 379). Late in life, after he became famous, a reporter asked Kiesler what might happen to the profession if architects started to follow his example. "I can assure you," he replied, "it will be like giving them marijuana, architecturally speaking" ("Kiesler's Pursuit" 115). With that slap-happy prospect at hand, how can we help but turn our attention to the conceptual hookah of Kiesler's design theory?

How a world comes to be organized in the vicinity of the human organism is a guiding theme in Kiesler's explorations; and this provides the basis of an anti-functionalist outlook he shares with Arakawa and Gins. The "humansnail" reverie in *Architectural Body* suggests that by swallowing, expelling, exuding and dispersing, the architectural body slakes its thirst directly on ubiquity itself, because the inexhaustible mutuality of something that goes through you and which you go through in turn cannot be contained—certainly not from a functional perspective. The alternative, in Kiesler's salutary formulation, is this: "*To inhabit, is to be at home everywhere*" ("Manifesto" 92). Habitation and habitat point to a deep symbiosis obtaining between body and dwelling. "The house is the skin of the human body" (92), an "exosomatic artifact" perched at the cusp of order and

combustion (a more precise term than the pejorative "disorder") (Fernández-Galiano 5).

In the architectural outlook dominant in the twentieth century, the body was distributed into corporeal functions, corresponding to Le Corbusier's quip that a house is a machine for living—although, if you think about it, that sounds ominously like an iron lung and other kinds of medical equipment (Conrads 60). The gist of Kiesler's objection to functionalism is that it presumes to know all functions, and presumes all functions are known. He has to go way back in time, through history to pre-history, to summon an alternative:

> Primitive man knew no separate worlds of vision and fact. He knew one world in which both were continually present within the pattern of every-day experience. And when he carved and painted the walls of his cave or the side of a cliff, no frames or borders cut off his works from space or life—the same space, the same life that flowed around his animals, his demons and himself. (*Selected Writings* 42)

To unframe objects and events is (following Arakawa and Gins) "to let loose an everywhere at once" (34). In his primal model, Kiesler surmises that "prehistoric man drew no ground plans for his house … He built *directly* … the inhabitants gradually put on the house; as one might put on garments until covered" ("Pseudo-Functionalism" 740).

At issue here is not historical accuracy but the implications of the paradigm, which opposes monumentality in the interests of adaptive flexibility. With this in mind, it is worth recounting some of Kiesler's involvements in the arts. He began as a set designer, repudiating the conventional theatre as little more than "a box appended to an assembly room" ("Debacle" 62). "The obsolete for-mula of a monolithic construction, suddenly solidified and perma-nently and fictitiously thrust upon the scene, is out of the question," he insisted ("The Universal" 538). He wanted to replace it with "the space-stage, which is not merely *a priori* space, but also *appears* as space" ("Debacle" 67). But how do you make space *appear*? Is it like leafing through the universe with a flock of birds? Does it mean falling under the spell of "kinesthetic flickerings, nudgings and push-pull cracklings" (Arakawa and Gins 20)? Kiesler's own solutions tended to be kinetic, but the most useful evocation can be found in a remark about Frank Lloyd Wright's design for the Guggenheim Museum which, in Kiesler's view, best achieved its purpose on festive occasions. "That is the moment when the time-space continuity comes

to life. The people are transformed into sculptures ever moving at different speeds of coordination with no paintings in sight" ("Notes" 63). What a wonderful apparition: a museum completely denuded of its art, filled instead with mobile avatars of unbridled curiosity, ready for anything—a "spatiotemporal collaboration between a moving body and a tactically posed surround" (Arakawa and Gins 73).

Reviewing Kiesler's design for Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in 1942, Manny Farber wrote that "what Kiesler has done essentially is to take the frames off the paintings, the paintings off the walls and the walls away from the gallery" (Phillips, *Frederick Kiesler* 28). "Taking the frames off the pictures, Mr. Kiesler has framed the exhibition instead," a reporter for the *New York Times* observed;

> in this rebel arrangement art moves out into the open. Sometimes, thus liberated it looks faintly menacing—as if in the end it might prove that the spectator would be fixed to the wall and the art would stroll around making comments. (Goodman 90)

In his designs for theater and for art galleries, in fact, Kiesler regularly tried to do away with the surveillance orientation of display space, mingling functions so that a mutually inquisitive domain might be opened up. By removing the frames and mounting the paintings on the tips of baseball bats extending several feet from the curvilinear walls of Art of This Century Gallery, the frames were diffused throughout the entire milieu so that "The picture seems to float freely. It ceases to be a decoration on the wall and becomes a small solid island in space. It is a world in itself which the painter has conceived and the architect has anchored" ("Manifesto" 96-7). Kiesler reconfigures a painting as a thought balloon that actually requires a mooring, like a zeppelin. What he accomplished by these means was a category shift, in which there was no clear distinction between display space and art work, with the consequence that everything *in* the space *extended* or *vivified* the space. A painting could be a doorknob. In fact, Kiesler mounted a series of small works by Paul Klee for Art of This Century Gallery on a rotary device, with variable lighting, so the very act of viewing the paintings took on the character of an adventure.

Kiesler was inclined to think of art works in cluster formations. As early as 1918 he had arranged constellations of his own paintings to work together as an ensemble in spatial supplication. He called

them "galaxies," and he was meticulous in specifying the proximity between one painting and another, because "the intervals between the units of a galaxy are as important as the units themselves, particularly since these intervals flow in and connect with the surrounding area" (Bogner 23). In order to encourage this connective flow, Kiesler left his canvases unframed, a practice he carried over to his exhibition designs not only for Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century, but also for the "Blood Flames" exhibit at the Hugo Gallery in 1947, where the "pictures (and people too) were framed by spaces instead of lengths of wood, the pictures were surrounded and tenderly embraced by distances and proximities" (Bogner 24), conjuring a surfeit of space commensurate with the art works into the delimited interior in which they were displayed—almost as though the exhibition were something like one of his own galaxies, a galaxy being, in Kiesler's definition, "a decentralized composition" (Bogner 23). Or, you could say with the help of Arakawa and Gins, an architectural body in which "the implicit shines out explicitly" (Arakawa and Gins 60).

The Galaxies may appear to be discontinuous, but Kiesler doted on continuity. Any work of art, from architecture to dance, he saw as a means of "transfixing continuity" ("Inside the Endless House" 387), and he thought of sculpture as a medium for "condensing continuity," in which "the artist creates a new gravitational field, into which the observer is drawn" ("Inside the Endless House" 394). The observer, being human, is then pressed right up against "how a world comes to be organized in the vicinity of the human organism" in the architectural body. In Kiesler's memorable formulation, "The artist creates by imposing limits on endlessness" ("Inside the Endless House" 395)—but, crucially, you have to know you're dealing with endlessness in the first place so as to grasp what it means to impose limits—because, "Strangely enough," he says, "what appears, in art and in life, to be a standstill of plastic forms is actually only a slowdown in the creative evolution of space-time" (29). So, to follow out the prospect of an artistic reckoning, "You have to bathe in the stream of continuity, be aware of it all the time, and then you'll emerge from the dirt of the day like Venus out of sticky sea foam" ("Inside the Endless House" 374). Kiesler had enormous respect for the way actions grow like fingernails (Arakawa and Gins 32), and he would no more trim them than fix them in place. With Arakawa and Gins, he attends to the "wavering of an organism that persons,"

distributing sentience, letting loose ubiquitous sitings (Arakawa and Gins 64-5, 9). Kiesler had serious reservations about fixity, to the extent that he resisted finalizing his own sculptures. If he had wanted permanence, he said,

> they would have to be supported by a pedestal of stone or marble with pins driven in. The sculpture would then come to rest somewhere in the concentration camps of art. That would have been the normal way. And that would have been the end of this creative process. ("Inside the Endless House" 22)

So, instead of an end, endlessness. Of the major project that consumed him from about 1947 to 1965, Kiesler said: "The 'Endless House' is called the 'Endless' because all ends meet, and meet continuously. It is endless like the human body—there is no beginning and no end to it" ("Inside the Endless House" 566).

In order to pursue the endless, Kiesler came up with continuous shell construction, sharing the 'tensegrity' principle with Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome (with which a model of the Endless House was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in 1952). The result, The Endless House, he claimed as

> the first to break entirely with the cube-prison tradition, to liberate space into galaxies of *disclosed* spaces for living, to invent a special construction system, *the shell in continuous tension, to eliminate the sharp division between floor, wall and ceiling of the box*, and to inject into the whole concept of a dwelling the psychological and emotional impact of the unexpected heights and widths of all living areas … [endowing them with] *the expression of a flow of life-forces, intensified to the point of intrinsic expansion*. ("Notes" 65)

Note Kiesler's emphasis on the psychological. The Endless is not a bachelor pad of creature comforts and technological whimsy; nor is it simply "a home for a family, but must definitely make room and comfort for the 'visitors' from one's own inner world…. Living in the Endless House means to live an exuberant life" ("Notes" 67); and the designer of the Endless House must never forget "the human being whose desire is a correlation of known and unknown" ("Kiesler by Kiesler" 68); never forget that, "Puzzle creatures to ourselves, we are visitations of inexplicability" (Arakawa and Gins xii), an ability not yet subject to explication, but still implicit, folded into the endless. Consequently, in Kiesler's estimation, "any structure … is *worth only*

as much as the ratio of its force of re-generation" ("On Correalism" 69). Hence his repeated insistence on replacing the term *enclosure* with *disclosure*.

To enclose is to protect, but to enclose is also to isolate; to enclose can even be a way to chastise by confinement. "For those who have no choice but to be contingent," write Arakawa and Gins, "the engineering of contingency is all that is the case" (xiii). The challenge is to sculpt contingency, as pure hazard, into a continuity commensurate with the Endless. Remember that space, not time, was for Kiesler the primary medium of building and habitation. But as he recognized, "Space, so hard to define, is so translucent in its endlessness that until coagulated into solid form, it cannot be perceived" ("Inside the Endless House" 394). In this formulation, we get a glimpse of Kiesler's approach to the arts, in which individual works are momentary and provisional disclosures of space, for which we need the "tentative form" and "adaptive structure" of the architectural body (Arakawa and Gins 29). And to make such a disclosure binding, to enshrine it, would be like declaring the most vital prospect of the Grand Canyon is the one you get from a roadside viewfinder mounted on a cement base—rather than, say, being perched on a donkey at a precarious turn in the canyon trail.

Imagine what this implies. Kiesler envisions art works being constantly remobilized in new contexts, unbounded by the constraints of ownership, intended function, audience expectations, and even the presumably immutable constraints of physical objects. Consider, for example, a poem that could incubate new stanzas while the book is closed. You open *The Palm at the End of the Mind* to find "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" has drifted off into strange seas of thought even Wallace Stevens could not imagine. No longer do you read; rather, you "walk into a purposeful guess" (Arakawa and Gins 23). In his aspiration, overall, Kiesler envisions a domain in which

> Art itself becomes the environment; in other words, the work steps down from the pedestal where it was an illustration of some idea or some memory and expands to become a living space. Thus it defines total space and induces endlessness in a concrete form. ("Inside the Endless House" 394-5)

As corollary of the art work stepping off its pedestal, the house sheds its blueprint to assume the tactile exuberance of human skin in "an amassing of the provisional" (Arakawa and Gins 65).

One can detect in all this Kiesler's inclination to *use* rather than *enshrine*—a term I use self-consciously, given that the only major commission he was able to bring to fruition as an architect was the shrine of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Jerusalem in the last year of his life. But it is a project that integrates all that he was about, and possibly a measure of its success is that in all the photo-documentation it is hard to figure out where the scrolls themselves reside. The shrine embodies Kiesler's conviction that architecture can only be said to begin when normative functions are obliterated by a solution larger than the ostensible need. Addressing the role of apertures like windows and doors, he writes:

> Architecture starts when these utilitarian developments finally outgrow their normal human physical needs and an oversized entrance develops—porticoes or doors—so high and solid as to be of Cyclopean origin, denoting an entrance to the sacred, beyond human scale. We have then entered the sanctuary of architecture. Thus the superfluous became a necessity. ("Notes" 67)

This insistence on the superfluous may seem puzzling. Assessing the cost of functionalism, Kiesler lamented "we have also put our imagination, our sense of time, space, coordination, into a grid-prison from which we can liberate ourselves only by recreating a new belief in the superfluous" (67). I take him to mean by the superfluous something akin to William James's supposition: "Had [man's] whole life not been a quest for the superfluous, he never would have established himself as inexpugnably as he has done in the necessary" ("Reflex Action and Theism" 131). "Prune down his extravagance, and you undo him" (James, "Reflex Action and Theism" 132). A commitment to the superfluous gives way to the extravagant resource of the gift.

> With the first line of a perfect poem the whole poem is already present. What comes after the first line is not superfluous, however; it is the overflow which exceeds the merely necessary and it is therefore a gift. (Picard 141)

The gift is a species of ripeness according to Henry David Thoreau:

> I want the flower and fruit of a man; that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavor our intercourse. His goodness

must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity, which costs him nothing and of which he is unconscious. (52)

Friedrich Nietzsche, adhering to a vision of superfluity outlined by Thoreau's mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson in "The Poet," proposes a rudimentary compass: "With regard to aesthetic values I now avail myself of this principal distinction: I ask in each individual case 'is it hunger or is it superfluity which has here become creative?'" (133).

Architecturally speaking, a window is superfluous. A slit will suffice, as in castle fortifications, to disclose any movement outside. But for Kiesler, a window is a quivering aperture, access to realm exceeding the geometric frame. Form does not follow function; nor does function follow form. All is formed by folly (a term I mean in the eighteenth-century architectural sense: a deliberate ruin), the fruit of the gratuitous. You do not need it, but you can not do without it—or, without it, you do not stand a chance of knowing what *doing* is. Not even a *ghost* of a chance, let alone what it would mean to *host* the odds. Understandably, then, one of Kiesler's pet peeves was the architectural priority given to blueprints. "If God had begun the creation of man with a footprint," he noted, "a monster all heels and toes would probably have grown up from it, not man" ("Pseudo-Functionalism" 733). If the notion of space is confined to a floor plan, the result is equally monstrous, no less so than a ceiling plan or a wall plan. "The ground plan is only a flat imprint of a volume," says Kiesler, whereas "a house is a volume in which people live polydimensionally. It is the sum of every possible movement its inhabitants can make within it" (("Pseudo-Functionalism" 739-40). To this end, Kiesler distinguished between functionalism and biotechnique:

functional design derives from the traditional behavior of any tool; on the other hand, biotechnical design derives from the evolutionary potentialities of man. Functional design develops an object. Biotechnical design develops the human being. ("On Correalism" 68)

Frame a door, and movement has consequences; without the door there is just lethargy in motion. A door discloses the continual reciprocity between body and space, an interaction Kiesler compared to the mobile adaptations of acrobats, leaping into and out of trapeze clusters, forming momentary ensembles ("Pseudo-Functionalism" 734). For his purposes, a dwelling should confer on its residents the

practical means of forming momentary ensembles, or the orchestration of contingency.

From the beginning of his career, publishing in *De Stijl*, Kiesler was wary of trends, insisting that "the question is not straight or curved walls, but how does one live among these straight or curved walls—what life, new life has been fostered by them?" ("Kiesler by Kiesler" 64). "We want dwellings to be as elastic as the vital functions" ("Manifesto" 99). Therefore "the study of the forces which make and maintain life is more important for schools of architecture than studies of past or present styles of design" ("Notes" 65). Kiesler eventually came to theorize his principles under the heading "Correalism," with two Rs, combining correlation with real, and displacing the architect with the "Correalist designer" who,

> before he designs an enclosure for human beings, must be as fully aware as possible of the life forces which bring about the small universe which they are to erect for the human beings by enclosures of any kind, shape or form" ("Kiesler by Kiesler" 64).

Note his awareness of, and discomfort with, *enclosure*, a term given an even more dramatic twist in another formulation: "The question is: in what way can the life of the person inside any compound heighten his awareness of being alive, his contact with and awareness of the outer world?" ("Grotto" 22). Consequently, in Kiesler's estimation, "any structure…is *worth only as much as the ratio of its force of re-generation*" ("On Correalism" 69). Hence his regular insistence on replacing the term *enclosure* with *disclosure*.

In Kiesler's diagnosis of modern building trends with their fetishization of technological novelty, any thought of the regenerative potential of architecture was abandoned by the "emphasis on esthetics, anesthetics, prophylactic building design with total amnesia of ethics" ("Kiesler by Kiesler" 68). Kiesler himself was by no means against technology; his career was a constant adventure in engineering, deliberately experimenting with new materials precisely as a way of overcoming the inertial applications derived from familiar materials and routine methods. "No tool exists in isolation," he wrote. "Every technological device is *co-real*" ("On Correalism" 63). No tool does a job by itself. It always has a human agent. But human agency must work on behalf of other humans, not as an extension of the tool, which

is the bias of functionalism. As antidote, Kiesler spoke of *biotechnique*:

> functional design derives from the traditional behavior of any tool; on the other hand, biotechnical design derives from the evolutionary potentialities of man. Functional design develops an object. Biotechnical design develops the human being. ("On Correalism" 68)

Correalism arose in response to biotechnical design: "*The term 'correalism' expresses the dynamics of continual interaction between man and his natural and technological environments*," Kiesler wrote in his 1939 "Manifesto of Correalism" (61).

Lest anyone mistake him for a Luddite, which is always a danger given his ferocious iconoclasm and his propensity for proclamations like "The T-Square has done its share. It has dehumanized Design and dry-cleaned it" ("Design" 131), Kiesler offered this clarification:

> My friends, don't think I am suggesting a return to kerosene. We can create right now whatever you desire. You need not choose bulbs or tubes. You can have metal panels radiating light, invisible, soft as the whisper of a cypress. Define your need—it can be taken care of. You don't need to submit to industrial dictatorship. ("Inside the Endless House" 378)

Wary of the dictatorial terms by which industry catered to purportedly natural "needs," Kiesler was always bent on reversing the flow, emancipating the needs so as to instigate industrial commitments on a human rather than a strictly commercial scale. Here we find the fruit of Kiesler's reckoning with the spaces induced by his Galaxies, which ceaselessly pour the ostensible contents of created works into the gaps, the interstices, the wallowing made possible in which space is a standing invitation to disclosure. The canvas taunts you into considering that, yes, you can look away. So: *What do you see in the* Away?

"We say 'inner world' or 'outer world' but actually there is just one whole world," Shunryu Suzuki writes, on his way to an architectural reference destined for ripening in the endless house:

> In this limitless world, our throat is like a swinging door. The air comes in and goes out like someone passing through a swinging door. If you think "I breathe," the "I" is extra.… When your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement, there is nothing: no "I," no world, no mind nor body; just a swinging door. (29)

These superfluous apertures, these gratuitously magnified openings, and this swinging door offer an intriguing link to Joseph Cornell's boxes (Cornell tried to initiate a project with Kiesler, possibly spellbound by the fact that Kiesler was the uncle of film star Heddy Lamar). It is as if Kiesler's Galaxies were a way of inviting the contents of Cornell's boxes out of the basement and up into the open air. As if constructing a building was more like laying an egg than driving a stake into the earth. As if the wooden armature around a painting might cease to be a frame, becoming a hinge instead.

Imagine a room in which you would find yourself not inside, but *inside out*. Call it architectural body. Call it endless house.

Appendix: Kiesler Chronology

1890   Cernauti, Rumania: born December 9
1923   Berlin & Vienna: "electromechanical" stage production for *R.U.R.* (Capek)
        Berlin: joins De Stijl movement
1924   Berlin: *The Emperor Jones* stage production (O'Neill, dir. B. Viertel)
        Vienna: organizes and designs International Exhibition of New Theatre Techniques
        Vienna: International Exhibition of New Theatre Techniques, "Space Stage"
        Berlin: editorial staff member, *G* (ed. Hans Richter)
1925   Paris, Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs: "City in Space"
1926   New York: with Jane Heap of *Little Review*, organizes International Theatre Exposition
1928-30 New York: Saks Fifth Avenue window displays
1929   New York: Film Guild Cinema, architectural design
        The Modern Show Window and Storefront (Brentano's)
1930   Contemporary Art Applied to the Store and Its Display (Brentano's [rev. ed. of above])
1931   Woodstock, N.Y.: wins architectural competition for "The Universal Theatre" (project never funded)
1933   New York: "Space House" demonstration model constructed for Modernage Furniture Company
1934   New York: *Helen Retires* opera production
        New York: appointed director of scenic design for Juilliard School of Music (until 1957)
1936   New York: work included in architecture, theatre, and furniture sections of "Cubism and Abstract Art" exhibition at Museum of Modern Art
1937   New York: design critic for *Architectural Record*
        New York: appointed Associate Professor at Columbia University School of Architecture, where he establishes Laboratory for Design Correlation
1938   New York: "Mobile Home Library" designed in Laboratory for Design Correlation
1940   Michigan: "Architecture as Biotechnique" unanimously endorsed at Ann Arbor Design Conference, including Walter Gropius, Frank Lloyd Wright, Eero Saarinen
1942   New York: Art of This Century Gallery space and exhibition design
1946   New York: *No Exit* set design (Sartre, dir. John Huston)
1947   New York, Hugo Gallery: Surrealism exhibition design, "Blood Flames"
        Paris, Maeght Gallery: "Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme" exhibition design
        Paris, Maeght Gallery: "Salle de Superstition" installation (at above)
1948   New York, Juilliard: set for *Le Pauvre Matelot* (Milhaud) becomes first sculptural "Galaxy"
1951   New York: joins board of Julian Beck's Living Theatre
1952   New York: "Galaxy" from *Le Pauvre Matelot* included in "Fifteen Americans" exhibition at Museum of Modern Art

New York: "Endless House" model displayed in "Two Houses: New Ways to Build" exhibition at Museum of Modern Art (with Buckminster Fuller's "Geodesic Dome")

1953   Connecticut: builds wooden "Galaxy" for Phillip Johnson's house (destroyed by lightning 1956)

1954   New York, Sidney Janis Gallery: solo exhibit

1955   Houston, Museum of Fine Arts: "Galaxies" exhibited
        Ellenville, New York: Empire State Music Festival tent design (holds 2,000)

1956   New York: forms architectural firm, Kiesler & Bartos

1957   Jerusalem: initial discussions for "The Shrine of the Book"
        New York: World House Gallery design

1959   New York: "Endless House" model in *Time Magazine*

1960   New York: CBS 30 minute television feature and interview, "Endless House"
        New York, Museum of Modern Art: "Visionary Architecture" exhibition, "Endless House" model

1961   New York, Leo Castelli Gallery: solo exhibition "Shell Sculptures and Galaxies"

1962   New York: Museum of Contemporary Crafts hosts traveling exhibition, "The Ideal Theatre: Eight Concepts"

1964   New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum: exhibition, "Frederick Kiesler: Environmental Sculpture"

1965   Jerusalem: "The Shrine of the Book" opens, wins gold medal from Architectural League of New York
        New York: dies December 27

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Architecture and Poetic Efficacy
Architectural Poetics

Alan Prohm

This paper examines the notion "architectural poetics" as it applies to the work of Arakawa and Gins. It seeks a critical grounding for the term in the artists' concept of a "built discourse" and in an understanding of spatial meaning as the semiotic field supplying that discourse. It explores the literary and poetic background of Arakawa and Gins' *Reversible Destiny* project, tracing the different phases of their development as a path towards an amplified presentation and a heightened efficacy. Finally, it evaluates the relevance of their current (architectural) strategies and priorities to a certain lineage of modern and contemporary poets, assessing to what extent their architectural poetics remains poetics in the sense a poet would mean it.

> Je crois que pour être bien l'homme, la nature en pensant, il faut penser de tout son corps.[*]   Mallarmé

> First off, might not the world exist so that everyone may turn into an architect?[**]   Arakawa and Gins

1. Architectural Poetics

Parallels between the architecture of Arakawa and Gins and the poetics of Mallarmé have been noted in many places, despite what would seem a natural resistance to thinking the physicality of Reversible Destiny constructions and the evanescences of Symbolism in a single thought. But a similar tension is of course internal to Arakawa and Gins's own work, and troubles (or activates) the dialectical path any receiver or participant must take in confronting it;

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[*] "I believe that to be truly human, nature thinking, one must think with the whole body" (Œuvres 352).

[**] (Arakawa and Gins 6). It was Mallarmé who wrote: "Tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre" ('Everything in the world exists to end up as a book').

a movement between often elliptical texts and the published models they comment on, or between theoretical tracts or instructions for use and the physical, that is visitable sites they aim to put to good use. In seeking the maximal thought, Mallarmé was forced back onto (or through) the materiality of thinking and language, just as in aiming to think concretely Arakawa and Gins continue to rely heavily (or rather, with loft) on writing of a very determined abstractness and poetic projection. The problem of the relation between texts and built structures in the work of Arakawa and Gins is certainly the dramatically amplified grandchild of a problematizing of sense first ventured in the visual poetry and book theory of Mallarmé. But whereas with Mallarmé the paradox is an etherealist project that must fall back on a concrete poetics to achieve its aims, with Arakawa and Gins the paradox is somewhat inverted, a concrete, embodied practice that continues to rely on precision indeterminacies and suggestiveness in the language that intends it.

Literary parallels of this sort, and there are others, might be enough to justify using the term "architectural poetics" to categorize the recent work of Arakawa and Gins, though without some clarification it is not obvious that the term is an appropriate one. It is unclear where the term surfaced first, though as a notion it seems to have taken root with the "Transgressing Boundaries" conference at Salamanca in 2000, where a number of the papers later collected in the important volume, *Architectures of Poetry* (edited by Diaz, Eugenia, and Dworkin), were first presented. Alternately we can point to Steve McCaffery's online "North American Centre for Interdisciplinary Poetics," which went up in 2001, becoming the term's most visible and status-conferring address; an address at which, as was also the case with the *Architectures of Poetry*[1] publication, Arakawa and Gins are distinguishable as the tenants who receive the most guests.

Interestingly, however, Arakawa and Gins themselves never seem to touch the term. The publication of their *Architectural Body* under Charles Bernstein's and Hank Lazer's "Modern and Contemporary Poetics" imprint at the University of Alabama Press, and on the rear cover of that book the short list of predecessors which includes

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[1]   E.g. by Mark Taylor in his piece "Saving Not" in *Reversible Destiny*, and by Michel Delville in "The Poet as the World: The Multidimensional Poetics of Arakawa and Madeline Gins" in the Arakawa and Gins issue of *Interfaces*.

Alexander Pope and Rimbaud (though also Leibniz and Dogen), are perhaps as far as they go in embracing a designation that is clearly attached to them from without. The question I want to ask here is whether it sticks. What substance does the concept have beyond the novel provocation of its grounding analogy? And is it useful, either for classifying the work of Arakawa and Gins or any other work one might judge similar, or for answering the more important and interesting question: "How does it work?" Reversible Destiny, I mean. The not dying.

The term is obviously of some use in expressing the cross-over nature of the decades-long project that brought us Reversible Destiny (the promise) and procedural architecture (the practice), a project that began in painting and poetry, or in what for the sake of simplicity we can label this way, and eventually became architecture. It also usefully serves to acknowledge the continuity of the project, which did not so much switch media as concentrate and amplify, continuing an original intuition to its (para-)logical extreme and according to its practical requirements. And finally, it serves to mark the difference of this project, which stands out as distinct in its methods and motivating ideas from most everything else happening in architecture. But "poetic" as a label of praise or distinction within architecture is equally a lever for separation and dismissal, and already here we see where the term will lose its desirability. On the one hand, having chosen architecture as the truly efficacious means, it is no use to go on being called poets, and even within literary or artistic discourse it defeats the purpose of having migrated along this path, if the new landscape continues to be measured according to old coordinates.

If we are going to make use of the term in discussing Arakawa and Gins, it is important to insist on a couple of qualifications. First, we should disconnect the idea of an architectural poetics from any expectation that there could or must also be an associated poetry. Poetry can be thought as architectural (and architecture as poetic) in many ways, describing just as many zones of hybridity in which the term "architectural poetics" may be of different uses. But, though I do not discount the possibility of a rigorously defined, intermedial poetry of architecture, this is not what we are dealing with here. Instead, for this work and for many other projects that fall under the loose and recent designation "architectural poetics," we must think poetics as an organizing principle or motivation perhaps found characteristically in

poetry, and certainly grounded genealogically in it, but in a real and practical sense independent of literary means or of a literary background on the part of its practitioners. Thus we can think of poetics as a way of experiencing meaning mediated through discursive sign systems. Poetics in this sense can be a something applied at work by poets or architects, by gardeners or weathermen, and is necessarily "parapoetics" in the sense Steve McCaffery gives the term[2], not a blending of poetry with other media but a contamination of its creative/critical principle into other discourses (92-3). I would only add to McCaffery's formulation a qualification I think he allows, namely that this spreading need not originate from poetry as an emission but can move also from within the target discourse as an ingestion.

Sufficiently rarified and transposed, poetics may indeed prove a useful optic through which to explore the Arakawa and Gins project. Yet if the term must be loosened from its genealogical root in order to apply cross-modally, it must also be focused and tightened within its new context if it is to retain any analytic power. The chief difficulty in tracking the poetic as a principle, either into poetry's hybrid unions (intermedia) or along poetics' migratory transgressions (parapoetics), is tracking languaging as a vital role that must be re-filled within each new context. As a term, "visual poetry" means very little without an argument as to how the visuals themselves take up some portion of the language-like function involved in doing poetry. And "architectural poetics" is similarly crippled without an explanation of what discursive base architecture can offer to host the contaminant foreign principle.

2. Spatial Meaning Built Discourse

On this point Gins and Arakawa do go an important step further towards accommodating the label architectural poetics. In a key section of the "Procedural Architecture" chapter of *Architectural Body*, they elaborate their idea of a "closely argued built discourse,"

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[2]   I lay out one version of this argument in my article, "Resources for a Poetics of Visual Poetry," and in my dissertation, *Visual Poetics: Meaning Space from Mallarmé to Metalheart*.

and do so precisely in terms that substantiate the analogic parallel with a verbal poetics. They write:

> It is by relying on juxtaposed repeatable and re-combinable items that verbal discourse, with great sleight of mouth (or hand), encompasses and presents sequentially considered events. Modularly constructed areas and the architectural procedures they engender will be the juxtaposed repeatable and re-combinable items of a built discourse. (56-7)

They put significant effort into substantiating this parallel, carefully arguing that their architecture *is* discourse, while they could simply have invoked the looser metaphor of an "architectural language" and moved on. Their argument involves pointing to the systems of differences they mobilize both in the structure and appearance of spaces and in the "information states" these produce in the visitor as awareness. Contrasts between comparable units within the "closely argued" environments, and concomitantly between comparable sensory-motor and interpretive responses in the visitors, underwrite the capacity for inflection, for pointing out intended particulars within the field of features and occurrences and specifying them as the objects of an enunciation that has its own modes of deixis and reference to rely on. Experiencing a range of perceptible variables in an architectural surround would correspondingly articulate the range of perceptual and movement responses as a space of implicature, or in Arakawa and Gins's own terms "thrillingly yield a spectrum of body-wide knowing capable of physically manifesting cause and result or warrant and inference" (58).

> Discursive sequences of tactically posed surrounds, constructed as built propositions, marshal existing logical connectives and position newly invented ones into the "real," steering, regulating, and guiding interactions between body and bioscleave through three-dimensional THEREFOREs, BUTs, ORs, ANDs, and built-up WHATEVERs. (58-9)

From the perspective of linguistics or discourse theory, this parallel is still only sketchily drawn, but from the perspective of a strategizing of artistic means the commitment is clear. They are investing in a speculative analogy that will establish their architecture as a discourse, as a kind of building that shares certain crucial capacities with language. This becomes even clearer at the next level of resolution,

where they state directly that architectural procedures[3] have the place of words in this discourse: distinct, repeatable elements with specific or general import, "conveying" experiences as unitary moments in re-combinable patterns.[4] The tactically posed surrounds, then, which group procedure-eliciting structures into the experiential sequencing from which meanings emerge, amount to the "phrases, sentences, paragraphs and texts" of the built discourse.

The discourse Gins and Arakawa are concerned to establish relocates their previous efforts of reference and expression into an alternate field of meaning resources, one that, as we will see, has important implications for the efficacy of the communication they are attempting. What can be done with words and the vast syntactic infrastructure laid down to support their semantics is not the same as what can be done with walls and volumes and the presiding logics of bodily orientation and geographic suggestion. But the inverse is also true, and it is in the positive capacities of these modes of meaning that the artists have seen fit to invest the evolving poetics of their project. We can refer to the field of resources underwriting built discourse in general as a field of *spatial meaning*, distinct both from the lexical field underwriting verbal discourse and from any framing of a system of meanings based on the nominal identity and use of objects, though both of these also play a role in the total meaning experience of their architecture. Spatial meaning represents the specific novelty and challenge of an architectural poetics, in that any serious use of that term requires us to account for how a something called poetics can be done in the spatial medium proper to architecture.

It would be very difficult to say precisely what meaning content attributable to spatial modes of presentation or reception corresponds to a phrase or a paragraph, and what precision of enunciation would

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[3] An architectural procedure is both the movement-coordinating or orientating response of a bodymind to a tactically constructed space, and the affordance that space presents for calling forth that response. Architectural procedures, of which the "disperse to contrast" and "tentativeness cradling" procedures are the most established, are the central functional elements in Arakawa and Gins's architectural strategy. "An architectural procedure is a tool, and so too is the architectural surround into which it gets embedded" (*Making Dying Illegal* 156).

[4] Identifying architectural procedures with words seems misleading in at least this respect, that they are not the visible, legible elements of a built construction, but the invisible, potential construal responses supplied by the visitor/reader. Formulations concerning architectural procedures, therefore, would benefit from an articulation of the signifier-signified type.

justify identifying anything as the spatial equivalent of a sentence. And Gins and Arakawa do not say so. Such an attempt would quickly strain the analogy beyond its usefulness and certainly detract from the project of discovering and applying the resources of spatial meaning, resources whose value consists precisely in the sub-lexical and proto- (or ultra-)semantic traction they exert on the bodymind of architectural "readers." Having once established the idea of a built discourse, they do not return in this or other writings (so far) to further insist on the linguistic parallel, nor do linguistic terms take up a regular place in the terminology of procedural architecture. Within the larger argument of *Architectural Body*, the built discourse section seems to have served the purpose of an important thinking through of the critical, communicative basis of their practice, which, as they explain it, depends on a capacity to advance hypotheses, communicate observations, and ultimately effect targeted kinds of transformation in those who engage its products. And since their theorizing involves not just the identification of a communicative base but also the elaboration of specific, counter-conventional forms and devices (architectural procedures) aimed at producing particular effects, the larger theory served by this investment in a semiotic grounding clearly amounts to a poetics, in both loose and rigorous senses of that word.

3. Poetry and Efficacy

If this discourse, built as it is, is not doing poetry—what is it, then? Not poetry, because what it produces are not poems in any conventional sense. Yet it is carrying on a kind of communication that is a form of writing, and a communication carried out "poetically" by certain important standards. The know-how behind this is a poetics, then, in several senses. These senses are loose enough to accommo- date, without distortion, a serious usage of the term "architectural poetics," and yet robust enough to mean something useful when we allege that Arakawa and Gins have one. I think we can reasonably say that what they do, or the theory for it, is in fact as clear an instance as we could hope to find of this elusive, unlikely thing. But the poetics we are dealing with in their architecture will not be recognized in its genres and forms, but more likely in a certain approach to the question of efficacy. Just as for Kant the aesthetic is distinguished from the non-art crafts on the principle of "purposefulness without purpose,"

for Arakawa and Gins the art of their practice has a lot to do with the particular twist it plays on functionality. What Arakawa and Gins's discourse targets is not a lyricism but first an efficacy, achieved through communication, though that claim to efficacy has a lyricism of its own. The "poetic" aspects of their project, I would say, have primarily to do with the para-logical arc (or spiral) its acts of communication take. While on the one hand this angling is performed in literary English, on the other hand the communication propagates in and through matter, building materials, to effect changes at the most elemental levels of our embodiment and of our wiring for personhood. In their newest project, the "*Reversible Destiny* HOTEL," the last work they foresee completing in their lifetime[5], they envision lodgings for transient architectural bodies, given to a form of "architectural meditation" which will "in short order have you 'talking' for your great benefit with your own genes" ("*REVERSIBLE DESTINY* HOTEL" project description, Spring 2006).

If any doubt remained as to the legitimacy of bringing this discourse and the communication it serves under the rubric of poetics, they go yet one step further right where they draw the architecture-language parallel most tightly, and actually refer to their constructions as poems:

> Surely, as well, tactically posed surrounds will factor out as those poems that have ever eluded poets, poems through which those of us who wish to can save our own necks, poems that could only heretofore be intimated by an insufficiently procedural bioscleave. (*Architectural Body* 57)

If I have read carefully, this is the only place in *Architectural Body*, and one of only a few in all of their architectural writings, where cognates of the word "poetry" appear, and here four times in one sentence. The sentence seems to contradict my earlier assertion. If Nagi's Ryoanji or Yoro or the Mitaka appartments will factor out as poems, then certainly their creators are poets, and what they do is poetry, architectural poetry. But where Gins and Arakawa are fully literal about calling their mode of building a discourse, and both need and defend the implications of that claim, I think their calling their buildings "poems" here serves a more strictly rhetorical purpose. It

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[5]   In a telephone conversation between New York and Helsinki on December 26, 2005, Madeline Gins mentioned that this hotel would probably be the last project they accomplished in their life-times.

even hints at being a nod towards those who launched the discourse on architectural poetics at Salamanca and the NACIP, a nod that both takes up the terms of that discussion and redirects it. Because what they identify their constructions with are precisely poems that have never existed, poems of a kind intimated but never accomplished in the history of poetry as such, poems categorically beyond the reach of poets.

The distance separating poetry as traditionally (even experimentally) conceived and what Arakawa and Gins are doing now is described precisely by the path they took to get there, what they believe they are able to make as architects, what they hope already to have made if these factor out as poems, as those poems that had previously eluded them as well. For before they were architects they were, at least in part, poets. Madeline Gins' experimental writings in *Word Rain* (1969), Intend (1973/78), and *What the President Will Say and Do* (1984), the script of their jointly authored film, *For Example (A Critique of Never)* (1971) and the philosophical "lyrics" of their *Pour ne pas mourir/To Not to Die* (1987) can be identified quite unproblematically as poetic texts. *Word Rain*, for example, Gins's brilliant first book, is identified as a novel but is experimental, self-reflexive, even lyrical enough to qualify as poetry by many standards, and clearly deserves to be seen as one of the gems of 20th Century experimental literature. Even Arakawa's early painting and their long-run joint work *The Mechanism of Meaning* (1969-1988) have been received in certain cases as poetry[6], and have had some influence in literary circles. So the logic behind their move into architecture, and behind their decision sometime around 1988 to commit exclusively to architecture, should articulate quite precisely what's different about the new practice that suddenly makes this marvelous, elusive and neck-saving kind of poem achievable.

The logic of that movement, as I suggested earlier, is a logic of increasing efficacy. Between *Word Rain* and the full-blown Reversible Destiny constructions, it is possible to trace a substantial continuity of themes and strategies; what changes most notably is the scale of sensory impact in the presentation. *Word Rain*, to start there, takes the process of reading as narrative premise for a playful, dis-

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[6] For example in the *Poetry Plastique* exhibition of visual poetry curated by Jay Sanders and Charles Bernstein; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York City, 2000.

orienting and hyper-reflexive rehearsal of the process of reading itself. It does with verbal reading much of what the later architecture will do with orientation and the construal of physical spaces. The narrator, who is constantly addressing the reader in the first person, is herself a reader interminably working her way through a manuscript that may well be the manuscript of *Word Rain* itself, though through prominent and frequent quotation it always seems she is reading something else, which we are of course reading with her. As she reads we are led to confuse not only her "I" with ours, but also all the frames required for keeping the world of the manuscript distinct from the world of the narrator, one usage of a multivalent word from the others, perceptions of the narrator's physical surroundings from her perceptions of the inner, mental environment of reading, her reading from her thinking, and her reading from her thinking about reading. Furthermore, the act of reading is depicted as something intensively physical, both in bodily terms (sweat, eye movements, indigestion, sitting posture, the positioning of furniture in the room, the smell of paper) and in the palpability of the material metaphors she deploys to narrate the inner workings of reading (waft, platform, quay, rostrum, ropy gas shavings, fibers, and of course the word rain).

In these themes and strategies we can see much of what is kept as the migration proceeds from literary text to verbal-visual panels and then to architecture. The invention of puzzles to force awareness and active claiming of the processes of meaning-making, the interest in rendering the embodied, sited nature of thought and awareness not only apparent but inescapably felt, the strategy of systematically canceling and contradicting one set of frames or interpretive/ orientational hypotheses by another, the mixing and conflictual address of different sensory/cognitive modalities, the interest to track attention (and with it contextualization) in its instantaneous, category-collapsing movement across scales, the long-range strategy to neutralize subjectivity, even the central theory of landing sites, which emerged in the 90s to undergird their emerging architectural body theory but was already present in 1969 in the metaphor of platforms. These amount to core interests and concerns that are not displaced by the move from one set of means to another, but rather motivate it. Separated from the specifically literary enterprise of an experimental novel, or from the painterly enterprise of Arakawa's work during the same period, they reveal themselves as facets of a poetics that can continue to animate

works designed for different modes of presentation. And as the pedagogical/ transformational import of these themes and strategies clarifies for both Arakawa and Gins, ultimately becoming the earnestness of their radical proposal that not to die is an attainable outcome of what had formerly passed for aesthetic contemplation, they gain the clarity of a critical standard for evaluating the available artistic means according to efficacy.

Of Arakawa's foundational large-format philosophical paintings, and of the abstract graphical language they feature, Madeline Gins writes in *Helen Keller or Arakawa*: "Jottings and memos having to do with what anything in the world consists of should be made large, even enterable" (89). With embodiment a key to unpuzzling the puzzles these paintings present, efficacy clearly correlates with scale and perceptual immersiveness. This principle also serves to explain Gins's own participation in the *Mechanism of Meaning* project, where her writerly strategies of provoking reflexive awareness in the reader meet Arakawa's painterly ones and are retooled with a fuller range of meaning materials (graphics, images, textures, objects, gadgets) and a mode of presentation on large-scale canvas panels that are literally and necessarily *enterable* texts. And while this project may still be the best-known phase of their work, and continues to serve them as a core fund of conceptual formulations, the third and final published edition of the panels from 1988 ends with a "Review and Self-Criticism" and with architectural drawings that express their conclusion that even this project has proven its insufficiency. They say the need they feel to shift results from a reconceptualizing of their project, and from a redefining of what they had been after all along. Before, they strove to produce "a model of thought" after which to construct a "field of sensibility" (*Mechanism* 6), requiring them to expand the dimensionality both of their presentation and of the participation they expect and illicit from the "reader."

This field of sensibility and the art/construction that will serve it, because of the philosophical issues concerned, but also because of the transformative efficacy desired, is necessarily architectural, and architecture is seen as the inevitable next step in a presentational logic that had previously committed them to oversized painting and mixed-media works. In *Architectural Body* we read an updating of the earlier formulation concerning Arakawa's paintings:

> We contend that philosophical puzzles cannot be solved short of a thorough architectural reworking. It is necessary to track how a world comes to be organized in the vicinity of the human organism. Questions need to be asked in a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree way. Context is all, and all contexts lead to the architectural context, newly conceived. (xiv)

In the introduction to *Architectural Body*, we are told that architecture is the human race's "greatest tool for learning how not to die" (xi), and so it is the obvious and only choice of medium for a project that conceives this as its goal and meaning. It is also, a little less obviously, the medium in which the true ambition of poetry is to be realized, and for the same reason. This claim, which is what that provocative sentence equating tactically posed surrounds with poems amounts to, asks us to locate the unfulfilled dream of all poets in the project of not dying. It will probably not be long before someone, responding to this provocation, will write the history of poetry as the pre-history of Reversible Destiny; a project half completed in the tradition that reads literature as the history of lamenting death. All I propose to do in the space remaining is to suggest how the core themes and strategies of Arakawa and Gins's (now architectural) project, their (architectural) poetics, connect to core ambitions of modern poetry, and how those in turn can be linked to the project of reversible destiny, and the peculiar efficacy it seeks. Then we can start asking how it works.

4. Efficacy's Legacies

The theme of reflexive awareness is our *fil conducteur* here, our connecting thread. As I said, it represents a core continuity of their project from *Word Rain* and the early paintings, through *The Mechanism of Meaning*, and on to the most recent formulations of their architectural theory. What they write of projected reversible destiny parks within future reversible destiny cities may stand here as a slogan for their whole body of reader-resistant, reader-enhancing work since the beginning:

> Comfort is no longer a factor. That it might take several hours to go from one room to another in a reversible destiny house is of no importance as long as the sensibility of the person traversing the room flowers and catches on itself in transit (Arakawa 241)

This formulation evidences the link between their theorizing of reading and its epiphanic rewards in direct line with the key literary precedents. For Mallarmé, too, awareness of awareness was the motivating theme and the object of his technical innovations. For him the reflexive epiphany made possible through the mobilization of a language reflecting language, of devices of disappearance enabling a poem like *Un coup de dés* to mean nothing but meaning, was what remained of mystical ambition in an age beyond the death of God and the Christian promise. The hope motivating his poetry and informing his poetics was that of a revelation of the Word through words, of Logos as a principle of cosmic and cognitive order palpably manifest in the logic and patterning of meanings achieved through poetry,

> afin qu'un jour … le Verbe apparaisse derrière son moyen du langage, rendu à la physique et à la physiologie, comme un Principe, dégagé, adéquat au Temps et à l'Idée. (in order that one day… the Word may appear from behind its medium of language, delivered into physics and physiology, as a Principle, extricated, adequate to Time and the Idea.) ("Préface à 'Un coup de dés'" 384)

Minus some of the hieratic tone, but without substantial distortion, we could name this Principle "the mechanism of meaning," especially as that re-incarnates more physiologically in the sited awareness of an architectural body, of a thinking with the whole body as Mallarmé himself intimated. Like Arakawa and Gins, Mallarmé was after a model of thought that emerged as a field of sensibility.

The literary legacy of desire to observe the workings of consciousness connects back to even more distant roots in the past of experimental poetry. With Wordsworth, for example, at the height of Romanticism, a poet's introspection onto the function of his own mind claimed status as the epic narrative of its (post-)revolutionary age, promising, in line with the romantic logic, the emergence of a new heaven and a new earth through powers inherent in the perceptual processes. Scrutiny into the mechanism of meaning as that which is manifested particularly in the phenomena of subjective coloring and symbolic communion emerged during the romantic period as a concern that would prove nearly permanent in Western poetry thereafter. And central to that ongoing concern is fascination with the transformative efficacy attributed to adjustments to sentience; for example Blake: "For the eye altering, alters all." As language was ascribed the capacity to sharpen and shift perception, allowing an ex-

perience to have its transformative impact, poetry was credited with the power of altering concrete realities. Where Wordsworth or Blake or Shelley dreamed of the changing of earthly regimes and human society, another strain of this logic invested in hopes of not dying. Such canonical poetic moments as the Ancient Mariner's vision of the sea snakes in Coleridge's poem, or the effortful epiphany of his "Dejection: an Ode," or the despondent Keats' encounter with the nightingale in that other famous ode, are all moments where the poet's ever-threatening destiny of death by despair and loss of meaning is reversed in the clarity and penetration of a simple perception. Rilke's requiem for the suicide of Wolfgang von Kalckreuth and Sylvia Plath's "Black Rook in Rainy Weather" show how robustly the poetics of this salvational efficacy continue up to more recent times.

> had someone occupied,
> occupied in the inmost of his being,
> but quietly met you on your dumb departure
> to do this deed; had even something led you
> to take your journey past some wakeful workshop
> where men were hammering and day achieving
> simple reality; had there been room
> enough in your full gaze to let the image
> even of a toiling beetle find admittance:
> you would have read the script whose characters
> you'd slowly graved into yourself since childhood,
> trying from time to time whether a sentence
> might be formed: alas, it seemed unmeaning.
>
> - O ancient curse of poets!
> Being sorry for themselves instead of saying,
> for ever passing judgement on their feeling
> instead of shaping it … Invalids,
> using a language full of woefulness
> to tell us where it hurts, instead of sternly
> transmuting into words those selves of theirs,
> as imperturbable cathedral carvers
> transposed themselves into the constant stone.
> That would have been salvation. Had you once
> perceived how fate may pass into a verse
> and not come back, how, once in, it turns image,
> nothing but image, …
> you would have persevered.
> But this is petty,
> thinking of what was not….
> Who talks of victory? To endure is all. (Rilke)

It is some continuance of these metaphysics that informs the more formally radical tradition of literary experimentalism that links Arakawa and Gins back to the late Mallarmé by way of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry and the early modern avant-garde. The notion articulated famously by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, that "the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group"[7] (Whorf 134), informs a tactics of poetic innovation that sees in radical play with language a radical leverage for changing reality by way of the intervening mentality of human beings. Viktor Shklovsky's seminal "Art as Technique" (1917) plays the role of linking the revolutionary romantic logic of freshness of perception with the 20th Century (constructivist) task of resituating artistic effort and innovation in the technical means of art production, in this case in the constructive mechanics of language itself. The promises of the romantic model of poetic efficacy could be said to revolve largely around the power of the image, enabled by an enhanced perception, to *stand for* something whose power is inherently effective. The image, perceived adequately for it to function in its capacity as symbol, thus transmits something (real) into reality by means of an appearance. The experimental modernist model, by contrast, where that can be distinguished from the romantic model which persists, identifies reality as merely a mode of appearance, and ascribes to the mechanics that mediate appearance an efficacy over the production of reality. While Shklovsky, like Imagism in its way, is still concerned with enhancing perception of the image, the instrumentalization of poetic language to which he contributes is part of a branching that seeks transformational efficacy not in the power of an image to "bring about" some reality, but in the possibilities of modulating reality through affecting the mechanics of its constitution via appearances. As strategies for poetic efficacy the one model invests in semantics, the other in syntax; the one in meaningful objects, the other in meaning systems.

The apotheosis of this latter model, certainly relative to our purpose of contextualizing the poetics of Arakawa and Gins's architecture, is to be found in the writing of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets. L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry is the immediate literary fact that conditions reception of their work since the 80's as poetry or

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[7] Edward Sapir quoted by Benjamin Whorf.

poetry-related[8], though individually and as a team they start before L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E and pursue the overlapping concerns within a critically distinct framework. Despite the differences, considering parallels with the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E movement offers us useful ways of understanding how the poetics that persists in their architecture compares (in terms of priorities and strategies) to poetry proper. Furthermore, contextualizing their poetics this way may provide useful assistance in coming to understand the fabulous, by now notorious claim of reversible destiny. That claim, rather more than an oddness in the fact that they are applying their poetics in/as architecture, is the thing that sets Arakawa and Gins so far apart from all the other poets and artists we might relate them to. And yet I think the same basic claim is alive in the background theory and in the metaphysical unconscious of the poets they leave behind. Heirs to both romantic and constructivist dreams of efficacy, to Coleridge and Shklovsky, the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writers cannot help but mix a little semiotic millennialism in with their rigorous formal experimenting, and in one way of seeing things, Arakawa and Gins are only taking this latency to its fullest explicit conclusions.

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing claims and is ascribed many "liberatory" properties. At the same time it is often accused of being academic and esoteric. Where its claims to a liberatory impact outstrip its obvious social and political relevance, I would say, is where the efficacies it seeks to mobilize are most clearly parallel to those of Arakawa and Gins. In defining the paratactic "new sentence" he sees as emblematic of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing, for example, Ron Silliman specifies its function of disrupting readerly procedures of semantic integration so as to draw attention to those procedures themselves, to the mean*ing* where the meant is never confirmed. In the essay "Migratory Meaning," Silliman examines devices that effect an equivalent disruption at semantic levels below that of the full sentence, and goes on to generalize the use of such devices as the defining poetic strategy of his generation. The strategy as he defines it

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[8]   Witness Charles Bernstein's ongoing witness to their work, reviewing *The Mechanism of Meaning* for L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E in 1971, devoting a substantial essay to Arakawa's painting, "Words and Pictures", collected in *Content's Dream*, interviewing Madeline Gins for the *Linebreak* audio series, and including their work in the visual poetry exhibition *Poetry Plastique,* curated together with Jay Sanders in 2001. Other language poets who have written about their work include Steve McCaffery, Nick Piombino, and Hank Laser.

consists in deploying semantic elements that project reference frames for an eventual integration that is then systematically frustrated by the failure of subsequent elements to confirm those frames, and by the new, contradictory frames they project instead. Taken a little bit out of context, Silliman's technical description of these devices might easily be mistaken for an explanation of the disorientation effects allegedly experienced in a Reversible Destiny construction. Both strategies deploy elements that illicit expectations and the tentative projection of frames promising a coherent integration of subsequent elements, and both focus the tools of their craft on destabilizing each frame in turn so that no integration is possible beyond the sheer continuity of attention and effort at construal.

What Lyn Hejinian, in an analysis closely parallel to Silliman's, calls "the rejection of closure" is a widespread poetic priority of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E (and of its precedents and post-scripts), with more than a superficial similarity to the architectural-poetic priorities of Arakawa and Gins. In line with the experimental-modernist model of efficacy I referred to above, rejecting closure can be understood not merely as isolating a new range of poetic effects in the play of disjunctive language, but as intervening in the mode of reality-formation over which language presides. Semantic closure is of course not just the end of a certain kind of reading experience; it is also a core engrained coping device for knowing the world and acting within it. Refusing the readerly demand for closure, learning to leave coherence and determinate integration suspended, is seen not merely as a source of alternatives to the apparent, objectionable coherences in which reality currently manifests itself to us, but even more significantly as a way of intervening in that reality by retraining the cognitive mechanisms we apply or do not apply to its formation. This is the efficacy on which L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing's more esoteric claims to relevance rest, and if language truly plays the constitutive role L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writers tend to ascribe to it, and if literary reading/writing are effective means of retooling the mechanisms of constitution, then their writing might truly be expected to change things.

Rejection of closure, called by another name, lies at the heart of the poetics which Arakawa and Gins transport into, and develop as architecture. Their name for it is "tentativeness," which in some of their writings appears as *the* key to the trick or promise of not dying:

"staying current with bioscleave, remaining alive as part of it, involves keeping pace with the tentativeness it brings to bear…" (*Architectural Body* 49). Elsewhere they make the same point more directly, calling tentativeness "authoritative for human life." Authoritative for human life, tentativeness is therefore at the heart of their poetics understood both as their toolkit of devices and techniques, and in the sense of the meaning experiences their work targets. Only, where the postmodernism of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry risks applying indeterminacy to little purpose beyond supply of a few by-now standardized "L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E" styles, in the trans-humanism of Arakawa and Gins it points the way straight to not dying.

The devices Arakawa and Gins employ in targeting tentativeness parallel the literary devices of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing, of experimental poetics in its L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E moment, as does the analysis suggesting these devices could prove efficacious in changing life and the world we co-constitute. These devices, architecturally applied, are "poetic" not only by virtue of this family resemblance with experimental literature, nor just because at least one of the artists used to do poetry. Rather they and the project they are applied in are poetic also because they share something fundamentally "linguistic" with the poetics of poets who use words. Devices produce effects (perceptual, emotional), and you have aesthetics. Devices produce meanings, and those meanings string into tactically constructed patterns, and you have poetics. The architectural devices applied in Reversible Destiny buildings operate not only on the spatial *feeling* of a surround, the values of volume, angle and placement as they interface us in the sensory array, but also on the spatial *meaning*, on the implicature effected percept by percept as body encounters construction. Percepts accrue not merely to a shifting whole of presentness (image or atmosphere), but impinge also into the process, into our articulate and systematized construal of the space as space, our reading it. If feeling and meaning involve separable levels of cognitive response, and this is disputable, there is a use for distinguishing aesthetics from poetics, and in view of this divide the "art" of Arakawa and Gins's architecture, the "technics" that diverges it from conventional functionality to deliver a surplus of meaning or a twist, a meta-level meaning about meaning in general, would have to be considered a poetics. Because this poetics is being applied in architec-

ture, and could not be applied in language alone, it is proper to call it an architectural poetics.

Viewed this way, Arakawa and Gins's architecture of built works is (or involves) a poetics in the same sense that a writer's design-activity and know-how are a poetics. But if there is an evolution, there is an exponential leap, and these poetics are not equivalent. Arakawa and Gins ascribe an efficacy to their built constructions that steps them and their communication a whole scale beyond writing in the sheer potential of the mediality. While Arakawa and Gins have left, in the course of their development, (strictly) literary practice behind, this persists not just in habits of thought and language, but more by design in their positioning of their new modes as in fact the culmination of literary experiment. They do not make this claim directly, and as artists they are strikingly uninvested in the detailing of any literary, or even artistic legacies (linkage to Duchamp being the prominent exception), yet to think their (current) relation to literary poetics is to acknowledge that the architectural (poetic) efficacies they claim for their work put them a substantial step beyond literature along the path of one of literature's own favorite self-fabled development narratives, that of an increasing efficacy in poetic means. Poetics as a cousin of rhetoric has for long sought the key to total medial efficacy since its dawnings, along trajectories traced by the magical or rationalist, religious or constructivist logics of efficacy that have underpinned it at various stages. Wordsworth's "lyrical ballads" experiment and Imagism are both knots in the rope connecting Arakawa and Gins to a core longing of European poetics in the modern period. The theory inherited along these literary root-lines, and along root-lines that branch equally through the visual art and design cultures informing Arakawa's practice, involves a transformation soteriology that has never been phrased so largely, claimed so explicitly and formally evolved towards, as in the work of Arakawa and Gins. What remains vague aesthetic mysticism in Mallarmé and critical-theoretical assertion in L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, stands out in strange brash explicitness as this architectural theory and practice claim a key to not dying.

Whether I am right to project Reversible Destiny back as a latency into the developmental desire of experimental literary practice, whether Arakawa and Gins's statement that tactically posed surrounds are the poems that have always eluded poets are grounds enough for

me to do so, may still need deciding. But I think is undisputable that an epochal step must be acknowledged between the main currents of experimental poetics and this practice, How these unprecedented claims to efficacy are taken, and to what extent the works for which they are made are successful at fulfilling them: these are other questions. As an aesthetic strategy to operate a transformational efficacy, though, we can say that Arakawa and Gins's Reversible Destiny architecture has reset the bar for claims of efficacy in "poetic" practice. This parallelism relating their architecture to experimental verbal poetries, however close, breaks down in one important way, which seems to make all the difference. Without making an independent evaluation of the efficacy of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writing to change reality, we can read Arakawa and Gins's project as a rejection, on principle, of any such claim. In their view the true poem of the overcoming of dying, the poem they claim all poets are after, will continue to elude those who rely on language's limited efficacies to achieve this ultimate of all outcomes. Only the body—that which does/is the living, as opposed to that which articulates it and describes—presents a medial base broad and deep enough to change life in the one way they claim every poet, and person, really wants.

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"Autopoietic Event Matrices" in Architecture and in Literature:
Wordsworth talks to Arakawa and Gins

Fionn C. Bennett

Houses were not the only things Arakawa reduces to what looks like rubbish. So also were the notions of subjectivity and objectivity. For when they are absorbed into the "bioscleave" Arakawa uses architecture to create, they cease being discrete "honest to goodness entities." Instead they are transformed into transitory and ever altering "events" that get made into a person and a correlative world through how they happen to each other. But this adventure in architecture also raises a number of questions, especially about the "autopoietic system" which allows the event which "persons" and the one which "worlds" to interface and interpoetize each other: if person and world do not predate happening to each other, then *what* are the "events" they are made out of? *What* makes them interface and interpoetize each other? *Where* and by what modalities is their happening happening? And *how* did it come about that events became "accidents" of subjects and objects? Here philosophy can help us, for it is responsible for creating the reified world Arakawa and Gins remind us is not a fatality. It is therefore where we need to direct our questions to find out how it ceased being normal to experience personhood and worldhood the way they are experienced in Arakawa and Gins' "bioscleave." Where philosophy cannot help us, however, is in replicating in non-architectural domains the effects Gins says Arakawa produces in architecture. That is easier to accomplish with literature, especially the kind that allies itself to Wordsworth's ideas on the vocation of the poet and finality of his art.

Keywords: Autopoietic systems; Eleaticism and language; Onomastics; Aetiology of the subject-object relationship; The spatiality intrinsic to language; Post-structuralist resistance to metaphysics; Overcoming metaphysics viably; *Sein-zum-Tode*.

> It must never be forgotten that we don't know what we are in the first place.
>
> If bound to error one is, then choose always, when judging what merits inclusion, to err in the direction of being overly inclusive.
>
> − *Architectural Body*

1. Do Arakawa and Gins Promote 'Presocratic Architecture'?

Philosophically, ours is a time characterized by a "double negative": by a "no longer" and a "not yet," or by a "used to be" and a "yet to be." Despite their equivocalness, epithets like "postmodern," "post-philosophical" and "poststructuralist" indicate, as well as not, the times we have left behind. It is difficult to say which appellation will suit the epoch to come. Certainly, little is presaged in the debate among contemporary philosophers on how we should respond to the fateful question, "*De quoi demain sera-t-il fait?*" Perhaps it is best that way. After all, who today would trust a philosopher to construct their tomorrow? Besides, it is not certain philosophy would not benefit, perhaps enormously, from being "reordered" by non-philosophy. It may even be that there is no other way to save it, which is why visionaries like Arakawa and Gins are perhaps vital, for they do not limit themselves to the resources of philosophy to address the challenge of constructing tomorrow. They use architecture instead, and no ordinary architecture either. For with it they aim at nothing less than the restoration of an experience of Being-a-person Being-in-the-world that philosophy is responsible for making us forsake and forget. In fact, they are trying to restore a pre-philosophical and indeed a "Presocratic" experience of Being. To be convinced, one only has to compare what Arakawa and Gins make us feel in the "sensorium" they create in architecture with the way we are supposed to have experienced Being-in-the-world prior to Plato. A convenient reference for making such a comparison is the Platonic dialogue entitled *Theatetus*, in particular the passage in it referred to as "the mystery of the Initiated" (152d-154a, 156a-157c, 179e-180d).

Except for a detail or two, what is described in this passage is identical to the way person and "surround" are experienced in Arakawa and Gins' "Architectural Body Event Matrix." In the Event Matrix, for example, there is the completest absence of the conditions that have to obtain to be able to speak of subjects or objects or any other kind of "honest to goodness entity."[1] And just like in the Architectural Body surround, we have to do with an inter-poiesis of percipient and perception as and when and only for so long as they are

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[1]   "We end up conjoining, as it were, Berkeley's dissolution of physical objects into a series of ideas perceived with Hume's dissolution of the self into a series of perceptions" (Burnyeat 18-9). See also McDowell 143-5. Comp. Arakawa and Gins 66.

in contact.[2] And no less here than in the Architectural Body senso-rium, it is better to speak about what's going on as 'processual' rather than as an entelechic "state of affairs."[3]

So because the Event Matrix makes us feel what *Architectural Body* says it makes us feel, it makes us experience Being-in-the-world the way we used to be able to experience it but have ceased experiencing it because of philosophy. For, again, what is described in the "mystery of the Initiated" is how the world was experienced before philosophy monopolized our interpretation of Being-a-person and Being-in-the-world.

Now, all this should be cause for celebration. We should rejoice in the prospect that the night-time of what Nietzsche called "the longest error" (Nietzsche 50-1) may at last be coming to an end and that, finally, someone is using more than mere words to make that dawn possible. But our rejoicing should be tempered by a couple of concerns that certain opportunities are being missed and that certain dangers are not being missed. To specify the opportunities and dangers I am thinking of, I will limit myself to a couple of remarks about the way *Architectural Body* characterizes itself as an "Auto-poietic Event Matrix." One remark concerns the *limit* between the Ma-trix and its outside. It will consider how much "education" this Matrix can offer us about "what goes into being a person" if it is as implacably celibate and prophylactic as the authors of *Architectural Body* seem to desire. A second remark will reflect on the *existential implications* of the Reversible Destiny project and wonder if the Cumean Sibyl cited in the epigraph of *The Waste Land* wasn't thinking of this kind of immortality when she uttered her shocking "I want to die." Yet another remark will ponder whether this Matrix is as much a place we can go to *to 'escape' philosophy* as is claimed. After all, we would not want to sell *Architectural Body* as a panacea for all the ills of philosophy if more needed to be done to make that claim credible.

Prior to entering into a discussion on these points, however, it would be advisable, I believe, to be sure about the "wrongs" of philosophy everyone today is trying to "set right": how in the world did philosophy ever become responsible for creating the world that

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[2] *Theaetetus* 156a-b, 160a. Comp. Arakawa and Gins 10, 27-9 & *passim*.

[3] *Theaetetus* 157b. Comp. Arakawa and Gins 66.

makes the Architectural Body sensorium necessary as an antidote? As this question concerns our strange habit of modulating our experience of ourselves as "subjects" and the content of our "surrounds" as a collection of "objects," we have no choice but to begin our story with a strange poem, indeed a scandalous one. I refer to Parmenides of Elea's versified fable about his encounter with *Aletheia*, the Goddess of Truth. With good cause, some accuse this poem of being responsible for the creation of the reific world Arakawa and Gins help us escape. These accusers suggest that the poem was successful in this because of the way it was able to 'annex' words and language and 'suborn' them to the advantage of the uncompromisingly anti-natural ontology promulgated in this poem,[4] All of which requires some explanation.

2. The Aetiology of the Subject-Object Relationship: The Incubus of Eleatism

Simplistically, but not altogether without reason[5], the proponents of the naturalistic philosophy then in vogue interpreted this poem as affirming the outrageous idea that the natural world and the things we encounter in it do not exist and that what does exist is in a place and of a kind no man could ever encounter. The poem was successful in making the natural philosophers take the proposition seriously by forcing them to recognize a contradiction between two of their most cherished *doxai*. These *doxai* were, first, that Being is restricted

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[4]   In the pages which follow, I will interpret the history of philosophy—and in particular the effects this history has had on language—as though the following passage from the *Twilight of the Idols* revealed something essential about it: "Today we are *necessitated* to error, to precisely the extent that our prejudice in favour of reason compels us to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, materiality, being. … Nothing, in fact, has hitherto had a more direct power of persuasion than the error of being as it was formulated by, for example, the Eleatics: for every word, every sentence we utter speaks in its favour!—Even the opponents of the Eleatics were still subject to the seductive influence of their concept of being" (Nietzsche 47-8).

[5]   The relationship between the poem and philosophy is, of course, extremely ambiguous. Philosophy likes to consider it one of its founding texts. Which is false in the sense that, in the mouth of Parmenides himself, it bespeaks mantical, mystical, chthonic and shamanistic influences. In other words, things philosophy had to exorcise in order to become what we know it to be (Gernet 242-4, Vernant 386). Still, legitimate or not, its adoption by philosophy as what we call Eleaticism cannot be denied. Besides, as we're interested in the 'wrongs' of philosophy, it isn't what *Parmenides* meant in the poem that's important, only what *philosophy*, rightly or wrongly, thought he meant.

exclusively to what one finds in the natural world and, second, that the constituents of the natural world are finite, particulate and mortal.

What is problematic about simultaneously maintaining these two affirmations is the implication that Non-Being is an indispensable predicate of the only thing that is supposed to exist. For what else could natural beings come-to-be *from* and perish *towards* if not Non-Being? And because Non-Being is essential to the composition and operations of the natural world, it ceases to be credible to say that this latter is anything that "really" exists. For by Parmenides' reckoning, whatever "really" exists has to "*wholly* exist," just as what does not exist has to "*wholly not* exist."[6] Consequently, to "wholly exist," the natural world would have to have *no* relationship to Non-Being. In other words, it shouldn't be possible for its contents to come-to-be and pass-away. And as that is manifestly not the case, the natural world "wholly does not exist." Furthermore, once it is accepted that the natural world and its constituent phenomena are what does "not exist," then if anything *does* exist, its properties would have to be the exact opposite of those that characterize the phenomena populating the "inexistent" natural world. Meaning that whatever "truly exists"—e.g. "the Eleatic One"—has to be birthless, deathless, timeless, changeless, motionless, unique, and homogeneous for it is the contrary of these attributes which characterize natural beings.

Again, these "scandalous" arguments could not be ignored or disputed for they were based on contradictions between affirmations no one was prepared to relinquish or even compromise on, which meant that if there was any hope of being able to combat the idea that the natural world and the people living in it did not exist, there was only one possible solution: the natural world had to be reinterpreted in terms of the Eleatic definition of Being. In other words, to be able to predicate anything in the natural world with "Being," it had to be either a replica of the "Eleatic One" or exhibit one of its essential characteristics.

Now, it does not matter if one calls philosophy's attempts to resolve the Eleatic Elenchus a "naturalised Eleatism" or an "Eleatised naturalism," for either way philosophy since Parmenides has been opposed to the idea of anyone having a relation to nature or to themselves that is not profoundly Eleatic. And this matters to us today

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[6] Cf. Diels-Kranz fragment 28 B 8, ll. 11, 16, 24.

because philosophers were not satisfied with idle gigantomachic chatter about what-is and what-is-not. They wanted more. They wanted to make it impossible for their audience to perceive the world and experience who they are without philosophy's help. And because of philosophy's debt to its reading of Parmenides' strange poem, the more it was able to gain control over our perceptions and experience, the more Eleatic became our world and the more Eleatic we became. For, again, philosophy had convinced itself that it is only through being replicants or predicates of the "Eleatic One" that it is possible for people, things and events to "truly exist."

But How? How was philosophy able to "Eleatise" our per-ceptions of the world and our experience of ourselves?

3. The Eleatic Annexation of *Logos*: Towards An "Onomastic" Language and How This Affects Our Experience of Being-in-the-World

It does so by way of a new *Logos*. One which enabled its users to have a relationship to what and how they and their world would have to be in order to constitute entities which "truly exist." Which does not mean this new *Logos* had to cease being relevant to the natural world and, consequently, useless for the purposes of the men living in it. Only that it had to represent the contents of the natural world the way it would be experienced if it were populated by nothing but replicants of the Eleatic One. Philosophy accomplished this existence trans-forming linguistic *tour de force* with a new determination of the name or *onoma*.

As a linguistic category, philosophy allows *onomata* to belong to a number of classes. It also recognises that names can be polysemic and ambiguous. But polysemic and multipurpose though they may be, names nevertheless have a specificity. They *identify* things and events and they do so *univocally*. That is to say, they make sure there is no ambiguity about the "essence" or "quiddity" names refer us to (Der-rida, *Margins of Philosophy* 247-8). And, of course, this "quiddity" names are supposed to illuminate is not anything about yourself or your surround you could ever actually experience. Only something you would have to be what an Eleat would acknowledge as something that actually exists, which is why philosophy's language constrains us to speak of ourselves as "subjects" and our world as an ensemble of

"objects," for it is with nouns which identify phenomena as objects and people as subjects that philosophy was able to make you and your world replicants of the Eleatic conception of Being[7].

And we cannot suppose that because philosophy's logos includes more than substantives it offers us the possibility of a non-Eleatic relationship to the world and ourselves. We cannot do so because all non-nominal parts of speech are "syncategoremic." In other words, they have no other purpose than to constitute, qualify, quantify, situate, activate, vehiculate, differentiate, predicate or otherwise articulate the noun. Alternately, they will not let us mean anything if they do not make us refer to a noun signifying an essence[8]. So, again, philosophy deprives us of a relationship to ourselves and to the world that is not Eleatic and it does so with a determination of language that subordinates all non-nominal parts of speech to the substantive and the substantive to an essentially Eleatic conception of Being. Alternately, the content of our respective surrounds co-operates with philosophy's language in allowing itself to be reduced to objects and this language allows its speakers to have a world. Otherwise, it allows them no world. Similarly, *you* co-operate with philosophy's language in referring to yourself as a subject, and it helps you to identify who or what you are. Otherwise it prevents you from identifying yourself.

Of course, this does not mean that the 'non-philosophy' philosophy and its *logos* attempt to abolish from themselves are thereby abolished. Nor does it mean that non-philosophy is absent from philosophy's language. In fact, the former is continuously erupting within the latter in the most surprising and often troubling of ways. But, ultimately, philosophy and its language remain unaffected by these onslaughts, not because the former does anything to deflect the latter, but only because philosophy gives itself the means to absorb non-philosophy as an 'other' of itself that it actually enjoys being around. What are those means? How does philosophy supply itself with the non-philosophical company it is pleased to have? The answer

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[7] At the origin of the grammatical categories called the 'subject' and the 'object' is the Aristotelian notion of "substrate" or "*hypokeimenon*" (Iledefonse 80, 86-7). In virtue of its links to the notions of "*ousia*," of "*to ti en einai*," and of "*to eidos to kata ton logon*," the Aristotelian *hypokeimenon* is, without any doubt, the descendant of the Platonic "*ontos on*" and thereby of the Eleatic conception of Being.

[8] For a discussion of the philosophic origins of the subordination of syncategoremic parts of speech to the noun, see Aubenque 119, 194-5 & Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* 236, 240-3.

is, with "non-serious," "performative," "enthymemic," and above all "metaphorical" uses of language.[9] What we call poetry, literature, rhetoric and comedy, uses of language which allow philosophy to interface with affect, alterity, absurdity, dream and deviance. Not the real thing, of course. Not the horror inspiring pudenda of "the irrational". Only a defanged, declawed and "disenfranchised" expression of philosophy's other[10]. Which means that 'non-serious' forms of language are not what Arthur Danto would call "disturbatory." In other words, they are no more successful in transporting non-philosophy *into* philosophy than they are in transporting their users *out* of philosophy. They are merely the means philosophy allows the users of its language to have so they can enjoy the *illusion* of meaning something "other" than or even contrary to philosophical meaning but that fail to be other in as much as it is their relationship to a philosophical determination of meaning that confers on them all the meaning they have or could have.

Obviously, the foregoing is far from a complete or even adequate "aetiology" of the Subject-Object relation and of its stranglehold over language. Missing from it is an account of what was added, subtracted and modified by philosophers subsequent to Parmenides. Also wanting is an account of the way linguists and, above all, grammarians adopted this heritage and "administered" language accordingly.[11] But incomplete though it may be, it at least gives us an idea of the linguistic challenge *Architectural Body* is up against.

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[9]   The philosophical determination of the expressive functions of the metaphor is a consequence of its definition in Aristotle's *Poetics*, 1457b 6-9 & *Rhetoric*, III ii, 1, 5, 7. Some dispute the viability of philosophy's attempts to monopolise the metaphor (Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* 207-71; Ricœur 19-61). Others are less sanguine and, more realistically, tend to see philosophy's co-optation of the metaphor as virtually impossible to challenge (Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* 89 and, on Deleuze, Lecercle 25-7).

[10]   Here we are making ours the views expressed by Arthur Danto in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*. Especially his view that "the philosophical status assigned by philosophy to art" is responsible for the belief that art and poetry "make nothing happen." Not, of course, because they are powerless to do so, but because the philosophers recognized, and dreaded, their ability "to modify the minds and then the actions of men and women" and took the "aesthetic" measures required to prevent that from happening (Danto 11sq.).

[11]   Useful information on the relationship between Eleatism and philosophy can be found in Palmer. For an up to date treatment of the relationship between philosophy and the history of language, see Lallot; Schmitter; Ildefonse.

4. Eleatism and Architectural Body

We know that the ambition of the Architectural Body project is to offer us an experience of Being-a-person Being-in-the-world radically unlike the philosophically sanctioned alternative, something which supposes that its construction and operations take place outside and without the help of philosophy's overcode. For if it did not, there would be no way it could avoid being an accomplice in making person and world replicants of the Eleatic conception of Being. So, does Architectural Body in fact satisfy this indispensable condition?

As a direct, purely *architectural* experience of what happens in the Event Matrix it undoubtedly does. But, inevitably, things are less certain when we are speaking about the *book* in which this other than Eleatic experience of person and world gets reduced to words and language. True, the authors are keenly aware of the limits of language.[12] True, the text uses expedients that, to a considerable degree, elude the dangers I am speaking of.[13] But, alas, the linguistic effects of "the longest error" inevitably remain all too present in the text. A book cannot be as clearly written and easy to understand as this one without being semantic, onomastic, categoremic, syncategoremic and therefore Eleatic. And the volume's impeccable comprehensibility isn't the only way in which it remains in thrall to philosophy and philosophy's overcode. Consider what the book says about the kind of *space* one finds in the Architectural Body sensorium.

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[12] "A person who is held in the grip of language alone will have lost touch with many other scales of action vital to her existence" (Arakawa and Gins 82).

[13] A particularly effective use of those expedients is the use of suspension points: "… This is scary. It keeps changing … volumes open up with every motion … With each push … it's changing right in front of my eyes, with every push … push open … opening. How I spread my arms to push it open … it takes form how … If I push to one side … It is as if I am that snail …" (Arakawa and Gins 25). The impression one has just by looking at this page is not merely that language is failing to mediate and modulate what is going on. It is also that language is under such pressure from what is happening between person and surround that it is on the verge of passing from extreme exiguity to complete silence. Alternately, one has the impression that language is here being absorbed back into the pure events words are supposed to illuminate but more often obscure.

5. Do Philosophy and The Event Matrix Share The Same Species of Space?

We know that space in the Event Matrix is a by-product of the proprioception of whoever occupies it.[14] We also know that deliberate, high velocity deformations of classical space are crucial to making and keeping Architectural Body a "tentative-constructing-towards-a-holding-in-place."[15] Ultimately, however, the space which commands how a person "distributes sentience" and thereby "fields his surround" is *more geometrico* isotopic space. We can be certain of this from what we read in the chapter on "landing sites." Unmistakably the spatiality peculiar to "perceptual landing sites" is *one dimensional*, that of "imaging landing sites" is *two dimensional* and that of "dimensionalizing landing sites" is *three dimensional*. In other words, we are speaking about *lines, planes and solids*. But which ones? Presumably the same ones the philosophers used to reify pure becoming when they wanted to sculpt it into "self-subsisting realities."[16] Which means that the space which situates, positions and dimensionalizes the Architectural Body landing sites is "stereometric" or "isomorphic."[17]

But even if it is no more than "hinted at" or "nodded towards," this is a spatiality which we *cannot* use to "map" what is happening in the Event Matrix. We cannot because the only things stereometric space can accommodate are the "honest to goodness" entities *Architectural Body* is *not* supposed to contain. And yet representing what happens in the Event Matrix with the (meta)language *Architectural*

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[14]   See Arakawa and Gins 27-9, 34, 40, 43, 65: "An organism that persons articulates itself and its surroundings through its movements and its landing-site configurations."

[15]   Cf. Arakawa and Gins 65-6, 71, 73, and especially, 76-80.

[16]   For Plato's "geometrical" reification of pure becoming into bodily incarnations of "*ta auta kath'auta onta*", see, *inter alia*, *Timaeus*, 53c, *Laws X*, 894a sq. & *Philebus*, 23c sq. For Aristotle's views on the role of tri-dimensional space in determining "*ta physei onta*", see, *inter alia*, *Physics*, 205a 33; 206b 16; 209a 27; 211a 2; 212a 2. For a convenient review of the influence of Greek ideas on space in Scholastic, Cartesian, Kantian and contemporary philosophy, cf. Heidegger, *Being and Time* 89 sq.; Heidegger, *Die Frage nach dem Ding* 11 sq., and Heidegger, Platon: Sophistes 105-21.

[17]   It can be objected, of course, that the space peculiar to the Architectural Body "landing sites" must be understood as being similar to what Gilles Deleuze calls "protogeometry," "supple segmentary," "multiplicities of n dimensions," "anexact morphological essences" or "espace quelconque" (Deleuze and Guattari 233-4, 405-6; Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement* 154-7). But if so, to what avail? For ultimately this "rigorously vague" variety of space does not break free from the more geometrico isotopic space it challenges; it only extends its applications.

Body was written in makes the presence of this spatiality inevitable for tri-dimensional, *more geometrico* "stereometric" space is the only one philosophy wants language to have.[18] And the point I have just made about the space intrinsic to the language in which we are informed about events in the Architectural Body sensorium applies also to that language's determination of time, matter, movement, causation, identity, difference and relation.

Which is not to say that language *as such* is intrinsically incapable of ever being an adequate apophantical tool where it concerns what goes on in the Architectural Body Event Matrix. Only that such an apophansis cannot be achieved while being vehiculated by philosophy's language. In other words, if we really want to get beyond the essentially Eleatic experience of personhood and world-hood that Arakawa reminds us is not a fatality, we need to get out of the language that allows its users no other relationship to themselves or to their surround.

At this point the reader will no doubt feel that nothing new is being said. And, indeed, the point just raised has received eloquent formulation in the works of numerous icons of critical thought. The reader might also be saying to himself that recent post-structuralist times have witnessed a multiplicity of clever strategies for eluding the limits of language I am speaking of, which is true and should not be ignored.

These strategies are relatively simple. They operate on the basis of the idea that it is possible to identify interstices in the plenitude of meaning philosophy creates for itself and then to use those apertures to usher into the closure of philosophy the alterity or chaos it had tried to exclude or repress. Jacques Derrida and his "grammatological" concept of *différance* is perhaps the best known example of this manner of post-structuralist resistance to the imperialism of philo-sophy and "logocentrism." But because Derrida insists on making *différance* function as a "quasi-transcendental" *deus ex machina* in

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[18]   Bergson is the most obvious reference for the link between homogeneous, more geometric spatiality and its "quantific" effects on the experience of Being-a-person Being-in-the-world (see Bergson 51-77, 725-73). There are, however, better references than Bergson where it concerns the inherence of tri-dimensional space in philosophy's logos. One thinks in particular of Jacques Derrida in his deconstructive criticisms of Levinasian "eschatological messianism" and the "initiatory politopology" which structure various negative theological discourses (see Derrida, *Writing and Difference* 112, and Coward and Toby 91 sq).

relation to words and language,[19] he and his grammatology have no place in a discussion of a work as proudly post-theological as *Architectural Body*. So let us speak of Gilles Deleuze instead, and not just because his post-theological credentials are above suspicion; also because his thoughts on how to create a "line of flight" leading to a post-philosophical praxis of speech indicate how even the opponents of philosophy's annexation of language remain subject to the influence of the Eleatic conception of being. The Parisian philosopher's remarks on a "variable of expression" he calls "collective assemblages of enunciation" illustrate what I mean.

6. The Limits of Post-Structuralist Strategies for "Resisting" Philosophy

Deleuze's advocacy of "collective assemblages of enunciation" reflects his belief that language is faithful to its true nature and vocation when and to the extent that it is an apophansis of a person's *empirical* experience of himself and his world. Now, as Deleuze rightly points out, an empirical experience of self and world is always "*singularum tantum*,", i.e. unique, ephemeral, unshareable and non-repeatable. It is above all contingent. Hence, it is nonsensical to refer to people or to things as subjects and objects as the latter presuppose self-subsistence over time irrespective of circumstance. So the semiotic which obliges us to refer to persons as "monadic" subjects and the world as a molar aggregate of objects has to be "broken" and the "pre-individualized singularities" which remain have to be specified in language by nothing but words which refer to what persons and phenomena are interacting with at any given moment[20]. Hence the patient a famous psychoanalyst once identified as "Little Hans" must not be referred to as a "personological subject": instead the singularity or "haecceity" that psychoanalyst encountered and wrote about ought

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[19]   See, for example, Derrida, *Writing and Difference* 115-6: "… God is *nothing* (determined), is not life, because he is *everything* […] and therefore is at once All and Nothing, Life and Death. Which means that God is or appears, *is named,* within the difference between All and Nothing, Life and Death. Within difference, and at bottom as Difference itself. This difference is what is called *History.* God is inscribed in it."

[20]   See, *inter alia*, Deleuze, Foucault 59-60: "Il faut fendre les choses, les casser … Il faut donc fendre, ouvrir les mots, les phrases ou les propositions pour en extraire les énoncés …."

to be referred to as "house—street—warehouse next door—an omnibus horse—a horse falls—a horse being beaten."

Now, the attractions of this "*pragmatique du langage*" are considerable. Not least because it is exactly the same "semiotic" as the one expounded by the "Initiates" in the "mystery" mentioned at the outset of this paper.[21] Moreover, it is a perfect strategy for referring to the things that happen in the Architectural Body Event Matrix for it is a way of making sure that words refer to what happens as a "patchwork quilt that never stays the same."[22] But what effect does this semiotic have on the operations of "the despotic signifying regime of signs" it was invented to resist? Ultimately very little. For all it boils down to is this: we declare the subject to be nothing more than a "grammatical fiction," then we use other pieces of language to, as it were, "paper over" the absence we have thereby created and, finally, we make what has been reconstituted in this way function in language exactly the way the fictional subject did. In other words, *the subject survives in language as a silhouette constituted of the assemblage into which it has been dispersed*. And if that is the case—we maintain it is—where has our "line of flight" led us? Certainly not to a "post-signifying regime of signs." That would be the case if the subject and the object ceased being the emissaries and addressees of meaning. But that is not what we see here. For the grammatical fiction of the subject *remains at work in all the uses of language Deleuze uses to 'evince' its absence*. It is even what these subversive "variables of expression" are called upon to reconstitute. That is why Deleuze can refer to his "collective assemblages of enunciation" as the true "minimal unit of language,"[23] for, *mutatis mutandi*, they fulfil the same meaning-mag-netizing and meaning-conferring function in language as the signifier they replace used to do. So, ultimately, Deleuze's deterritorialization of language has resulted in a recapitulation of the linguistic Eleaticism it was undertaken to "break." Alternately, he has found a way of rescuing the subject by conceiving it the way it has to be conceived and referred to in order to remain as vital for the representation of events in post-modern times as at any other time throughout the entire history of philosophy since Parmenides.

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[21]   See esp. *Theaetetus* 157a-c.

[22]   Arakawa and Gins 12.

[23]   Lecercle 188.

Here, of course, it can be objected that we are being unfair, that we are criticizing Deleuze for failing to achieve something that, ultimately, no one can achieve. But we are not: we are only lamenting his failure to adopt the one strategy that will allow him out of the impasse he and indeed most other post-structuralist thinkers have got themselves into. For there *is* a viable "line of flight." It *is* in our power to give to the singularities which occur in the Event Matrix the language that is required to illuminate them in words. To do so, however, we have to satisfy two fundamental conditions.

7. On Overcoming the Eleatic Logos *Viably*

First, we have to abandon the idea that concocting ever more extravagantly subversive subsets of philosophical language will result in a language that is not philosophical. Second, we have to recognize that we cannot "resist" philosophy with negations of what it affirms, *only with affirmations of which it is a negation*. In other words, and more to the point, we have to compel philosophical language to oppose *us* because *we* insist on speaking to *it* in the language *it* had to suppress to emerge as a "hegemonic signifying regime." For emerge from the suppression of a former language it most certainly did. And—surprise, surprise!—the language it had to suppress was the very one we need to illuminate in words the things that happen in the Architectural Body sensorium. This in any event is necessarily the case if it is true that pre-philosophical Hellenic humanity had a language and that that language was concomitant with an experience of Being-a-person Being-in-the-world identical to the way it is experienced in the Event Matrix. So, if we really want philosophically administered speech to cease being an obstacle to the illumination in words of the kinds of things that happen in Arakawa's facticity factory, and if to the contrary we want words to *help* us experience existence as though it were Architectural Body writ large, then all we have to do is adopt the speech pre-philosophical Hellenic humanity used to make words illuminate the things that happened in the sensorium *they* existed in?

Obviously, there can be no question of exposing, even cursorily, the salient properties of this old speech. Just as obviously I am not suggesting we should all immediately run off and learn archaic Greek. All I am saying is this: if we *do not* adopt something like this

old language *we are never* going to make words reflect what happens in the Architectural Body Event Matrix; *we are never* going to restore a non-Eleatic relationship to ourselves and our surrounds and *we are never* going to get out of the "playpen" philosophy reserves for artists, critics and theorists so they can enjoy the illusion of defying philosophy without philosophy ever being disturbed by this defiance. On the other hand, if we *do* adopt and apply this old speech it ceases to be valid to say we are trying to express things and events that cannot be accommodated in the language we are using to do so. Moreover, *we* are in a position of putting *philosophy* in a playpen where idealists, nihilists and metaphysicians can blather about Being and Non-Being without that having the least consequence for how non-philosophers experience themselves and their world. And a final point I would insist on is the fact that we should not doubt the viability of this "line of flight." Reappropriating the resources of speech philosophy has wrested from us is not impossible. For if the Eleats and their successors were able to wrest language from the expressive possibilities it offered its speakers at the time of Heracleitos of Epheseus, what is to prevent a neo-Heracleitian "*nomothetes*" from wresting it back?

Here, of course, I am proposing a giant task for us "*horribles travailleurs*." But why should we fear gigantism and *giganto- machism*? If we are aiming at nothing less than "reversible destiny," surely learning anew the language that brings pure events to speech is but a trifle. But should we be aiming at immortality?

Because of the constraints of space I shall not be able to go into all my reservations about this idea. All I can do is make two observations, neither of them very original, and that I will put into the mouth of William Wordsworth. For, albeit with poetry and not architecture, he too was the artisan of Event Matrixes which transform our experience of Being-in-the-world.

8. William Wordsworth and Arakawa discuss "Event Matrixes"

It seems certain he would have said that the promise of eluding death should not be the reason we want to get "cradled" by Architectural Body. The argument should instead be that the experience of being in the Event Matrix is more *enjoyable*, more *inspiring* or more *enchanting* than the philosophically sanctioned alternative. And

Wordsworth would have said that one cannot effectively make that case by promising immortality to whoever enters the Event Matrix. To the contrary. The case is more convincingly made by *cultivating* the link between the Architectural Body experience and the promise of death. The reason is simply this: a relationship not just to the possibility but to the reality and even the imminence of death is the sole source of any value the experience of being alive *as such* can possibly have. So, remove the threat of death from the experience of being alive and you automatically thereby deprive it of what makes it so infinitely precious.

Again, an extremely conventional argument has been made much less prosaically by Schelling, Hölderlin, Heidegger, Jankélé-vitch and others who recognize that a relationship to the tragedy of death is a prerequisite for an *authentic* affirmation of Being-a-person Being-in-the-world.

A second point I am sure Wordsworth would take Arawaka up on is the way we ought to make being in the Event Matrix an opportunity to 'educate' ourselves in what goes into being a person and having a world.[24] Arakawa, as we know, is very particular about how we obtain this education for he will not allow us to appeal to anything we cannot find in the Event Matrix to explain person, surround and their interpoiesis.[25] That is one of the reasons he calls his Event Matrix an "autopoietic system." But this limitation is problem-atic. In any event, some tell us that, even as "a hypothesis," celibate autopoietic systems are inoperable and that "kicking and screaming" to the contrary is symptomatic of a "paranoia" and a desire to reify which one would wish absent from one's surround.[26] Moreover, if we suppose that the Matrix really is "enclosed" we are *ipso facto* unable

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[24] Throughout *Architectural Body* we are regularly enjoined to "go to all possible lengths to find out what we exist in regard to" and to consider our inquiry into what goes into being a person a "continual pursuance of that which perplexes, a coming to and at it from all sides" (xi-xii, 4, 29).

[25] Passages in which Arakawa and Gins reject all *deus ex machinas* are xii, 32, 52.

[26] "If the idea of autopoiesis is to retain any useful function it has to be thought in relation to entities which are evolutive and collective, and which sustain diverse kinds of alterior relations, as opposed to being implacably closed in upon themselves and maintaining their autonomous existence at the expense of casting out and dissipating anything external that would contaminate their inner purity (the machine as beautiful soul)" (Ansell-Pearson 196-8).

to explain the mysterious transitivity spoken of in *Architectural Body* under the unassuming but all-important syntagm "apportioning out."

Granted, it can be said that this "apportioning out" cannot be "explained" no matter what we do. For when we enquire into what apportions out the world all we ever encounter for our pains are the things and events the world gets apportioned out *as*. Meaning that what-the-world-is-apportioned-out-*as* has to be explained by what-it-is-apportioned-out-*as* or else remain inexplicable.

Wordsworth, however, would not be convinced by this reasoning. Quixotically no doubt, but firmly nonetheless, he would oppose it with the method for inquiring into Being-a-person he pro-poses in the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*. This strategy for educating ourselves about Being-a-person consists of creating a bridge or a 'hyph-en' between two knowledges: the knowledge of man's inner world and of his exterior world. But the bridge between these two knowledges is not merely between what we "know" of our inner and outer worlds. This bridge is instead between a "Not-Thought" in our knowledge of our inner world and a "Not-Thought" in our knowledge of the outer world. A "Not-Thought" within immediate experience and within external reality that is in fact *the same "Not-Thought"* because this "Not-Thought" would be a 'shadowy ground' or 'blind vacancy' "whose dwelling place is everywhere."

The following lines from "Prospectus to *The Prelude*" illustrate how Wordsworth uses poetry to situate person, world and their relationship within the "Not-thought" in question:

> … Urania, I shall need
> Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
> Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
> For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
> Deep − and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
> to which the heaven of heavens is but veil
> … while my voice proclaims
> how exquisitely the individual Mind
> … to the external world
> is fitted: − and how exquisitely, too

Now, we have no more right to refer to the exorbitant inanity of this "shadowy ground" as "the apportioner out" than we have to refer to it with any other epithet. But whatever we call it, it would certainly not be anything we find in the Architectural Body Event Matrix or that we

could decipher in terms of what we find there. It could only be some-
thing *outside* our sensoria. A necessary, inevitably indecipherable and
necessarily imaginary somewhere or something which *sustains* our
sensoria by being a whence they are apportioned out and whither anon
they dwindle away. A sort of entropy or pure potentiality in which
Architectural Body has to be placed *en abyme* and enquired into
through what we experience in the Event Matrix if we want a
complete education in what goes into being a person.[27] For if we allow
ourselves no 'speculation' into what apportions us out, not only do we
fail to question our Being-a-person "from every perspective possible,"
we moreover remain ignorant of that to which we are indebted for
everything about ourselves it is possible to know. And if it be objected
that this mode of 'education' is an exercise in self-delusion because it
boils down to the contemplation of the "necessarily imaginary," one
thing seems likely: our poet would reply, with words not unlike those
we find in *Architectural Body*, "Perhaps. But *what if* my brothers?
What if …?"

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[27] When it speaks of the "breathable mass energy of the universe turned world" (32),
Architectural Body evidently feels the need to posit just such an entropy.

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How Architecture Became Biotopian: From Meta-Biology to Causal Networks in Arakawa and Gins' *Architectural Body*

Joshua Schuster

This essay considers the implications of Arakawa and Madeline Gins' architectural body as predicated on a non-dualistic theory and therefore against meta-biological models of life. This approach emphasizes the quotidian availability and participation of the body in its surround that opens into a new way of considering causality as an architectural and philosophical problem. I argue that their work suggests a new manifesto for building around causal movements rather than cause and effect structure. The combination of new motifs of causal change and new biological models converges in a political aesthetic that I call "biotopian."

Keywords: Arakawa; Madeline Gins; Meta-biology; Architectural body; Biotopia.

1. Brief Case #1

In terms of total volume, one of the largest living things on earth is the giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*). These trees are found naturally only in a small area of the Western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. In ideal conditions, they can live approximately 2,000 years, and the oldest recorded sequoia lived 3,200 years. Most relevant to our topic at hand is that scientists are in consensus that they do not die of old age. They die primarily because they fall over. Sequoias have a shallow root system with no tap root (a strong, primary root that grows vertically), and excessive moisture can weaken its base so that strong winds eventually lead to toppling. Much has been said in recent years about the "immortality" of microscopic entities such as cultured cell lines, bacteria, viruses, and chromosomes that contain their own system of infinite and indefinite reproduction. But in the case of the sequoia, it is rather that the largest individually living being on earth has also *decided not to die*.

In the quite accurate terms of Arakawa and Gins, a giant se-
quoia dies primarily because it loses its *bioscleave*, that is, a contin-
uous, adaptive hold that fits the organism with its environment. One
could also say that these trees die paradoxically because they live too
long. It is probably most accurate to say that they outlive their *bio-
scleave* without actually outliving their own organism. This still con-
firms Arakawa and Gins' assertion that life is an organism plus a
bioscleave. Theoretically, a being can live forever if it never relin-
quishes its *bioscleave*. But the case of these trees seems to raise the
question of whether it is possible to outgrow life.

2. Brief Case #2

In a dim Wall Street office sometime in the middle of the nineteenth
century sits Herman Melville's Bartleby. He is employed by a small
business to copy sundry legal documents. At first Bartleby accom-
plishes his job exceedingly well, working day and night. In the words
of the story's narrator, "he seemed to gorge himself on my documents.
There was no pause for digestion" (12). In devouring the papers,
Bartleby becomes the documents he is copying. If there is no
digestion, there is no waste. Taylorism, not to be invented for another
half-century, is amateur compared to Bartleby's uncanny efficiency.
Copying is the perfect form of nutrition, as Bartleby and his
documents live symbiotically. Labor and life have fused, although this
is an inversion of what Marx argues is the need for workers to
recuperate their labor-power extracted from their life energy. Bartleby
has passed entirely through alienation and come out on the other side;
the sheer fact of labor has become a nutrient of human sustenance.

All seems to proceed with exceedingly fine profit until
Bartleby, "in a singularly mild, firm voice" (13), responds to one of
his superior's commands by saying, "I would prefer not to." Soon
thereafter, Bartleby stops all copying. In response to all of the
narrator's commands, consternations, pleadings, and conniving,
Bartleby abstains himself from activity with his now famous response.
The narrator is bewildered yet compelled due to Bartleby's lifeless
politeness and his "cadaverously gentlemanly *nonchalance*" (21).
Contrary to the sequoia tree, Bartleby is suspended somewhere
between pure life and not-enough-life. Bartleby's mannerism stuns the
narrator's managerial strategy. The narrator observes that, despite his

efforts to move Bartleby, "Not a wrinkle of agitation rippled him. Had there been the least uneasiness, anger, impatience or impertinence in his manner; in other words, had there been any thing ordinarily human about him, doubtless I should have violently dismissed him from the premises" (13).

I recount this well-known tale because I have the same reaction to Arakawa and Gins' phrase: "We have decided not to die." I imagine them saying this phrase without the least uneasiness, anger, impatience or impertinence. Indeed, had there been any thing ordinarily human about this phrase, I would have violently dismissed it.

Both Arakawa and Gins' and Bartleby's phrases have an enigmatic engagement with conventional speech acts. The seemingly incomplete sentence "I prefer not to" never actually makes it to the side of preference—that is, Bartleby is perpetually unable to affirm his preferences because of the "not to" that refers blankly to nothing that follows but also negates any attribute to the "prefer" that preceded it. Giorgio Agamben claims the phrase, as it hovers between affirmation and negation, is pure potentiality, but it is more the case that it is unable to arrive at or recognize any potentiality at all. There is a special aura of resistance to the phrase in its inability to refuse outright. And yet, it is tentativeness towards a form of overt resistance. In this sense, his condition curiously overlays with Arakawa and Gins' definition of architecture: "a tentative construction toward a holding in place" (23). Tentativeness and (barely) holding describe Bartleby, but construction would suggest too much control over causality. Bartleby's "I prefer not to" is above all a refusal of causality, of not wanting to be caught in the causal networks that designate obedience to the law and fuse life with labor. But his preference not to engage in any cause actually triggers a series of new causes in his employer and colleagues and ripples through the entire cause/effect relations that circulate around him.

There is something about the sedate phrasing of "We have decided not to die" that resonates in a similar way to Bartleby's phrase. Both use the "not to" to disrupt the stability of simple verbal causality that is associated with conventional performative utterances such as "I do." Both Arakawa and Gins and Bartleby avoid making demands on the will—one rests calmly in the present tense of "prefer," the other, just as calmly, in the present perfect tense of "have decided." The present perfect tense has the effect of a subtle confidence—the sentence

is not trying to trick anyone or force its will on anyone, but a decision has been made. In Bartleby's "I prefer not to," it is as if the voice trails off at the end, in a kind of ellipsis… and one can almost hear the sentence as "I prefer not to die." There is an aura of nostalgia in Bartleby's active verb that is dissipated into passivity, while for Arakawa and Gins, there is a futurism in their active verb. Decisionism, of course, has a long history in avant-garde manifestos as well as in modern political theory that stresses action as foundational for political subjectivity—but the "decided" does not enforce an end to hesitation, contingency, and tentativeness. No doubt the use of "we" as an amorphous collective fits with our expectations of manifesto rhetoric. But the "we" can be expanded or contracted as necessary, and the assertion takes place in an indefinite past and an indefinite future. "We have decided not to die"—but what kind of life is it to not decide to die?

In the history of philosophy, there are few, if any, philosophies of life or theories of biology that do not at some point posit a dualism in how life is said to unfold in time. For Aristotle it is the distinction between form and matter, soul (*psyche*) and body (*physis*). The most famous version of dualism is certainly Descartes' split mind/body. But even Spinoza's anti-Cartesian outlook, which posits a fundamental univocity of being—in that all being stems from the totality of nature or God, neither of which can be conceived of without necessarily existing—still relies on the distinction between the primary *natura naturans* and secondary *natura naturata*. Darwin articulates a theory of evolution in which traits that are advantageous for survival appear in genetic mutations in the individual organism and then spread throughout the species by sexual selection. The duality here, as spotlighted by thinkers like Richard Dawkins, is between the repeatable genetic traits that live on and the singular organisms of limited lifespan. Bergson follows after Darwin with a notion of evolution centered on a theory of pure life (instead of speciation), by stating that evolution is a continuous and constantly creative manifestation of the *élan vital* in a given organism. But Bergson's philosophy also is heavily reliant on a dualism, neatly framed in the title of his second book *Matter and Memory*. Any particular life is the result of the intersection of these two realities—Bergson compares the brief existence of any given organism to the spent portion of a rocket (matter) ejected while the rocket powers onward (the *élan vital*, or pure subjective life). Heidegger, critical of Bergson's philosophy as

just another metaphysics that obscures being, still insists on distinguishing between Being (*Sein*) and individual beings (*Seiendes*), the ontological and the ontic, which, as ontological differences, are irreconcilable. Even Deleuze, who shuns anything dialectical, draws from Gilbert Simondon's theory of life, which differentiates between the pre-individual, the non-stop flow and ongoing formation of individuation, and the individual or singular organism itself (to be fair, Simondon describes the march of difference as continuous multiplicity, which can only be seen as dualistic if one stops the march at any given moment). This distinction reappears in Deleuze's final essay "Immanence: Une Vie," where he describes a scene in Charles Dickens' novel *Our Mutual Friend* when a corrupt and despised man who nears death appears as sympathetic because he exhibits a moment of impersonal life that radiates pure immanence. Yet it is clear that "a life" differs in nature from the individuated life embodied in a subject. Just from this brief survey, we can see that the large majority of philosophies of life require a stratification and demarcation of primary and secondary importance that corresponds to a distinction between, as the modernist poet Mina Loy put it, life and Life.[1] Embedded in this formal dualism are both differences of degree and differences of nature. To be sure, the dualisms in these various philosophies play different roles, but they are all ways of explaining how life can die yet continue to live—even if life is dead, long live Life.

The philosophy of life posed by Arakawa and Gins sidesteps the position of dualism in two ways: by fully integrating an organism with its environment in the concept of the "architectural body" and "biocleave," and by extending this interaction towards a temporal asymptote of immortality. If this impetus to immortality is at all to be possible, Arakawa and Gins must posit an immortality of nature to correspond with their immortality of the organism; but by insisting on the immortality of this organism-environment, they have no need to speculate on a dualism of so-called "pure life" and the life of the

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[1]   Mark B. N. Hansen, in his essay "The Arche-Technics of Life," makes a similar claim for Arakawa and Gins as evading Deleuze's dualist model. "In contrast to Deleuze's concept of doubling, where life is split on parallel lines, one indefinite, the other definite, what is at issue [in Arakawa and Gins] is an intimate correlation or co-functioning of person and organism, personal and impersonal life. For just as the organism comprises the source for the life of the person, so too is personing the activity that allows the organism to deploy its life" (73).

organism[2]. Simply put, they reject ontological difference, or any
fundamental gap between being and Being. By this move, what
Arakawa and Gins resist is recourse to a *meta-biology*. In Arakawa
and Gins' writing, there is no transcendental flow of life that, by the
fact of its pure virtuality, would be unattainable in any way. A meta-
biology can either be a transcendental biological code or a principle of
transition or partition among organisms that can never be fully
embodied. Conversely, immortality suggests a total accessibility of
life, an ontology of full participation in rather than partition of life.
There is no hidden source of the Real, an unattainable motor of
History, or a biological drive that must be structurally inaccessible in
this theory of life.

If much of recent philosophy has stressed the need to end
metaphysical approaches to thinking, in a similar way we must also go
beyond meta-biological models as well. Immortality, in Arakawa and
Gins's proposition, then means making no distinction between life and
Life. Circumventing dualism does not necessarily mean that one
automatically has the superior non-meta-biological life theory—this
seems to be true even if immortality is a real option (we want to avoid
any awful logic of superior versus inferior models of life). But their
eschewal of dualism sets the stage for a radical accessibility of life to
itself, where the principle of life is an organism's very practice (and
not in service to some genetic material or abstract ontology).
Comparatively, immortality is not separated from time or the
fracturing of time into virtual versus actual. An architectural body
inhabits tentatively and embraces plural and awkward temporalities;
what seems to make this body immortal is that it does not posit time or
being as anything more than this tentativeness, but this contingency
never exhausts itself to the point of detachment or emptiness. Thus
immortality is neither a settled universalism nor an unprecedented
transcendentalism. There is no transcendental totality or absolute

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[2]   In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson argues that the inevitable flow of energy towards entropy
      was the case only for materiality left to decay. Life proceeds in the opposite direction,
      storing up energy to use in organizing itself towards increasingly greater complexity.
      Darwin's theory of evolution that slants selection towards complexity, since this maximizes
      the chances for an organism's survival, has added support to Bergson's argument.
      Theoretically, this recourse to complexity could continue indefinitely, as Bergson says, to
      "beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death"
      (271). Thus Bergson postulated what was perhaps the first avowedly evolutionary argument
      for immortality.

vocation that is driving the motivations of immortality to some final cause in the future. Rather, in Arakawa and Gins's model, which emphasizes connectivity rather than finality, immortality simply is not releasing one's *bioscleave*. It may be impossible to shear off entirely the grandiose transcendental rhetoric associated with ideas of immortality, but I would stress that in Arakawa and Gins's work, the means of achieving such a condition rely on strictly quotidian experiences. The drama of banalities and boredoms that help us inhabit our architectural bodies are more crucial to the success of this model than any radical biogenetic formula that can only be conjured by a million supercomputers. Immortality then is no more than an iridescent form of everydayness.

Arakawa and Gins also call this quotidian immortality "ubiquitous." Ubiquity is the "ground" and foundational metaphor of one proposed housing development for "Reversible Destiny Homes."

3. Model No. 17 Ubiquitous Site House

> In an extreme effort to oust death from the premises, the ubiquitous site, the site of a body-person inclusive of all that is within her perceptual ken, is reined in. As the body chews on the cud of its own expressivity, a monadology ensues. The architectural body is the ubiquitous site taken as entity.
>
> Specifications
>
> Shape precludes entry, but entry can happen upon a resident's forceful insertion of herself into the pliant, half-structured muddle. Effort, having reentered infancy, flails about and cries out. Residents who open paths through chaotic amassings ferret out processes central to their own formation. The direct relation that bodily articulation bears to thinking becomes apparent and critically assessable. (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 310)

The house appears like a patchwork of variously shaped and cantilevered roofs, under which are colored pouches of parachute-like materials that droop when uninhabited. Once one enters, the puff of one's breath and the girth of one's arms contour the space with each movement. The home and the person are continuous and sinuous. The fabric that billows down is much like clothes, or even skin, in its instant response to bodily displacement. This aggregate of an always-agitated house "flails about and cries out," as would an infant, to

whom the residue of fetal life and bio-morphic dwelling is still present. But since one can induce a new dwelling by simply moving, the flailing eventually could be tamed if one finds the right comfortable pose.

As is apparent from the proposed housing development, the architectural body is not a brand new body constructed by machines or modified genes, but the same old body that dangles about the bones in combination with its immediate, "ubiquitous" phenomenological surround. This ubiquitous architectural body holds as much for the sequoia tree perched at an elevation of 7,000 feet as it does for Bartleby in his mid-nineteenth-century version of an office cubicle. Thus the "lab" for inventing immortality is one's ordinary milieu: "Where one lives needs to become a laboratory for researching, for mapping directly, the living body itself, oneself as world-forming inhabitant" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* xxi). Against the typical hierarchy of expertise between scientist and citizen, architect and dweller, Arakawa and Gins go no farther than taking the phenomenological data of everyday life—being, givenness, and world—as all the raw materials needed for experimental lab work. Immortality, recast as living with ubiquity (a banal and less threatening form of totality), literally involves "oust[ing] death from the premises" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 310) because if one is to dwell at all in this house, one must be involved and alive (so must the house). It is impossible to dwell in this house without chasing and ousting death, or inactivity, with one's own active inhabiting. Otherwise the house collapses on itself as if in exhaustion or frustration. Furthermore, if there is dwelling at all here, we can only know it by the continuous copula of person-house. Arakawa and Gins call this living-housing unit an "organism-person-environment" (1). Surround, ubiquity, "all-inclusiveness" (xix), immortality and the more obvious "monadology" are terms that insist on abandoning the classical philosophical dualism of body and mind, or life and pure life: "Environment-organism-person is all that is the case. Isolating persons from their architectural surround leads to a dualism no less pernicious than that of mind and body" (44). The "environment-organism-person" is a three-in-one that keeps the process of differentiation ongoing in a meta-stable or multiply-teetering way.

Although architectural metaphors commonly are predicated on notions of engineering, one should not reduce this prospect of

immortality to one massive social engineering project. Perhaps one cannot totally avoid practices of engineering, but Arakawa and Gins insist on taking these as just practices, provisional and modifiable. Instead of engineering according to a fixed plan that privileges the longevity of the plan itself, they argue for an ongoing, provisional proceduralism. Dwelling is the equally tentative act of assembling the swirl of procedures: "The world as one finds it: a concatenation of partial procedures or procedure-like occurrences, diffuse or defused procedures, incomplete or bedeviling ones" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 52). Procedural constructing flourishes on contingency and tentativeness, conditions which seem to mock structural (rational) engineering. Incompleteness is tied here to immortality, in that an indefinite number of surroundings and procedures can be tried out so that the organism, rather than the structure, is involved in the work of perpetuation. To consider this critique of engineering from another angle, what is attempted is a form of habitation without *habitus*. To be able to inhabit partiality and elusiveness as such, rather than conceding that the destiny of inhabiting is habituation, is what defines the carefulness of a procedure. This respect involves an ethical claim such that "Proceduralists insist on taking note of even the most transient of positionings" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 71). Those who are without housing are often described dismissively as transient. Instead of the self-important grandiosity of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's *Learning from Las Vegas*, it is learning from transient living that is the "crisis ethics" in Arakawa and Gins's words that establishes the urgency of linking transient procedures to sustainable dwelling.

Engineering requires a logical and predictable relation of cause and effect; procedurality recognizes multiple layers of causal being, such that it would be erroneous to consider one event as the product of a standardized cause and effect. The work of Arakawa and Gins instead participates in what I call *cause-cause relationships*, mutually implicating, teasing, recursive, and generative causes which participate in positive or negative feedback loops. Among the philosophical precedents for approaching causality in this way is Spinoza's *Ethics*, which is an unabashed manifesto for rethinking causality in nature as grounded in an ultimately self-causing system. Nietzsche also proposes a revaluation of typical notions of causality. In his late notebooks, assembled as *The Will to Power*, he argues that

> "Causality" escapes us; to assume an immediate, causal bond between thoughts, as logic does, is the consequence of the crudest and clumsiest observation. *Between* two thoughts there are, in addition, *all sorts of affects* at play: but they move so fast that we *mistake* them, we *deny* them. (221).

To comprehend an event as a product of cause and effect is to force that event to slow down to the speed of human consciousness. Furthermore, the perception of the event by consciousness transforms the event so that it will fit the narrowed logical categories of the mind and grammar. Likewise, the speed of an event is inherently variable; consciousness alone is not flexible enough to comprehend this event, and must, at the very least, be supplemented by affects, which are relations of forces (*cause-cause relations*).

When Nietzsche proposes that philosophy should be "for life," he rejects mechanistic models of cause and effect, the view that there is a calculable formula and a predetermined relation between one and the other. For Nietzsche, the pluralizing activity of "life" substitutes for mechanical causality as the explanatory horizon of meaning. This is a reversal of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom insisted that the task of philosophy was to know the cause (*aitia*) of a thing. Knowledge is declared to be based on knowing the cause or the "why" of something. Aristotle then famously reduces this epistemological position to four basic models of causality. This mantra of cause and effect results in a devaluation of cause and a revaluation according to effect. It also assumes that the cause/effect linkage will sufficiently thematize and conceptualize the change in reality that occurs when something is brought from potentiality to actuality. When a cause/effect is ascribed to an object or an event, the flow of potentialities is interrupted in an arbitrary fashion and this interruption is masked by the declaration of a completed goal. But in the preference for "results" is a backward logic that first locates an effect and then ascribes a stable cause to itself. This logic entails the inscription of a false and needless dualism in the causal event. As Nietzsche points out in his notebooks:

> [W]e distinguish ourselves, the doers, from the doing, and make use of this schema everywhere—we seek a doer for everything that happens… [W]hat does that mean? It means we've *misunderstood* as a cause what is a feeling of force, tension, resistance, a feeling in the muscles that's already the beginning of the action. (251)

Force and tension, the feeling of a flexing, are not isolated causes, but embedded in causal networks. Causality is not a necessity to be obeyed, but a feeling of acting within a field of forces. One stretches one's causal being by exercising one's muscles and forces. Nietzsche: "If I conceive of the *muscle* as separated from its 'effects', then I have negated it" (252). Arakawa and Gins, who describe the architectural body as a kind of flexing, can be considered in this respect as Nietzschean architects.

Returning to the issue of non-dualist theories of life outlined earlier, the notion of *cause-cause relations* is not far from Spinoza's concept of immanent causality as *causa sui* manifesting itself as naturing nature (*natura naturans*). Deleuze understands Spinoza's terms of causality to be interchangeable with the terms of affect, the capacity to affect or be affected. Procedural architecture involves inhabiting these affective or causal networks, which cannot be reduced to pure doing (empty and endless procedures that generate no constructions) or pure being (a strictly formalist or mathematical ontology). I stress the repetition and redoubling of *cause-cause relations* to indicate that while a single cause might imply that one is satisfied with the givenness of the world (a problem of Spinoza's *sub specie aeternitatis*), a cause-cause model is about how to outgive the given. That is, the given (cause) of a particular situation or condition is taken as the basis for a practice of ongoing siting and reconditioning of constructive relations. The given is not negated nor is it sutured to another given, rather it is, to use Arakawa and Gins's description, "embedded [in] procedures" (*Architectural Body* 4) and "focal hubs of activity" (*Architectural Body* 10). The architectural body is then "constructed to exist in the tense of what if, [it] presents itself as intentionally provisional, replacing definite form with tentative form, the notion of a lasting structure with that of an adaptive one" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 29). This "tentative form" that constructs "adaptive" structures fuses causing and worlding. Tentativeness and adaptiveness shift the what, or substance, to the "what if" that engages new practices of freedom and care.

Attention to the architecture of causality is integral to what Arakawa and Gins call an architectural procedure. An architecture of causality involves living in a house that dynamically interacts with one's own movements and feelings. This architecturalization of the body involves *placing intelligence and affect as close as possible to*

with what it interacts. Arakawa and Gins's architectural bodies are coated with thousands of intelligent and affective switches—what they call "landing sites" (beyond artistic metaphor, this is simply descriptive of human skin). Most conventional architecture structuralizes delays in agency by enshrining materiality, with its inherent stubbornness, as the primary architectural medium—unless you smash the walls to obtain some immediacy. In Arakawa and Gins's architectural procedures, the delay is reduced to a minimum as the person-house becomes the material, *so that intelligence and sensation find themselves as close to the task at hand as possible*. This is how a *bioscleave* is formed—by the intimate staging of a mutual sentience and self-consciousness that is not a subject acting on an object but the process of inhabiting an ongoing landing site. The *bioscleave* exfoliates in the transfer of causality from the body to the world and vice versa. In this manner, "On-the-spot data managing is now within everyone's reach" (Arakawa and Gins, *Architectural Body* 22) because reach is itself the definition of the horizon of data.

Tentativeness seems to have its own built-in ethical concern. As Arakawa and Gins state: *"Do not mar tentativeness. One ought not to try and hold onto what one cannot hold onto. How to swim in tentativeness. How to hold tentativeness in (its/your) shape. Do not be greedy: do not try to hold onto too much"* (*Architectural Body* 84-5). But as much as this ethics can be said to be "already there," the sheer outlandishness of Arakawa and Gins's work demands a major investment in studying how ethics (not being greedy) is its own *bioscleave*. No reader or dweller of this architecture is completely unaware of the unprecedented risks and concerns of propositions such as deciding not to die. Indeed, rethinking risk and its potential aesthetics is one thing that makes this project so compelling. The sustainability of risk and concern cannot be separated from the architectural procedure, else the tentativeness hardens into the no-holds-barred scramble for possession. However, as much as modeling space on tentative holding suggests new practices of freedom, it is clear that Arakawa and Gins's notion of a constant and ongoing architectural procedure must involve an incredibly athletic body, even though they point to the body of the baby as perhaps the most architecturally aware. Constant awareness of landing sites would require astonishing endurance skills. Maybe this unique feat of stamina is what Duchamp had in mind when he constructed the first ready-made out of a bicycle

wheel inverted and implanted onto a stool, provoking the transition of materials from the physical to the pataphysical notion of bicycling in the sky as a feat of ultimate endurance. Simply put, immortality risks perpetual exhaustion, not only of the organism, but also of the concept of life itself. If everything is focused on adoration of aliveness, this risks a kind of ideology of life, where life has a stranglehold on all considerations. Absolutizing life risks turning existence into a gray zone into which everything and all activity are dumped. At the same time, one should be wary of the dangers of the endless means of capitalizing on immortality. The current life industry always wants to prolong our existence, but this is because they see the bios as the ultimate commodity, perhaps the commodity form as such. Moreover, the longer one lives, the more one can buy. Furthermore, a concern remains over how the perpetual need for energy by an organism evidently would lead to a species-wide problem of overpopulation and saturation of life—although it can be suggested that, in immortality, all the energy that had been previously spent in maintaining self-preservation could be reapplied productively elsewhere.[3] Nevertheless, we need autonomy to watch over immortality and vice versa. Immortality is not the end of history and the instantiation of a general will inside a closed system. One hopes the earth has decided not to die, too.

If immortality cannot shake associations of transcendence and exhaustion, in an equally ominous sense it is hard to dissociate this proposal from imperialist fantasies of relentless strength. Arakawa and Gins's propositions have been criticized for the potential associations of their ideas, not intended by the artists themselves, with government-sponsored military research initiatives to use biotechnology to create "immortal" soldiers. In the recent book *Radical Evolution: The Promise and Peril of Enhancing Our Minds, Our Bodies—and What It Means to Be Human*, Joel Garreau details some of the current evolution-engineering research projects funded by the United States government. The U.S. Defense Department prides itself on allocating money to the innovative research lab called Defense Advanced

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[3]   Scientists at DARPA describe their work as creating a "bio-revolution" (Garreau 23) and proclaim that "we will be the first species to control our evolution" (42). Coming from a military-financed scientist, this idealism (ultimately, as Ernst Bloch once noted, all idealisms do have some degree of non-ideological desire) is coated with the biopolitics of what Deleuze called the "society of control" in a 1990 essay published in *Pourparlers*.

Research Projects Agency (DARPA) for any scientific discovery that might lead to military advantage.[4] A significant amount of the research generated by this agency is geared towards making a superhuman soldier, including: engineering skin and tissue that can heal itself within minutes, attaching microscopic computers to the brain to transfer input from the brain directly to prosthetic machines, pharmaceuticals that can block all feelings of pain, and reconfiguring mitochondria in cells to conserve energy and work more efficiently so that food and sleep are needed only rarely. All of these technologies, of course, have stunning medical potential as well. They can be used to save lives on operating tables, though, evidently, they can also be used to make superbabies or prolong life for those who can afford it. Yet while high-tech tales of new uses of human beings make great media stories, these futuristic biologies are too often cut off from any compelling political narratives of social change, if not outright in the service of imperialism. The utopian quotient of these projects does not promise any concrete political version of freedom for the people. This is utopianism without utopia for market and state-driven reasons. Biological transformation now takes place all the time without political transformation.[5]

Recent critics on the left tend to analyze these operations in terms of Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics,[6] where power over biological life is the framework for the political concern of bodies, populations, and personal health that are now seen as the integral matter of all modern political institutions and practices. What Arakawa and Gins propose is an alternative paradigm altogether. At stake is nothing less than a rehabilitation of a livable utopia through new tropes and practices of biological transformation. I propose to call this conjunction of left politics and new biology as *biotopian*. A *biotopian*

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[4]   There is, of course, some political content to these new biologies in the way they influence the narratives of current political identities. Francis Fukuyama, in *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, provides a useful analysis of the stakes of new biology for contemporary neoliberalism. Fukuyama fears that biotechnology will replace the institutions and practices of deliberative democracy, but he resists connecting this instrumentalism of the body with the world-wide instrumentalism of capitalism itself.

[5]   For a recent example see Rose.

[6]   This theme of *biotopia* resonates with the term "biotopology" that Arakawa and Gins conceptualize in their most recent book *Making Dying Illegal* (56-88). However, biotopology stresses the different spatial relations and activities of an organism, while *biotopia* emphasizes the political and utopian premises of their work.

architecture can be defined as the moment when political and aesthetic progressivism converges in the harnessing of new biological metaphors and models of ontological change for socio-aesthetic practices. A utopia radicalizes the parameters of the permitted and the horizons of the expected, that is, it scrambles cause and effect. Utopia can even be defined as the search for a post-obsolescent way of living, for example, where immortality is combined with tentativeness. If biopolitics means controlling and capitalizing on life itself, *biotopia* involves thinking the conjunction of biology and politics in a rigorously non-biopolitical manner.

Some will disagree with my assessment that Arakawa and Gins are not partially invested in a notion of genetic engineering, and the authors themselves may not be opposed to a future biotechnological operation that would inaugurate immortality with prescribed dosage. I am basing my analysis solely on the writings in *Architectural Body*, which do not explicitly insist on genetic engineering but rather on devoting resources to constructing houses and cities that sustain the process of the "organism that persons" (2). What makes their manifesto most relevant for politics today is precisely that it does not refer to the supersoldier or superbaby ideologies that flow from government-sponsored research projects. Their *biotopian* project is proposed solely as a rigorous aesthetic of "engineering of contingency" (xiii) that, by incorporating its own sustainable procedures into its structures, could conceivably perpetuate itself towards an asymptotic immortality. Perhaps the best evidence of skepticism towards biopolitics is that, in this volume, Arakawa and Gins do not promote any new surgeries, eugenics, pharmaceuticals, or nationally controlled institutions by which the organism would be improved and monitored. Their favored examples are poems, philosophies, snails, and houses.

To posit an infinite renewable *bios* in a *biocleave* would be to insist on a state of existence that can be called *biotopian*. Let me then sum up what a *biotopia* could be.

First, a *biotopia* is not a call for a better, liberal version of biopolitics. Biopolitics involves erecting discourses, institutions, and social practices to manage the family, reproduction, labor, and pleasure of a population for the good of the regulated political whole. Against this administrative practice, *biotopianism* should be considered as a rejection of the rise of everyday biopolitics. The philo-

sophical models of biopolitics that have been proposed by Foucault and Agamben, among others, for the most part portray the increase in political attention to biological matters as a dystopian and brutal operation spawned out of fear of overpopulation and extreme exposure of bodies under globalism. In the face of the massive stakes of biopolitics, it would seem that a *biotopian* vision could only appear as hopelessly naïve. But this is only so if one neglects the political critique posed by *biotopian* thinking, which, first of all, takes seriously that progressive politics and biology must be thought of as implicated and layered (but far from controlled) in any complex understanding of how we experience the world.

Second, *biotopian* thought is not reducible to utopianism that presumes that the social totality can be engineered from the top down, or simply from the bottom up (the naïve view of biopower). Rather, the "organism-person-environment" is tentative and continually being reassembled on multiple levels of access to causality for some, while demonstrating inversely how destitute and devoid of any access to causality or political change most humans are today.

Third, *biotopianism* takes seriously the need to integrate nature and culture, but unlike ecological movements based on a nostalgic return to nature, it insists on a future political way of living that is not limited to pragmatic here-and-now approaches to instrumentalizing the differences between nature and culture for the sake of preserving both. In other words, the essence of an environmental surround is sustainability rather than preservation; forcing nature to slow down so that it can be preserved according to our level of perception would be to destroy its ongoing proceduralism.

Fourth, by insisting on a political advocacy for new practices of freedom, *biotopia* is not a claim for an end to history and a predetermined end to social change. By insisting on an alternate politics that is nonetheless "grounded" in the contingencies of *bios*, one can invoke both a commonality and a gap between biopolitics and *biotopianism* that remains irreducible and cannot be tied to one agenda. These two categories ultimately remain in productive critique of each other if their respective autonomy and agendas are also heeded.

Finally, while immortality may be an unreasonable demand on reason, or a sheer aesthetic fantasy, the concept of *biotopia* asks us not to whisk away brusquely such utopian provocations, but to consider more thoroughly how the conjunction of new biology, left politics,

and aesthetics can look to each other for new models and metaphors of progressive social change (which, after all, is what Spinoza, Bergson, and Deleuze philosophized under the notion of life). I want to be very clear about why *biotopian* architecture offers a compelling progressive political stance. All political practices are based on the power to recognize what is accepted and institutionalized as a cause/effect relation. Yet every theory of causality also involves a theory of change. A new way of how we understand change to be embedded in causal relations can provide us today with reinvesting new left political and aesthetic approaches. What *biotopia* offers—as summed up in the not ordinarily human phrase "we have decided not to die"—is a provocation to research as to how new forms of political freedom might arise from new understandings of the relationship of biological and aesthetic change. To be sure, if immortality is just a way to extend privilege or re-inscribe hierarchy, there is no compelling political or aesthetic justification. A *biotopia* is a strict rejection of the biopolitics of administered privilege, and therefore one of the most urgent prospects for Arakawa and Gins's work is how it might suggest an alternate model of living where Life is not used to exploit life.

When Arakawa and Gins announce "an open challenge to our species to reinvent itself" (*Architectural Body* xviii), they are calling for a *biotopia*. Their vision provides a framework for thinking the immortality of bodies from trees to houses, as well as for critiquing biotechnologies that aspire to nothing more than expanding capitalism to new markets. This *biotopia* is not a call for more biotech labs, but for a global approach to living that builds from the body out. "We ask only that enormous sums of money be spent on constructing the world as a tactically-posed surrounding for the benefit of the body. A procedural constructing of the world will constitute a way for our species to take evolution into its own hands" (*Architectural Body* xix). This is a call to renew a radical utopian science, but one predicated on combining the most ordinary forms of existence with the most progressive of political possibilities. We have to cause our own conditions of causality: "In the twenty-first century, philosophers need to *construct* the conditions that will cause answers to be forthcoming" (*Architectural Body* 88). Here construction, conditions, and causality are closely linked. In Arakawa and Gins's notion of architectural procedure, intelligence and affect are placed as close as possible to

causal switches and to the flow of causal relations. It is perhaps the best lead we have on how to evolve another evolution.

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Architectural Body as Generative Utopia?

Françoise Kral

The focus of this paper is not so much the functionality of *Architectural Body* as an architectural project as its meaning in the context of the history of ideas. Arakawa and Gins's project to combat death and reverse destiny represents, to a certain extent, the demise of modernity pushed to its radical point. It redefines the human condition not as the product of something given and biologically programmed, but as a sheer product of reason, something that can be revised and reconfigured by human beings themselves. In this paper I argue that their project originates in a contextual predicament which strikes at the heart of contemporary interrogations as to the agenda of modernity, and as such constitutes a critical reassessment of modernity, its demise and its limitations.

Keywords: Architectural manifesto; Utopia; Modernity; Strategies of empowerment.

To the rationally-minded critic, the work of Arakawa and Gins may at first glance seem utopian. Their architectural project is not only aimed at designing new types of buildings but encompasses a much broader scope. Arakawa and Gins undertake the challenge which consists not only in providing room for the living and designing new types of buildings, but in turning the living into undying beings, beings against death. Imagining and working towards life without an end is not only a hubristic undertaking, it also shakes the foundations of our conception of man, a being towards death, determined by his own awareness of death (Heidegger[1]). But this project also situates *Architectural Body* in the realm of utopia, in a locus beyond what seems possible, in other words—u-topos.

Needless to say, there is a good dose of fiction and aesthetic license in this undertaking, which leaves the rationally-minded critics that most of us are faced with the following dilemma: to dismiss the project as the product of two optimistic minds or to try and make sense of it? If one chooses to undertake the challenging task of making

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[1] In *Being and Time*, Heidegger defines man as a "being against death," a being who is aware of the fact that he is bound to die (Part II, chapter 1, sections 45-33).

sense of it, one soon realizes that there is more to it than meets the eye, and that *Architectural Body* is also an architectural manifesto that situates itself in relation to an architectural tradition which it seeks to assess, and possibly to improve on.

Besides, when one compares Arakawa and Gins's project to other utopias imagined in the 20th century, or rather to architectural projects which come close to abstraction, one may wonder if *Architectural Body* does not demonstrate more awareness of reality. Critics like Richard Sennett have remarked on the way modern architectural projects make a point of going against nature. In *The Conscience of the Eyes*, he tries to account for the predominance of straight lines and sharp angles in the concept of the grid, and argues that they can be read as a constant reminder of the prominence of the rational over the natural, as if by building such an environment we could hope to "channel" nature, but also human beings, and master their less rational and more bestial tendencies, their drives and passions, and celebrate the triumph of modernity. Sennett also explains that the grid, which has been used extensively in twentieth century urban planning (a city of streets intersecting under right angles) was the fullest and most fitting expression of the dream of the city as uniform, impersonal, cool and neutral. The idea was to fight historical contingency.

> The grid can be understood as a weapon to be used against environmental character—beginning with the character of geography. In cities like Chicago the grids were laid over irregular terrain …. The natural features that could be levelled and drained, were; the insurmountable obstacles that nature put against the grid, the irregular course of rivers or lakes, were ignored by these frontier city planners, as if what could not be harnessed to this mechanical, tyrannical geometry did not exist. The farms and hamlets dotting nineteenth century Manhattan were expected to be engulfed rather than incorporated as the grid on paper became building in fact. (52)

The concept of the grid therefore rests on the idea that nature can/should be curbed, that an ideal world is one in which man's drives and urges—in other words what makes him what he is—should be channelled and repressed so as to let the rational side triumph over the bodily. *Architectural Body* rests on a radically different postulate which can be summed up as follows: architecture should adapt to man and not man to architecture, so that we may wonder whether it is the grid or the architectural body that is the real utopia.

Arakawa and Gins never fall into the trap of conceiving man as a mind without a body. They always keep the body in focus and choose to cater for the ordinary man rather than for a prototype of perfection improved and reconfigured by new architectural surrounds. In terms of methodology, their project is of a very pragmatic character, in the sense that they do not proceed from abstract patterns which they then project onto human beings but opt for a back and forth movement of mutual adaptation between the architectural surround and the inhabitant, and this in a way is more realistic. It is in this sense that the *Architectural Body* project can be read as something else than mere utopia—in the limited sense of a fiction that has nothing to do with reality—but a generative utopia[2] characterized by a strong pragmatic orientation. It is a sort of yardstick against which any architectural project should be measured and evaluated.

My point of interest in this paper is not so much the functionality of the project as its meaning in the context of the history of ideas. Arakawa and Gins's project to combat death and to reverse destiny represents, to a certain extent, the demise of modernity pushed to its radical point. It redefines the human condition not as the product of something given and biologically programmed, but as a sheer product of reason, something that can be revised and reconfigured by human beings themselves. Yet their methodology questions that of modernity. Their project originates in a contextual predicament which strikes at the heart of contemporary interrogations as to the agenda of modernity and as such constitutes a critical reassessment of modernity, its demise and its limitations. It is as such not only an aesthetic but also a philosophical manifesto.

1. *Architectural Body* as a reflexive work

The hybridity of *Architectural Body* as a text offers an insightful entry point into the methodological and epistemological predicament at stake in the work of Arakawa and Gins.

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[2] To a certain extent, most utopias from More's seminal text to more recent works are part of a tradition which uses the fictitious setting as a way of addressing real issues. The term *generative utopia* is therefore somehow repetitive; however, I use it so as to stress the fact that Arakawa and Gins revive the tradition of the utopia as a narrative set in an imaginary world but which refers us to real world issues.

Architectural Body is characterized by a tension between a scientific approach sometimes pushed to its radical end and an almost organic conception of architecture. In other words, it is a tension between clearly laid-out propositions that are logically organized and at the same time a close observation of the human body, which is not only dealt with as an object of study but is literally embraced, studied from within, not once and for all but in a dynamic perspective, through the various stages of its development.

This theoretical stance can be traced in previous works by Arakawa. The paintings presented in *Reversible Destiny* already forced the observing subject not only to reflect on his position as subject but to experience how his subjectivity affects his perception and how his limited position hampers the perception of what could be theoretically perceptible. In the *Paintings for Closed Eyes* ("The Mechanics of Meaning" 30-1) for example, the viewer has to stand on a ramp, which limits his perception of what surrounds him to what is placed in front of him, thereby reminding him of the fact than the object never exists in *abstracto* but is part of a situation between the object viewed and the person viewing it. Because the viewer always looks at an object in a given context, within the limits of his sensorial capacities and his location in space, the specificities of the situation and of the viewer's position in space should always been taken into account.

This apparent tension between the powers of rationality and scientific thinking and a constant emphasis on the limitations of the body is far from being the only one in their work. *Architectural Body* is also an ambitious project which sets out to challenge the way human life has existed for centuries. Surprisingly enough, this excess of optimism which borders on hubris is counterbalanced by an acute awareness of the limitations and the difficulties Arakawa and Gins are bound to run into when challenging death. To give a brief example, one can read the definition of architecture as a "*tentative constructing toward a holding in place*" (Arakawa and Gins 23) as one which takes account of the difficulties involved in the project as well as the provisionality of the results. This is a rather unexpected and even visionary definition of architecture—visionary in the sense that architecture is perhaps one of the more solid art forms. It is usually seen as an "effective holding in place," something that is bound to provide a solid structure to society and resist the passing of time.

When defining architecture as tentative and provisional, Arakawa and Gins implicitly redefine the prerogatives of architecture—and produce a reflexive text, a kind of architectural manifesto. But they also write against the excessive positivism of disciplines which forget to cordon off their field of expertise and propose to reach beyond what is doable. This is a timely issue. The development of humanities in the 19th and 20th centuries provides plenty of examples of intrusion of scientific methodology into fields where it has little or no relevance at all (we can think of phrenology and its ambition to measure intelligence by measuring the size of the skull, but we can also think in more recent days of the humanities which have decided to imitate hard sciences, like schools of sociology based on the Durkheimian postulate that the humanities should deal with facts as if they were things). In *Architectural Body*, Arakawa and Gins question, at least indirectly, the methods and strategies that have been implemented in various fields in the wake of modernity. By declaring that architecture should be tentative and by stressing the provisionality of their results, they assert their awareness of certain limitations and eschew the pitfalls of an unlimited belief in the omnipotence of scientificity, thereby presenting an indictment in the negative of positivism in art and in particular in architecture.

2. *Architectural Body* as A Critique of The Utopian Stance Inherent in The Idea of Modernity

As a challenging project whose goal is not only to change the way we envisage man but to actually alter his very nature when turning him into an undying creature, Arakawa and Gins deliberately ignore the scepticism of postmodernity and revive the greater optimism of modernity. This proposition is undoubtedly stimulating and vivifying, but it does pose a major problem. There has been an ongoing debate for several decades now on modernity and in particular on how modernity can have led to barbarian acts (and here the horrors of 20th century provide ample evidence of this). Adorno and Horkheimer have paved the way for a thorough examination of the causes and failings of modernity in *Dialectics of Enlightenment*. More recently, other figures like sociologist Zygmunt Bauman have followed suit and questioned the methodology of modernity (*Modernity and The Holocaust*). That is why the project of reviving modernity, no matter

how fascinating it may seem, presents certain problems and requires an assessment of the methodology designed to achieve this ambitious goal.

Architectural Body can be read as an interesting architectural manifesto that is at the same time an implicit indictment of the pitfalls of modernity, a sort of evaluation in the negative. The methodological tensions and apparent paradoxes I have underlined in the previous section are not incoherences: they constitute methodological safe-guards. Arakawa and Gins assign an important limit to their project in the existence and reassertion of the given. That is why instead of producing yet another monstrous utopia, one in which reason holds sway in an unlimited and dehumanized way, instead of creating yet another *Doppelgänger* of the scientific projects to reconfigure society, Arakawa and Gins have set the basis for a utopia of humanized rationality, one which bears witness to the complexity of human beings and makes room for their dual nature, as minds and bodies. In other words, they pave the way for an optimism without positivism.

In order to provide a concrete illustration to this probably abstract assertion, I would like to briefly refer to the foreword of *Architectural Body*. In the preface, Arakawa and Gins discuss possible titles for the book. They explain that a possible title would have been *Constructing Life*, but it didn't work because their project has more to do with "recasting and reconfiguring life rather than with an out-and-out constructing of it."

But we can also think of the definition of their method they give in *Architectural Body*:

> Having observed near and far how the body moves through its surroundings, having thought lengthily of still other ways to surround it, and having built a few tactically posed surroundings, we now notice ourselves to have been tracing an architectural body, or at least a landscape for one. (xi)

This passage stresses both the observation principle which is crucial to their work and the back and forth movement between the observation of the given, conceptualization and potential alteration of the concept if it turns out not to be appropriate.

I would now like to return to the question of the utopian quality of the project and argue that it is not so much a utopian projection as the materialization of a mental landscape, of what I will call later an *inscape*.

3. A Case in Point: Yoro and The Prototype House as The Objectivation of A Mental Landscape

Far from being curbed by the rigidity of a grid, Yoro challenges the rigidity of the map-inspired patterns projected onto it, and can be read as the materialization of some of our representations of the world we live in—as if it were some allegorical representation of how we see the world. It is therefore not a utopia but the exteriorization of an inscape. I propose to substantiate this rather elliptical claim with an analysis of the Yoro project and some of the houses designed by Arakawa and Gins.

The site of Yoro, built in Japan between 1993-1995, could be described as something between a recreation park and a theme park. Yet unlike most parks in which everything is designed for the better, there is a strong realistic streak to the whole concept. The landscape is hilly, making it difficult for the visitor to get around, and the slopes are so steep that it becomes potentially dangerous to walk in the park. There are even signs that warn the brave visitor to beware of steep slopes. In other words, reality is introduced into this apparently fictitious setting. What is introduced is a form of hyperreality in the sense that the visitor is made to experience things with a heightened degree of awareness. At every moment and with every step he takes, he may lose balance and fall, hence a constant awareness of the body.

One may also read Yoro as an allegory of our world, with its changing geography and its elasticity and even plasticity. Many theorists willing to understand changes in contemporary life have studied the way new means of transportation have brought certain places together while widening the gap between others that are not geographically very far apart but that are not connected by modern means of transportation—so much so that there seems to be a compression of time and space between influential places, while the geographical distance between two minor towns or villages seems to have increased (McLuhan[3]). In other words distances have become increasingly measured in terms of time—the time it takes to go from one place to another—rather than in terms of the actual distance in miles or kilometres. Hence the idea of elasticity I have put forward. In Yoro, places which seem close enough on the map are in actual fact

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[3] Marshall McLuhan had perceived these changes and new tendencies as early as 1967. To him, the world was a "global village," a place where distances had suddenly shrunk (3).

difficult to access, and as such they are distant in terms of time. What comes out of this only superficially artificial landscape where nature reclaims its rights is the fact that distances are to be thought of in terms of effective distances rather than in kilometric ones.

Yoro is not the only work that embodies our representation of today's elastic geography. Some of the houses for example illustrate another key concept of contemporary life: its changeability and transitory dimension. Boltanski, Chiapelle or Bauman, to name only a few, have evidenced the discontinuity of the post-modern experience: the fact that our lives no longer seem to be a logical progression towards a clearly defined goal but a chaotic progress from one transitory episode to the next, without a goal or *telos*. The idea of transitoriness is often found in Arakawa and Gins, especially in the *Infancy House* (*Reversible Destiny* 284-5). This prototype has transitory spaces that prepare the visitor for the room he is about to enter. In the *Infancy House*, passageways mimic the next room so that the visitor can project himself into the adjoining room before he has even left the one he is in. In other words, this house leads you to experience what it feels like to be given the impression that you are still somewhere you have left or that you are already somewhere else when you have not left the place you were and still are in. The result of this perplexing experience is a blurring of the frontier between places, which disrupts their existence and questions the very notions of their authenticity and intrinsic differences.

At this stage we can ask the following question: are the works of Arakawa and Gins only mimetic, do they limit themselves to providing and immortalizing the way we see the word around us? Or is there a programmatic and pragmatic value to their work? Arakawa and Gins also provide remedies, not by altering the environment but by working on the individual himself, which then again may be a lot less utopian than the idea that we should change the world around us.

I would like to give two examples: In Yoro the visitor is literally thrown off balance and is made to adjust and think of every move very carefully. In the limited time frame of the visit, the visitor is thus made to leave reality and enter a new environment characterized by new parameters—which in itself constitutes an experience of reversed destiny, in the sense that the visitor is taken back to the days when as a child he had to learn to control his body. But at the same time he is still an adult; he is not reduced to being an infant, but

made to learn in a limited amount of time and with the experience he already has to adapt to a new environment. In other words, he is trained or retrained to use his body in a different context, but also to use fully his capacity to act and decide. And the capacity to make decisions is precisely one of the things that have been most discussed in relation to post-modernity. In fields as varied as literature, philosophy, politics or sociology theorists have argued that there is a crisis of the post-modern psyche, in the sense that the post-modern man can no longer think of himself as a subject in a grand narrative (Hassan, Hutcheon, Harvey). In other words, his awareness of the limited influence of his political involvement does not stimulate him into action; it does precisely the opposite. And on a larger scale, it hampers political action. If there is one thing Yoro does, it creates a context that forces the visitor to make choices and come up with a competent reaction to unexpected situations. Instead of being reduced to passivity by the immensity of the task, the visitor is prompted into action, and this, we may argue, is part of a strategy of empowerment.

The last example I would like to give links Yoro to houses designed by Arakawa and Gins. Yoro can also be read as an allegory of the vertigo of contemporary man with a foot on each continent and who potentially loses touch with the local. Theorists like Appadurai have evidenced the fact that contemporary man is caught in international networks—in what Appadurai terms "scapes," like the technoscape, the mediascape, the financescape—which offer him the illusion of unlimited access to the world around him, beyond the confines of the local or even the national. Yet in the process, the tie with the local often deteriorates. Regarding the way spatiality is envisaged in *Architectural body*, it seems to me that the emphasis is on continuity between the body and its surrounds. There is a lot more to the *Snail House* described in *Architectural Body* than meets the eye. The *Snail House* can trivially be described as a tent without the pitches. And yet the concept it is based on is a lot more complex in the sense that it reconfigures the relation between man and his geographical surround in terms of continuity, but also in terms of proportion and even need (and here of course we could link this to Bauman's analysis of the way consumer society creates needs and recycles the waste produced by goods not really needed). The idea behind the project is that when you enter a room, the material expands and adapts itself to your needs and movements. There is no waste in

the *Snail House*, so to speak; it meets the needs of the individual without overwhelming him while always maintaining a continuity with the individual. It never becomes a disjuncted object but a spatial continuum that comes into existence and evolves with the body (hence the expression "organic architecture" I used earlier).

Conclusion

The starting point of this paper was the status of the *Architectural Body* Project—what to make of it and how to read it. I hope to have showed that it is not only a utopia, it is a project with a vision and a *praxis*. Arakawa and Gins do not only bring out our inner, unclear and unvoiced perception of the world around us, they also employ a pragmatic approach, a tentative praxis towards a setting in motion which acts upon the body. It reconfigures a human in his or her body, to take up an expression used in the foreword to *Architectural Body*, and literally regenerates it. Their stance is both critical and sceptical of some aspects of modernity, and yet has the optimism of modernity in a postmodern era. Rather than opting out, for fear of not having a place in the grand narrative, Arakawa and Gins lay the basis for a new form of commitment which starts with an active reconfiguration of man's surrounds for and by the body. It is not a disjunctive approach but one that aims at restoring some sort of continuity between man and his surrounds through the body.

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Preceding an Architectural Body

Chris L. Smith

The second sentence of the preface to the text *Architectural Body* (2002) is one that is both perplexing and provocative. The preface reads like a discussion. The topic of the discussion is the titling of the text and one imagines it is a discussion between the text's authors Madeline Gins and Arakawa. The sentence occurs in quotation marks and states: "If only readers could come to it having some sense of what the architectural body is."

This chapter focuses on this second sentence and in particular that which is perplexing and provocative about it. This is not to preclude the remainder of the text but rather this intensity of focus on the second sentence is a means to access all that occur after it. The chapter explores this one sentence as an opportunity to investigate that which *precedes* the architectural body. The intent here is not to reconstruct a history of the architectural body but to explore the sense or logic of its configuration. I must declare that this second sentence is approached from the perspective of architectural theory, and in particular that discourse which focuses on the body/architecture/text relation.

Keywords: Architectural theory; Body of Architecture; Madeline Gins; Arakawa.

1. "Come to It"

The second sentence of Arakawa and Gins's *Architectural Body*: "If only readers could come to it having some sense of what the architectural body is" (ix), is perplexing because of what it suggests, something about the habit of thought related to architectural bodies and what is more commonly called in architectural theory the *body of architecture*.

      The most obvious and productive ambiguity of the sentence relates to the third person neuter pronoun: the word 'it.' Though the topic of the dialogue that forms the preface of the text and graces the soft cover of the English language edition is seemingly the title of the text, *Architectural Body*; it is not clear whether in this sentence the authors are referring to the title, to the text, or to the body constructed within it: the architectural body itself. Likewise there might be

simultaneity to the intent: the title, the text and the body to which it refers may be simultaneously implicated: to "come to it," "if only readers could come to it" (ix) may be to come to it all (text, title and body) and all at once. Such simultaneity would seem apt when engaging with the discourses related to text, architecture and the body. Much of the ongoing exploration of the body-architecture relation involves consideration of the discursive impact of the body. Following the linguistic turn of the 20th Century the body of architectural theory is considered operative in the discursive environment: the body performs in that discourse, it creates its own openings, it can transform and con-figure the discourse just as the discourse transforms and configures it.

Thus, though there is no wish to overly complicate the analysis of Arakawa and Gins's architectural body it will be necessary to "come to it" with questions of assemblage and connection, and questions concerned with the sense and the logic of the text in which it is operative. A number of notions that emerge in the work of Gilles Deleuze and in his collaborative work with Félix Guattari will aid this consideration of what Arakawa and Gins refer to as the architectural body, the *organism that persons*, and that which precedes it. These conceptual tools are engaged in order that we can "come to it" anew.

2. "Some Sense of What The Architectural Body Is"

A second perplexity to the second sentence emerges when one assumes that the 'it' of the sentence is referencing an architectural body (either singularly or simultaneously to the title and the text). The suggestion that a reader would not presently have "some sense of what an architectural body is" (ix) is an odd one, or at least this seems odd to anyone engaged in architectural theory. The notion of an 'archi-tectural body' is one that has pervaded the discourse of architecture, and anyone who has even tentatively ventured into architectural discourse will have a *sense* of what an architectural body is, or at least a sense that precedes a reading of Arakawa and Gins's text.

So what is the contemporary sense of the architectural body that one does (or does not) have? Body constructs that occupy places within architectural discourses tend to be collectively referred to as the "body of architecture." This term is not a recent innovation but rather a long-enduring appropriation. It is appropriated from the antique architectural treatise *De Architectura* where Vitruvius repeatedly

describes his text as "writing the body of architecture" (9.8.15; 6 pref 7). The term is, however, used across the discourse of architectural theory whether that body operates in modes that are classical Vitruvian, humanistic, psychoanalytical, phenomenological, formalistic, post-structural, etcetera. In architecture Vitruvian man operates as what Deleuze and Guattari might describe as a "conceptual persona" (*What is Philosophy?* 65).

For Deleuze and Guattari philosophy as the practice of concept creation involves recourse to particular characters or conceptual personae that speak in and through the utterances of a given philosophy: "[C]onceptual personae are […] the true agents of enunciation" that chart the concrete and corporeal consequences of ideas (*What is Philosophy?* 65). It is because a concept is incorporeal that it must be "incarnated" or "actualised" in bodies (21). If the body is that which enacts particular thoughts, it is the conceptual persona that may simultaneously negotiate the territory of body and thought. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, for example, Deleuze and Guattari invoke the "nomad" who is aligned with a singular people or tribe rather than a universal thinking subject as a means to evoke and investigate the concept of the "war machine." For Deleuze and Guattari conceptual personae negotiate the territory between the corporeal and the incorporeal relation to thought: "Conceptual personae are thinkers, solely thinkers, and their personalized features are closely linked to the diagrammatic features of thought and the intensive features of concepts" (What is Philosophy? 69).

There are definite phases in architectural theory where specific connections exist between the diagrammatic features of thought and the personalized features of Vitruvian man. If one is to negotiate the *sense* of the architectural body (or the body of architecture) it is difficult to neglect that inclination in architectural theory for placing the Vitruvian body in a central position and letting it speak for the body-world relation. The Vitruvian body-world relation is one that is general and analogical. This tradition is documented in Vitruvius' description of symmetry and proportion: "On symmetry: In Temples and in the Human Body" in the *Ten Books of Architecture:*

> [S]ince nature has designed the human body so that its members are duly
> proportioned to the frame as a whole. It appears that the ancients had good
> reason for their rule, that in perfect buildings the different members must be
> in exact symmetrical relations to the whole general scheme. (73)

Since Vitruvius, considerations of architecture as organism, as body, or as receptor of bodily geometry have flourished (Steadman, *The Evolution of Designs*; Rykwert, *The Dancing Column*; Dodds and Tavernor, *Body and Building*). The tradition of letting a Vitruvian body speak for what the architectural theorist Dalibor Vesely refers to as the "primary tradition": the world-body "articulation"; strangely remains intact even when it is the very same Vitruvian body construct that is often under attack (Vesely 30). Contemporary discourse not only takes its focus as the original Vitruvian body but that same persona is often used as a counter-point for much theory. Generating particular animosity amongst late 20th and early 21st century architectural theorists is the revitalization of that persona in the early 20th century by those who sought to 'humanize' architecture. Geoffrey Scott's *The Architecture of Humanism* is a much-referenced case in point:

> Architecture that is spacious, massive and coherent, and whose rhythm corresponds to our delight, has flourished most, and most appropriately, at two periods, antiquity and the period of which antiquity became the base – two periods where thought itself was humanistic. The centre of that architecture was the human body; its method, to transcribe in stone the body's favourable states; and the moods of spirit took visible shape along its borders, power and laughter, strength and terror and calm. (239)

The Architecture of Humanism maintains an enduring legacy in contemporary discussions of the body of architecture. Many late 20th Century constructions of an architectural body originate as reactions against the metaphysical pieties of early 20th Century humanism. The striations of humanism, based on the anthropocentrism of the classical tradition and the Cartesian dialectic imaged as the symbolic assemblage of Vitruvian man and Euclidean geometry, form both an obvious and emblematic site of confrontation for architectural theorization intent on reforming an architecture based on the Vitruvian persona reinvigorated by Scott.

The late-20th- and early-21st-century discourse of the body of architecture reflects both an explicit self-consciousness about theorists' utilization of body constructs and a new scepticism of rhetorical strategies embedded in architectural discourse. The body of architecture that emerged as a response to humanism did not emerge independent from philosophical currents. Two modes of the body of

architecture that maintain positions within contemporary discourse emerged from the texts of phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

The North American architectural theorist Robert McAnulty critiques the phenomenological body of Alberto Pérez-Gómez and the psychoanalytic body of Anthony Vidler, in his poignant 1992 essay "Body Troubles." It was an essay that set the agenda for discussions of the body of architecture for the following decade. McAnulty opens his essay with a critique of the classical body nostalgia of Scott's *Architecture of Humanism*. McAnulty's target is not only the body construct but the impact of language, of discourse, on architectural assemblages. He characterizes a state of affairs where the task is to rid the Vitruvian body of the dangerous illusion of the anthropocentric analogue. Employing Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* in considering the politics of the bodies in question, McAnulty traces a history of the altered sense of the body in architecture, as a rejection of the centric body of humanism (182). McAnulty critiques the *revelatory* body proposed by Pérez-Gómez and the *repressed* body proposed by Vidler in a manner which spells out the problem of the architecture/body/text assemblage.

For Pérez-Gómez the question of that which is considered a necessary (re)novation within architecture is primarily formulated as an attack on the Cartesian construction of reality through the model of phenomenology (26-9). He links the 'continuum' of the "mysteriously related" body and world to a notion of transcending death. In a manner that might warrant a citation in *Architectural Body*, Pérez-Gómez suggests that it is the sentiment of "transcendence" that the body of architecture can incite, where "[a]uthentic architecture has always enabled man to come to terms with his mortality and transcend it" (28). One can read in Pérez-Gómez the appeal to the *authentic*, the *coherent* and the *real* that is present in much of Heidegger's phenomenology. Pérez-Gómez's renovation of the humanist body is articulated with reference to the drawings of bodies in the architectural work of John Hejduk. Pérez-Gómez describes Hejduk's architectural body constructs as "marvellously animated machines with brilliant suits of armour and scintillating eyes" and suggests that through the animistic body we are made aware of a transcendent life (26). It may be wondered whether the "suits of armour" of Hejduk's bodies are a protection of stable identity. Likewise, they may be the protection of

psychological identity also described in terms of armour by Jacques Lacan in "The Mirror Stage":

> The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation–and which manufactures for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic–and, lastly, to the assumption of the *armour of an alienating identity*, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. (4-5, emphasis added)

Utilising the developmental narrative of Lacan's 'Mirror Stage,' the occurrence of the 'transcendent' of Pérez-Gómez is read within a psychoanalytic model as "repression" by the architectural theorist Vidler in his account of a (re)turn of the body in *The Architectural Uncanny* (69-82). Continuing Pérez-Gómez's attack on the humanist world/ body dualism, Vidler's body was to privilege a concept of *reciprocity* over Pérez-Gómez's phenomenological notion of *continuum*. The "alienating identity" of which Lacan speaks is the identity of a body alien to its own image. For Vidler, the body and the instrumental world have a reciprocal relationship in that one necessitates the other in order to conceive of itself. Thus architecture, as a projection of the interiorized body, becomes bodily. Vidler suggests that architecture possesses the ability to cause a perception of "the disturbing ambiguity of the uncanny" in that it can "return" that which had been repressed (in this case, the pre-mirror stage fragmented body). He suggests that "in this context it would be, so to speak, the return of the body into an architecture that had repressed its conscious presence that would account for our sense of disquiet" (79). In *The Architectural Uncanny* the return of the absent is architecture's reflection from the instrumental world as body back to the psychologically performative subject (from which the original expression emanated). McAnulty is troubled that both Pérez-Gómez's and Vidler's accounts of the body

> must be seen as reformulating the issue of the body and architecture *in terms fundamentally unchanged* from those of Geoffrey Scott. Both insist on a model that finds the body as an interiorized subject projecting itself onto an exterior world. As such, both fail to answer the challenges posed by Foucault's formulation of the subject as pure exteriority, the production of the inscription of the relations of power in culture. ("Body Troubles" 189-91, emphasis added)

The body constructs that architectural theory adopts and adapts from phenomenology and psychoanalysis rely upon the original Vitruvian construct. Both modes customarily characterize their innovations in terms of the Vitruvian body. Words prefixed with 're' such as 'renovation,' 'return,' 'reworking,' and 'rewriting' are used in these discourses to suggest the relationship they maintain with the classical Vitruvian body (McAnulty, "Body Troubles" 180-97). Difference in such accounts is understood as difference *to* and measured *from* a normative position that takes the form of the Vitruvian persona. Analogical construction promotes the 'reworking' of the Vitruvian form over the creation of the new or the instatement of an Other.

3. A Present "Sense of What the Architectural Body Is"

Recent discourses of the body of architecture have tended to take the negotiation of the world/body relation as their locus. A contemporary definition of the term 'body of architecture' may be, simply, a body construct that is implicated in architectural discourse. Implication in the discourse of architecture would, however, seems to be almost unavoidable. As the relation of importance to architecture has always been that which exists between body and context, any discourse delineating a relationship between the body and the world may be considered 'architectural.' Architecture is, as Arakawa and Gins suggest, "a second, third, fourth, and, when necessary, ninth (and counting) skin" (Gins and Arakawa xv-xvi). Much contemporary architectural theory would concur with this sentiment. *Body and Building*, edited by Dodds and Tavernor, would be a text in point. Dedicated to the scholarship of Joseph Rykwert,[1] the essays of the text document the impact of the Vitruvian body on architectural discourse. "The Architectonics of Embodiment," Vesely's contribution to *Body and Building*, concerns itself more directly with the notion of analogy than the other essays of the text that are, nonetheless, content to partake in its habituation (28-43).

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[1] Joseph Rykwert's testament to the endurance of the body-architecture relationship, *The Dancing Column*, is an exceptional work of scholarship. It begins and ends (however) in the order of analogy.

There have been significant attempts to negate the Vitruvian world-body relation in architectural theory. Notable amongst these are the architect Peter Eisenman's indirect engagements with Chomsky's linguistics and then direct engagements with Jacques Derrida; Marco Frascari's consideration of the monster and the grotesque body in his text *Monsters of Architecture*; and the work of Greg Lynn which deals explicitly with Deleuzean notions of *becoming* and the *new*. Lynn's explorations of Deleuzean notions through architectural theory, and particularly as they relate to the body are collected in two publications: *Folds, Bodies and Blobs: Collected Essays* and *Animate Form*. However, the interiority of architecture as a task often means that notions of pure exteriority (of the monstrous or the *new*) remain notional and with little relation to the architectural project. In a 1998 paper, "It's Out There… The Formal Limits of the American Avant-Garde," Michael Speaks enters into a consideration of the work of Lynn via a critique of Cardiff Bay Opera House Competition proposals. His broad concern is the way in which the issue of 'form' tends to present itself as an interior limit-condition for architecture:

> Lynn and Eisenman are literally pulling form in opposite directions. Lynn wants new forms which answer to new, exterior conditions, but he neglects the critical question raised by Eisenman about the interiority of architecture; about, in other words, what architecture is and does. (30)

It is the teleology of architectural production that is Speaks' concern. That is, when architecture (what it is and does) is the pre-ordained outcome of a process, then the process of architectural production is teleological and any creation of a body construct in architectural theory seems bound to that end. This problem of architectural (in many respects formal) teleology is also articulated in the disjointed and at times pained exchange of letters initiated in 1985 between Eisenman and Derrida, as they attempt to coordinate a competition entry for the design of Parc de la Villette in Paris in the early 90s (Kipnis and Leeser).

Although a concept or conceptual persona derive a necessity from historically determined problems, they are transformative and may be taken up, used, and renewed throughout history and across disciplines. This consideration allows the present chapter to deal with the historical and disciplinary instance of emergences of particular body constructs, whilst simultaneously suggesting that such emer-

gences are not tied to the problems they originally address. So, whilst this "sense of what the architectural body is" historically precedes Arakawa and Gins' architectural body, I will concede that the *preceding* may be historical without it necessarily being conceptual.

The sentence, "If only readers could come to it having some sense of what the architectural body is" is provocative in that it tends to question the habitual thinking surrounding the architectural body and the discourse concerned with the body-world or body-architecture relation. Given that there is a virtual (historiographic) understanding of what an architectural body might be, then perhaps Arakawa and Gins's suggestion that we do not have some sense of what the architectural body is, is to suggest that the sense we do have of it is inaccurate, inflexible, needs adjustment, or is just plain *wrong*. The sentence might likewise be suggesting that what in architectural theory is often called the "body of architecture" has no relation to the architectural body about which Arakawa and Gins are concerned.

So, if the historical/disciplinary sense of the architectural body is inaccurate, what precedes the "architectural body"? And is it less problematic than the continued re-working and re-referencing of the Vitruvian body or the teleologies of the 'new' bodies engaged in architectural production?

4. "If Only"

A clue to the emergence of the architectural body can be found in the second sentence. The second sentence is not merely provocative by implication but also literally. It begins as a plea: "*If only* readers could come to it." If only: the suggestion that something is not as it should be; a longing for something, or somewhere, or someone; a lack; an expressed desire; the introduction to a polemic or a self-help guide. If only: the suggestion of a status quo which is in a crisis state that needs escaping, or, as it occurs in the work of Arakawa and Gins, the introduction to a *crisis ethics* for a crisis state. For Arakawa and Gins the crisis at hand is the "death sentence": the inevitability of mortality (xvi). The antithesis of this is (pragmatically) the "war on mortality" (xviii) or what they call a "crisis ethics":

> an ethics that permits no category of event, not even mortality, to be set
> aside for special treatment, and that considers there to be nothing more

> unethical than that we are required to be mortal shall be called a *crisis ethics*. (xviii)

There is not merely diagnostic skill at play here. Arakawa and Gins not only *discover* the problem but profess a solution. What precedes the architectural body is a crisis state or state of emergency and an ethics designed to negotiate, negate, this state. The repeated definition of architecture as a "tentative constructing toward a holding in place" (23, 48, 51, 59 and 69) takes on poignancy when the state around it is described as one of crisis. What might be considered a conservative act "to hold in place," what might have read as retaining the status quo or of preserving the hegemony of a context, reads more as a reactionary act when the state itself is considered to be one of emergency and crisis.

A more generous reading might suggest that Arakawa and Gins's notion of the 'crisis' might relate to Michel Serres's notion of chaos. The long-running argument of Serres is that although philosophy and the sciences have been instrumental in establishing laws of logic and rationality that have been crucial to our present understanding of ourselves and our universe, one of the most pressing tasks of thought is to recognize that such points of order are islands in a sea of chaotic multiplicity (Serres and Latour 127-9; Serres 3-34). Deleuze and Guattari pick up this notion in articulating the difference between art, philosophy and science in terms of their relationships with chaos in their last collaborative text *What is Philosophy* (203).

Arakawa and Gins's use of the 'crisis' is however focussed on a particular and pivotal crisis and not on a universal characteristic. The crisis exists not as an investment in the complex fluidities that life entails but as a prompt to the resolution of the tail-end of life. The conceptual persona emerges in an unfortunately heroic guise in response to an unfortunately distressed call: "If only" we did not die; "If only" a body could save us…

5. "What the Architectural Body Is"

It is not only a crisis state that precedes the architectural body, but there is an existing body construct, or way of being, that acts as the corporeal material of the architectural body. According to Arakawa

and Gins, "[t]he organism that persons is the first step on the path to the architectural body" (2).

The organism that persons is described in a way that resonates in some manner with Deleuze's own descriptions of the body. The organism that persons is an assemblage. It is a multitude, a swarm of sites that is configured as one (Arakawa and Gins 5): "an organism that persons lives as a community" (Arakawa and Gins 98) and simultaneously as "one person at a time" (Arakawa and Gins 91). Deleuze turns to the problem of the configuration of a subject in his 1962 study of Nietzsche, when he suggests forces are the potentials for acting and being acted upon which constitute bodies as bodies of a particular kind and where "every relationship of forces constitute a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social or political" (40). We can find a very similar sentiment in Arakawa and Gins:

> We have adopted the admittedly clumsy term "organism that persons" because it portrays persons as being intermittent and transitory outcomes of coordinated forming rather than honest-to-goodness entities. (2)

If the organism that persons precedes the architectural body, then it also precedes architecture itself. According to Arakawa and Gins, "[a]rchitecture, in anyone's definition of it, exists primarily to be at the service of the body" and it follows that "[t]he question arises as to what the body is in the first place" (xi). This would seem to be an inversion of Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the conceptual persona: a body that is constructed *in response* to as opposed to one that emerges *in connection* with the diagrammatic features of thoughts. Arakawa and Gins' organism that persons is also an investment in the foundational or ordering capabilities of the body rather than the singularities that might configure a body "in the first place."

However, the question of what precedes the architectural body might not be that simple. If the organism that persons precedes the architecture, for Arakawa and Gins the best means of *assessing* or altering that body is architectural: "Theoretical constructs as to the nature of person can be assessed in a thoroughgoing manner through—and in the end, only through—architectural construction" (xxi). Thus, though the organism that persons is described in terms of the 'intermittent' and 'transitory,' access to it is through methods which might be applied to material entities. Though there is clear

precedence given to the body over architecture the poststructural impulse to challenge such boundaries that might exist between body-world is very much a part of the architectural body notion. "The unit for consideration, that which is to be measured and assessed, should be the body taken together with its surroundings" (xx). This sentiment is likewise expressed in the text in the description of a horse and cart assemblage (xvii). For Arakawa and Gins, this assemblage is "what the architectural body is."

6. "Sense"

What is most fascinating about the text *Architectural Body* from an architectural perspective is the way in which it renegotiates the Vitruvian world-body pact of architectural theory and the teleology of architectural production, although 'renegotiate' is probably the wrong word. What the architectural body of Arakawa and Gins does is not to negotiate with existing propositions of body constructs at all. Although the Vitruvian persona does not form the norm that it does in other discourses there is still strange attractors to which Arakawa and Gins' architectural body is prone. The text *Architectural Body* abounds with references to something, somewhere that precedes the architectural body: there is a repetitive referencing implied in the prefix 're' of 'reconfigure,' 'reorder' and 'reinvent,' for example (xvii-xviii). There is a distinct referentiality to the text—and importantly it is not self-referentiality.

Nor is this referentiality one that is directed toward architectural production. The teleological drive toward architecture, that preoccupies many critiques of body constructs in architectural theory is not a result of the architectural body. Architecture is not an outcome but rather part of the very equation of the architectural body. It is by this logic that Arakawa and Gins can pragmatically deploy the teleologies of the architecture: "If you want to do the impossible, should you be desirous of tilting at windmills, why not build to your own specifications the windmills at which you wish to tilt?" (xix). For Arakawa and Gins, you build windmills that you can tilt—if you wish to tilt a windmill. This constitutes a stage-setting for what one wishes to happen and as such pre-empts the event rather than an architecture.

The persistent use of the prefix 're' in Arakawa and Gins' text is not a referencing to that which precedes the architectural body

historically nor to a necessarily predetermined architectural outcome. I would argue that the referencing is to a logic, to a *sense*, that precedes. It is a referencing to a foundation or a law, that is waiting to be revealed—to a prior stability that precedes a crisis state. The architectural body might have been what Guattari refers to in *Chaosmosis* as an "alterity that is itself subjective" if it were not for this logic which precedes it.

In a position that is broadly consistent with that taken across the collaborative works with Deleuze, Guattari commences *Chaosmosis* by suggesting that his research has led him to "put the emphasis on subjectivity as the product of individuals, groups and institutions" and depicts subjectivity as that which involves "no dominant or determinant instance guiding all other forms according to a univocal causality" (1). He rejects the phenomenological and psychoanalytic readings of subjectivity for the machinic. Rather than being inherent or dependent upon bodies and contexts, subjectivity, Guattari declares, is produced by multiplicitous forces and social fields, molar and molecular assemblages to which a subject has access or notably from which a subject is excluded. He defines this exclusion in terms of "the ensemble of conditions which render possible the emergence of individual and/or collective instances as self-referential existential territories, adjacent, or in a delimiting relation, to an alterity that is itself subjective" (*Chaosmosis* 9). This alterity cannot be understood as the repressed dehiscence that Vidler found fascinating in *The Mirror Stage* (Lacan 4). There is nothing primordial about Guattari's notion of alterity. Guattari suggests that theoretical standpoints actually create subjectivity (by inclusion and alterity). He specifically accuses the Freudian and Lacanian schools of psychoanalysis of creating new forms of subjectivity: of *producing* hysteria, infantile neurosis, psychosis, and family conflict, whilst alleging to discover what was previously at hand:

> It's no longer a question of determining whether the Freudian Unconscious or the Lacanian Unconscious provide scientific answers to the problem of the psyche. From now on these models, along with the others, will only be considered in terms of the production of subjectivity … [for] every individual and social group conveys its own system of modelising subjectivity. … None of them, whether fantasmatic, delirious or theoretical, can be said to express an objective knowledge of the psyche. (10-1)

It is the problem of assigning a logic of discovery to creation that concerns Guattari. It is this same "production" of a logic of discovery that I think occurs in Arakawa and Gins' text and that fosters the emergence of the architectural body. The mode of Arakawa and Gins' text is that of presenting a series of solutions to the problems that they previously identify. In this way the politics of the *Architectural Body* appears to be a politics of constructivism (Gins and Arakawa xii). It is different from the constructivism of Deleuze and Guattari, but more like the constructivism of much architectural pedagogy: a constructivism based on the discovery and articulation of problems as a key means to resolving those same problems. This often involves articulating a problem as an opportunity.

Another way of saying this is that the logic of the text is one of addressing a preceding tension by uncovering that which is antagonistic to it and then deploying that as a solution. Thus, a discovered 'crisis state' might be looked at as an opportunity for a 'crisis ethics.' For Arakawa and Gins this logic of antagonism, premised on an initial 'discovery' involves identifying a crisis state that precedes a crisis ethics which in turn precedes an architectural body.

The problem is not that something precedes. Indeed preceding is perhaps as inescapable as mortality. A conceptual (atemporal) preceding necessarily occurs. Even in the case of texts which productively utilize idiosyncratic or fresh terminologies, such as that of Arakawa and Gins, there is a need to determine in existing language the necessary communicable referents; and this determination necessarily precedes. No, the real problem of that which precedes the architectural body is the insinuation of that which was previously at hand: the articulation of creation as discovery. This is the characteristic of Hegelian reconciliations and Hegel's demonstration of 'the one that divides into two' is another way of considering the logic that delivers the architectural body: the dialectical logic sees conflict (antithesis) as fruitful collisions of ideas from which a higher truth may be reached by way of synthesis. That is, an initial tension (a crisis state) is met by its antithesis (a crisis ethics) and the resultant synthesis or mediation (the architectural body) is the outcome or resolution of the opposites.

Hegel interpreted the dialectic of reason as a means to reality as a whole, rather than its abstracted parts, and thus giving a truer and deeper knowledge than analytic understanding. The implied character

of the initial thesis is considered to be a characteristic of its antithesis and the resultant synthesis. The problem of the dialectic is that the resolution was already written into the initial tension. That is, it is a simple process to trace the dialectic in reverse; to locate from the answer the question (in which the answer was contained), or to read the logic that produces the resolution, or to locate that which precedes the architectural body.

7. The Second Sentence

Arakawa and Gins's constructing of the body as "that which had it all" tends to render all other 'productions' of bodily potential as discovery, recovery, reordering, and reinventing. For Arakawa and Gins "each newborn organism-person-environment [is] an Atlas shouldering the world in its entirety" (3). In this way, the future of the body is, like the outcome of the dialectic, its past: that which precedes it. By this logic, a sense of the architectural body has always been there and has always been negotiated—it is written into that which precedes it.

The prompt of the second sentence of the preface to the text *Architectural Body* is not to establishing what an architectural body is, but rather establishing what is not already that same body. This would seem to be the crux—and the crisis—for all such constructions that rely upon the rhetoric of the discovery of that which is already there: If only readers could come to it *without* some sense of what an architectural body is.

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A Bioscleave Report:
Constructing the Perceiver

Jondi Keane

Arakawa and Gins's reversible destiny project is singular among contemporary investigations of the organism-environment. Their approach is based upon the reconfiguration of embodied processes. To this end, Arakawa and Gins's Bioscleave House is the first residence to be built for a person to conduct daily research, *in situ*, 'where living happens.' This paper will discuss the specific architectural features within Bioscleave House that allow persons to interrogate historically reinforced cognitive configurations such as the external observer or the affective phenomenal perceiver. Before reporting on my experiences in Bioscleave House, I will briefly discuss trends in contemporary research that provide a context for Arakawa and Gins's situated approach to the practice of embodied cognition.

Bioscleave House is Arakawa and Gins's first residential building. It consolidates 35 years of work exploring the extent of the site of "person." Consistent with their painting-puzzles, installations and reversible destiny house prototypes, *Bioscleave House* increases the diversity of environment information so that a person can track his/her perception and action under radically altered conditions. Procedural architecture, the built enactments of reversible destiny, offer novel environments devised to make a person's embodied responses perceivable. To this end, Arakawa and Gins devise architectural features that resemble and differ from natural and built-environments enough to halt automatic or habitual perceptual modes of perception. Analysis of "tactically posed surrounds" indicate that self-awareness is stimulated by the difficulty of taking a stable position as an observer or a perceiver. The descriptions of top-down conceptual processing and bottom-up perceptual learning are useful characterizations of the habitual cognitive systems that procedural architecture destabilizes. I see these to be roughly equivalent to descriptions such as the (internal) observer and perceiver; con-

figurations ritualized by the mind-body split. Not only do Arakawa and Gins reject the mind-body separation and the isolated positions or configurations it reinforces, they also refuse to separate the researcher from the *in-situ* context of the research.

In order to address the range of issues that might constitute a report on persons as "world-forming inhabitants," a philosophical investigation of the turn towards construction is necessary in light of efforts to move beyond postmodernism by "returning to the real."[1] To facilitate my discussion, I have broken the essay into two sections. In section one, I will briefly address current research concerning the gap between the observer and the one who experiences events. These include the revival of phenomenological and introspective philo-sophical projects by cognitive science and by the arts and humanities. Section two reports upon my experience in Arakawa and Gins's *Bioscleave House*, focusing on features of the house that require a person to re-evaluate abstraction in embodied terms. My conclusions will suggest the crucial difference between the perceptual learning produced by Arakawa and Gins's *architectural procedures* and the efforts in the arts, sciences and humanities to establish "a correlation between the biological level and the phenomenological one" (Petitot et al. 13), correlates with how the stable position of the observer is situated in relation to the ongoing *in-situ* events of the perceiver.

1. Contemporary Approaches to the Integration of Observer and Perceiver: Re-entry versus Revival

The onerous task of returning to the real and reinvigorating the explanatory power of art and science is achieved at the price of reduction, which, as Bohr observes, already excludes reality. For Arakawa and Gins, the question becomes, how may we re-enter Bohr's indeterminate reality and Heisenberg's uncertainty as operations of the real? Arakawa and Gins work under the assumption that the study of phenomena cannot and should not be separated from the production of the world as *lived*. In contrast with the use of data by

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[1]   Attempts to move art back towards the "real" are apparent in Hal Foster's *The Return of the Real* and Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, among others. These theorists insert the objective distance of the artist back into the temporality of the social and the production of social values.

most scientists, Arakawa and Gins's approach is consistent with Stuart Kauffman's assertion that "biospheres … persistently increase the diversity of what can happen next" (4). The lived world is constructed from the actual effects of uncertainty and indeterminacy that may arise from the juncture of perception and imagination.

There is a history of inquiries that have creatively bridged this gap. From Alfred Jarry's interrogation of the scientific imagination in *pataphysics* to André Breton's ironic suggestion that we do away with the imagination so that everything may be considered real, projects that factor in uncertainty allow fictive data to re-enter the domain of the actual. Where idealism meets realism, abstraction re-enters material processes as an organizational principle. The revival of ready-made and familiar projects becomes re-entry when representation is re-assessed to be a form of perception and action. The task is to break with the embodied habit of holding abstractions at a distance. Arakawa and Gins consistently attempt to turn things already formed back into movement.

Cognitive science and the "cognitive revolution" have revived Husserl's ideas in order to search for a new link that will reveal an invariant and unify the theory of mind. The arts and humanities have revived Bergson's ideas to allow for the dynamics and pragmatics of abstraction to be counted in the evolutionary workings of the organism.

For cognitive science, Husserl redresses the "explanatory gap" that now exists between the phenomenological mind that experiences and the cognitive physiological mind, resulting in a "mind-mind problem" (Petitot et al. 8-9). In "Beyond the Gap: and Introduction to Naturalising Phenomenology," Petitot, Varela, Pachoud and Roy suggest that phenomenological data is impossible to eliminate. Despite its persistence, they note that from a purely methodological point of view self-report is only used to disprove or contrast "what the subject really perceives as opposed to what she thinks she is perceiving" (Petitot et al. 12). In order to produce a truly scientific theory of mind, cognitive science only admits properties that are continuous with properties of natural science. Often the use of Husserl gets caught up in how to integrate his phenomenology into cognitive

science rather than how to integrate cognitive science into the body-wide processes of living.[2]

In the arts and humanities, Elizabeth Grosz's book *The Nick of Time* on Bergson, Nietzsche and Darwin is one example of the strategy of jumpstarting the re-integration of introspection, affect and evolutionary forces. Her scholarship fuels the contemporary trend to re-absorb the proliferation of abstraction(s) into the flow of becoming and the production of concepts of process. For Grosz, Bergson provides an ontological basis for theories of difference. "Intuition" allows differentiation within the "one-itself" to occur, while "duration" differentiates difference from becoming. For example, a person can perceive internal difference by slowing external difference, and a person can perceive external difference by enlarging internal difference (Grosz n.p.). Bergson provides a way of integrating abstraction into material processes that does not reduce or undo dualisms to free subordinate terms or circumvent dualistic tendencies, by proliferating dualisms as the very stuff of becoming. Through Grosz's re-reading, Bergson offers a method of discerning difference, allowing introspection to reach beyond usefulness [cognitive function] to touch the shared continuity or the "face" of objects (Grosz n.p.). Bergson's effort to integrate scientific and philosophical data within the individual's life-producing movements suggests that metaphysics, like Melville's God, must come out of the dictionary and into the streets. At both ends of the twentieth century, the movement into inner continuity is heralded as the way by which we can access the outer world.

Where cognitive science has reabsorbed the anti-naturalism of Husserlian phenomenology for the benefit of a naturalist perspective, the humanities have searched for ways to fold abstract systematicity into the situatedness of material systems. This constitutes the state of the politics and philosophy of change. Giorgio Agamben is a philosopher who, although committed to the history of ideas, approaches the biosphere by theorizing its systematicity. From the relations between things Agamben has extracted a more general system of relations such as the "signifier of the signifying function" (*Infancy and History* 84), the "intelligence of an intelligibility" (*The Coming*

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[2]   One might regard neurobiologist, Antonio Damasio's books *The Feeling of What Happens* (1999) and *Looking for Spinoza* (2003) as examples of the tendency to re-enter the relation of biological activity and mental function.

Community 2) and the "expropriation of all identity, so as to appropriate belonging itself" (*The Coming Community* 11). He charts the history of abstraction rather than the history of events, making absoluteness participate in its own separation as well as its inseparability from the pragmatics of realization.[3]

Historian Wayne Hudson's "constructive history" and "constructive utopianism" put forward an argument that grounds the possibility of change in an ontology of historical and social change. He proposes that a "utopian surplus" is available when the virtual as well as the actual are included in the production of institutional and organisational approaches to the social (2-3). The result would be an *embodied realism*, linked to the art of invention (Hudson 3). This approach resembles and adds to poststructural aims to set the imagination to work by forming judgments without a prior model espoused by Lyotard (61). In this way, Hudson's constructive approach reabsorbs the ideal, the fictive, and the impossible back into the construction of the social.[4] Whereas Lyotard suggests that "it is the artists that always establish the rules of a language game that did not exist before" (62), Arakawa and Gins agree with Hudson that the role of changing the rules must be wrenched from art and reabsorbed into the daily research of inventing oneself as a person.

2. Bioscleave Report: Invention and Assembly

Arakawa and Gins's *Reversible Destiny* project differs from revivals and critiques by turning towards re-entry which is made possible when the conditions of perception are built or made buildable. They state:

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[3] Books such as Rosi Braidotti *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Polity 2006) and Paul Bains' *The Primacy of Semiosis: An Ontology of Relations* (UTP 2006) purport to subvert the opposition of idealism and realism by taking a stand against the universalism of abstraction. Bradotti calls for ethical accountability that takes "Life" as the subject, not the object, of inquiry. Bains focuses on the claim that relations are external to their terms, arguing that therefore signs are relations whose 'being-toward-ness' provides a ontological basis for relation before the cognitive division of the real and the rational take hold. Both books support the current trend to resituate abstraction among embodied activities.

[4] Hudson observes that "the crucial point is that there is often merit in performing an action that then serves as a reference point for subsequent changes, even though there may have been no unproblematic basis for those changes before the action was performed" (5).

> Procedures that have not been made to be architectural are of limited
> interest to us. … It—procedure or procedural action—*has* to be linked to
> architecture as that is commonly defined. Then there is our definition of
> architecture: *a tentative constructing towards a holding in place*.
> ("Directions" 17)

Constructing the conditions of perception produces environments
that may aptly be described as "pre-adaptive" contexts or "adjacent
possibles," both concepts of self-organization discussed by Stuart
Kauffman (142-4).[5] The aim of *Reversible Destiny* is to supply the
process that may change ritualised structures into movement and
movement into *formation. Bioscleave House* promotes the disassembly
of automaticity and systematicity making it possible to propagate
organization and to assemble new organism-person-surrounds—first, by
training in a tactically posed surround, and then by returning to the
biosphere with the cleaving, coordinating and reconfiguring skills in
tow. "*Bioscleave* Report" is offered as the document of my attempt to
re-enter the sites of myself by noting how the position of the observer
changes as it passes through the configurations of lived experience.
From the differentials produced by this experience, I glimpsed what
Arakawa and Gins call "atmospheric intricateness" ("Directions" 25), a
condition that suggests the turbulent connection of sites across scales of
action in the organism-person-surround.

Originally I had planned to describe my interaction with each of
the eight steps in "The Directions for Architectural Procedure Inven-
tion and Assembly"[6] as I moved through *Bioscleave House*. Instead, I

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[5]   In *Investigations* Stuart Kauffman observes "the need to rebuild evolutionary theory as a
marriage of two sources of order in biology—self-organisation and selection" (xi). He
defines the "adjacent possible" as "all those molecular species that are not member of the
actual, but are one step away from the actual" (142). He also defines the pre-adaptive
problem of Darwin, observing that "in an appropriate environment a causal consequence of
a part of an organism that had not been of selective significance might come to be of
selective significance and hence be selected. Thereupon, the newly causal consequences
would be a new function available to the organism" (130). Kauffman argues that it is not
possible to pre-state the circumstances and context-dependent causal consequences of all
possible organisms.

[6]   The eight steps of the "Directions for Architectural Procedure Invention and Assembly" (Arakawa
and Gins, "Directions" 11-5) are followed by "Vital Contextualising Information" (Arakawa and
Gins, "Directions" 10-27). At the outset they advise: "These directions are based on the principles
and concepts of procedural architecture as adduced in the text *Architectural Body*" ("Directions"
10). They suggest: "Having read through the following eight steps once, spend time studying the
accompanying material (VCI) before attempting to invent and assemble an architectural
procedure" ("Directions" 11).

will summarize my attempts "to take a stand against one's own automaticity" ("Directions" 12) and focus on the affects and effects of the House design.

   Bioscleave House was devised as a heuristic tool for perceptual learning. It enables a person to deregulate exchanges between stored knowledge and environmental information. The tactically posed surround draws attention to isolated positions within the organism-person by devising discursive sequences to interact with top-down processing and tactically posed surrounds to activate bottom-up processing. Discursive sequences are as much a part of the surroundings as the physical features are. In *Architectural Body* (2002) Gins and Arakawa observe "what will need to be studied is which types and combinations of bodily movements are most conducive to an optimal tentative constructing towards a holding in place, and which constructed discursive sequences best constrain them" (59). Movements of these concurrent specificities "parlay indirectness" ("Directions" 21) and allow the "familiar to pass through itself" (*Sites of Reversible Destiny* 73).

> The body can yield answers through that which it subsists as, through the whole of itself, inclusive of its sequences of actions and the surroundings into which, in a variety of ways, it extends itself. The investigative work that can yield answers cannot be done in the abstract; it must, on the contrary, be done on-site where living happens. (*Architectural Body* xv)

Passing through all the sites of oneself increases "boundary sensations" that impact upon the perception of "identity boundaries" (Kawamoto 88) that apportion the organism-person-surround allowing an atmospheric sensation of connectedness to emerge. Through sensation, Arakawa and Gins explore co-extensiveness and singularity observing "that body and person are co-extensive up to a point—they share events but not extent" (*Sites of Reversible Destiny* 68). The extent of the site of person is a bio-topological question that must be posed through the environment.
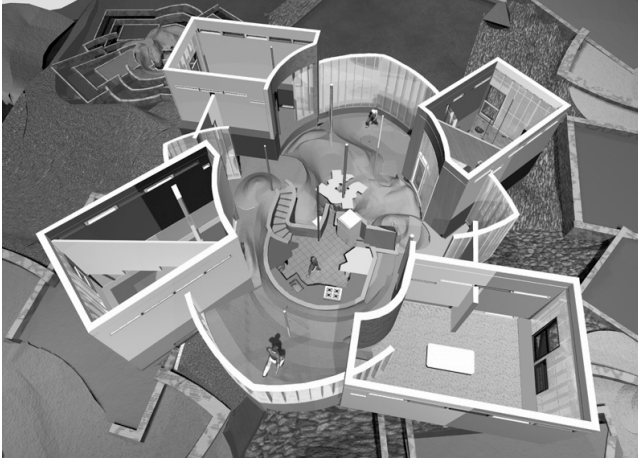
Figure 1. *Bioscleave House*

Experimental environments in the life sciences address questions directly to the organism, effectively omitting the person from the equation. Art environments often ask ironic questions that affectively move all the categories. Arakawa and Gins suggest that these modes of interrogation are insufficient and that a resident-researcher must have the tools to ask questions in a 360-degree manner. The complexity of a response means that effect and affect are intertwined. Arakawa and Gins call action resulting from this form of discernment "non-ironic irony" ("Directions" 20). Non-ironic irony would "parlay indirectness," for example taking Breton's ironic suggestion literally to see what embodied configurations emerge. Non-ironic irony provides a practical approach to re-entry, with formal operations (re-inversion) and tentative "open-ended double thinking" ("Directions" 20). Deleuze and Guattari cite Kafka's writing to give clear image of how the "unformed material expression" (similar to non-ironic irony) might appear: "It isn't a well formed vertical movement towards the sky in front of oneself, nor a question of breaking through the roof, but of intensely going '*head over heels and away*' no matter where even without moving" (6). This integrated understanding of top-down and bottom-up processing recognizes the practicality of fictive, affective and impossible abstractions.

Arakawa and Gins's explorations of organism-person-surround circumvent the findings of autopoieticians Maturana and Varela, who

insist upon the absolute separation between the organism and the observer [person]. The autopoietic organism is posited as a closed system. The "natural language" of the organism is separate from and unaffected by the descriptions[7] in the domain of the observer[8] which are without anatomical basis. But this does not seem consistent with their observation that "an organism can interact with its own internal state *as if* they were independent entities" (Maturana and Varela 13)— producing the very form of indirectness that Arakawa and Gins suggest may be deliberately practiced.

Procedural architecture deliberately constructs surrounds that anticipate the ways in which underdeveloped configurations of sensing may emerge and multiply. The coordinological skills that thrive as a result of these environmental features may be described as "pre-adaptive." Deploying bodily activity pre-adaptively inverts Maturana and Varela's 'as if' formula by appropriating the site where the 'as if' links perception to self-organization. This would mean that external descriptions of Arakawa and Gins's tactically posed surrounds allow interactions with external states *as if* they were internal because they are now understood to co-originate in the "organism that persons" (*Architectural Body* 1-4).[9] While cognitive science has rejected top-down models of cognition because it belongs to the domain of the observer separate from the operation of the organism,[10] Arakawa and Gins have not rejected top-down processing

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[7] Maturana and Varela define descriptions as the discourse generated in the domain of interactions with representations of communicative and orienting behaviours (29) and adamantly assert that the descriptions only map representation of the interactions (14) and are therefore considered to exist solely in the domain of the observer.

[8] Maturana and Varela note that the observer only describes himself describing (29). These descriptions do not partake in the natural language of the operations of the organism (31-5). According to Maturana and Varela, an autopoietic organism can only describe interactions into which the organisation of the living system can enter without losing identity (39).

[9] In *Architectural Body* Gins and Arakawa state: "When studying what goes on between a body-proper and its surroundings, it will be necessary to consider the extent to which person are behavioural subsets of the organism from which they emanate and out of which they compose themselves as agents of action" (2).

[10] Martin Rosenberg notes that cognitive science rejects a top-down model of the organization of information, in contrast to von Neumann and others who thought that a top-down model was somehow natural (164). He adds, "accompanying this rejection we find an embrace of a model of cognitive functioning which, while cognising top-down behaviour, (and its socio-cultural correlates), signals an investigation into bottom-up emergent properties. The term 'emergent properties' refers to a process of self-organisation with two related properties— distributed and enactive" (164).

outright. Rather, they consider top-down processing (conceptual, analytical, abstract) as another mode of body-wide thought-feeling.

In *Bioscleave House* there are three instances where Arakawa and Gins have tactically reduplicated a plan of the entire house so that a person must use body-wide sensing to process conceptual information.

- o The table in the sunken dining room is shaped like a plan of the house and turned at 90º to the actual house.
- o The ceiling of the bathroom has an image of the plan of the house.
- o The labyrinth in the garden uses multiple floor plans of the house in varying scales.

Each of these built-contexts makes a person simultaneously aware of the connection of bodily disposition to the acquisition of knowledge, while at the same time, drawing attention to the "fiction of place" (*To Not To Die* 6), the tentativeness of perception and the influence of action upon object-subject relationships.

The tactic of situating plans, or concepts of wholeness and totalized images, draws our attention to the fact that postural disposition influences learning and the processing of information. The benefits of standing (Nietzsche), walking (the peripatetic) or sitting for thought or meditation (lotus position) are widely accepted. We tacitly accept a variety of postural correlations, even if many are deemed personal preferences, for example whether a person likes to read lying down or sitting up. Astronauts have to learn to overcome the effects of motion, fatigue and zero gravity as well as environments for which terrestrial life leaves a person unprepared. It is fair to say that perhaps astronauts have pre-adapted to environmental conditions not available in the history or evolution of our biosphere. In the diversity of possible embodied configurations, astronaut training 'selects' configuration that may never have been selected. Likewise, the *Bioscleave House* produces diversity that the natural environment and the history of built-environment have not produced. The resident researcher, as a coordinaut, parlays the selection of embodied cognition for which he/she has not yet had occasion to exercise.

Looking down on the table while seated in the dining area, looking up at the ceiling while lying in the bath, or looking across the foreshortened floor plan of the garden labyrinth, each situated encounter requires unique body-wide and body-environment configuration. In

each case, the totalized image does not offer a *Gestalt* of the house, instead providing a different scale and context to measure critical resemblances ("disperse to contrast procedure"). One's bodily position to the plan and to the house is transposed and correlated with memory and is concurrent with other modes of sensing.
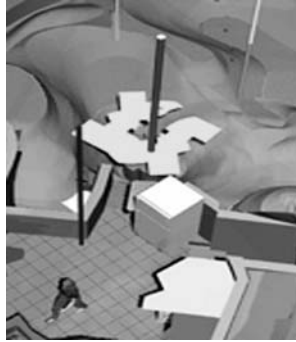

Figure 2. Dining Table in
Bioscleave House

Dining becomes an exercise in memory and transposition. Sitting at the table the miniaturized plan is seen obliquely. A person would have to crane his/her neck to cross-reference positions on the table with positions in the house in order to compare critical resemblances. The sunken dining room offers no view of the undulating floor, necessitating an additional transposition using the walls and/or ceiling to approximate the correspondence. "Perceptual landing sites" would be blurred into imaging landing sites, since the feature or events within perceptible range are not always directly observable.[11] This foregrounds the degree of approximation involved in the regard of observer or perceiver and suggests the degree to which we depend upon prior knowledge.

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[11] Arakawa and Gins devised landing sites and landing site configuration to think about world construction as involving three ways a body lands as a site. "A *perceptual landing site* lands narrowly as an immediate and direct response to a probable existent. An *imaging landing sites* lands widely … responding indirectly and diffusely to whatever the latter leaves unprocessed. … A *dimensionalising landing site* … [combines] the qualities of a perceptual landing site with those of an imaging one, coupling and coordinating direct responses with indirect ones, the formed with the formless" (*Architectural Body* 7-8).
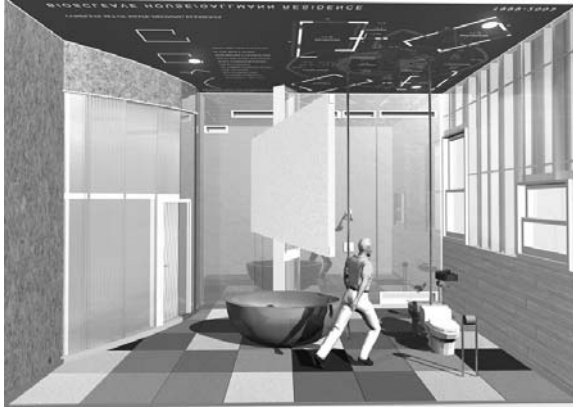
Figure 3. Bathroom of *Biscleave House*

Bathing becomes an exercise that makes persons aware of how they move the horizon to accommodate their body. Lying in the tub reading, often a person will not raise the book above the level gaze of the eye—a level that would be the horizon line if a person were standing. In contrast, the plan on the ceiling extends beyond comfortable viewing posture, but is not at a sufficient distance to view in one glance. This fragments the relation of body to plan to surrounds and makes the person aware that he/she constructs the unity of these partial perception-imaginings. The altered weight conditions of the tub might produce a floating sensation that could be used to imagine looking down on the floor plan. The graphic nature of the floor plan requires a different bodily mode of engagement than would be required by the thick material plan of the dining table. Using imaging landing sites to make the correspondence to memory in an inverted position entails the coordination of three established cognitive configurations.
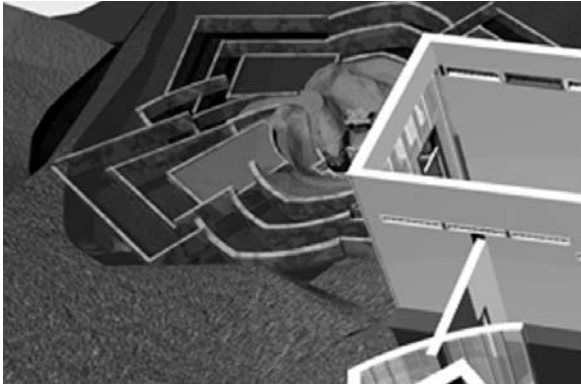
Figure 4. Labyrinth next to *Bioscleave House*

Walking in the garden labyrinth becomes an exercise in muscle memory and kinesthetic orientation. The labyrinth is approximately on a one-eighth scale. Looking at the ground while walking the labyrinth, a person would remember, to varying degrees of specificity, the placement of and the feeling of his/her steps within the house. The steps in the garden would have different terrain undulations underfoot. The scale of the soil, its texture would be similar, but the solidity would be different as the outside ground would be softer and aerated in contrast to the rammed earth floor. From the illustration (Figure 4) one can see that the labyrinth has concentric floor plans which would shift the way a person gauges, bio-metrically, the relation of current to prior proprioceptive and kinesthetic sensation. In this instance a person would draw upon several cognitive configurations but also need to factor-in scale and texture.

The interaction and potential integration of top-down *and* bottom-up processing can be initiated by either cognitive con-figuration. However, implementing change from the top-down (concept, plan or image) has become wrought with problems of immediate generalization and commodification. By guiding body-wide coordination through bottom-up processing, the embodied connections are separated and joined (cleaved) anew each time. For Arakawa and Gins, a person can practice cleaving and use the inconsistency and uncertainty of repetition as a prompt to re-enter and explore the sites of person.

Figure 5. Floor plan of *Bioscleave House*

The use of *procedural architecture* as a heuristic tool initiates a practice that erodes the authority of discourse, the homeostatic fidelity to identity, and the organism's commitment to closure. Combined with "Directions for *Architectural Procedure* Invention and Assembly" the disruptions I experienced in *Bioscleave House* were made more acute, resembling sea-sickness of a land lover alongside the excitement of a flaneur in a self-organizing city. My struggle to identify the indicators responsible for my unbalance, dismorphia and lack of orientation hinted at the insufficient coordination I possessed for dealing with new learning conditions. Uncertain boundaries and inconsistent points of reference left me no choice other than to assemble alternative modes of measure and engagement.

Figure 6. *Bioscleave* central room still under construction

Arakawa and Gins have deployed other tactical features in *Bioscleave House* that reposition the observer by presenting perceptual puzzles (from experimental structures in psychology) that cannot be unified or reintegrated from any vantage point. One such structure they have re-invented is the Ames room (Figure 7).

Entering the *Bioscleave House* through a breezeway connecting the existing F. L. Wright House (see Figure 1), a person must traverse many sets of stairs up and down to arrive at the entry to the central room (Figure 6). The steps up and down destabilize one's ability to judge the relationship of the interior floor to the ground outside, which makes a person all the more unprepared for the re-contextualised psychological experiment. The Ames room is an experimental structure that makes shallow space to appear deep, confounding the perception of distance by which to judge the height of a person in the space.

The photo by the visual psychologist Richard Gregory (Figure 8) shows that the 'illusion' or miscued perception of depth and size can be controlled by manipulating a single element: the floor. If the ability to perceive the floor is subtracted, reducing visual perception to a single plane, there is no need to truncate the room for visual effect. For psychology, the false perspective aids in the study of the relation of prior knowledge to precepts and expectations embedded in the act of, in this case, visual perception. Psychology is interested in data collection, whereas reversible destiny is interested in re-entry and ongoing application. Unlike procedural architecture, the purpose of experimental structures is not to make us aware of how we are experiencing the illusion that constructs these perceptions.
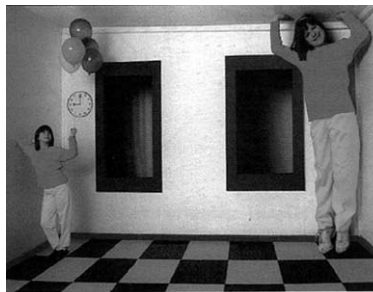

Figure 7. Ames room reconstruction

It is important to note that in contrast to psychological experiments, Arakawa and Gins use the features of the Ames room tactically and non-ironically to provide observational-heuristic benefits to the experiencing subject constructing his/her own perception.
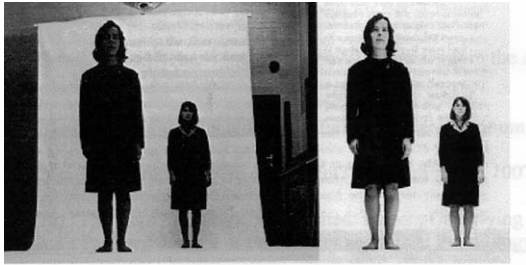

Figure 8. Ames room illusion subtracting the floor.

Since the features of the Ames room structure in *Bioscleave House* are not included for the benefit of an external observer, the resident-researcher can construct relationships with the surrounding by coordinating other modes of sensing that may provide an adequate measure. Instead of collapsing the perspective of the room, Arakawa and Gins have inverted the Ames-room effect, opening it along two divergent lines of perception and body-environment reference.[12]

First, the perceptually ambiguous undulating rammed-earth floor (rendered on the computer image in Figure 1) does not conform to a coherent horizontal plane. It thereby omits a steadying frame of reference that would normally connect proprioception and vision. Compounded by the placement of the windows—very high or very low in the rooms—a resident is unable to connect the interior ground to an exterior ground. As a result the floor is not consistent with the built environment nor does it produce continuity with the earth. The features of the central room distribute inhibitors for the perceptual recognition, which are usually obtained by cross-referencing relationships when moving through a house.

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[12] The discussion of the multi-level labyrinth and the use of the Ames room in Bioscleave House has been developed from a section of the article Keane, Jondi "Situating Situatedness through Æffect and the Architectural Body of Arakawa and Gins" *Janus Head—Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature, Continental Philosophy, Phenomenological Psychology and the Arts*. Ed. Shaun Gallagher. Special issue: *The Situated Body*, 9.2 (2007). Amherst: Trivium Publications. 437-58

Second, the visual measure used to locate one's body in relation to the pitch of the ceiling does not correspond to the changes in the floor, which vary inconsistently in relation to each other, giving the impression that the room slowly stretches and contracts. Experiencing two or more unrelated sets of cues regarding orientation, size, distance, location and balance, compounded by the absence of fixed points of reference, makes a person opt for momentary, event-based modes of relation rather than programmatic responses. The turn towards increased diversity through increased perception of difference differs significantly from the experimental objectives and the search for invariance in the life sciences.

The interaction of the floor and the ceiling in *Bioscleave* is reminiscent of the way Arakawa and Gins have used multi-level labyrinths in previous *Reversible Destiny* houses to operate on different parts and apportionments of the body in the surround. The multilevel labyrinths of *Critical Resemblances House* (1985) positions three labyrinths at different levels of the body. This allows a person to become aware of the separations and connections across the body, prompting body-wide perception and action. Unlike the multilevel labyrinths, the *Bioscleave House* suggest apportionments of the body that are linked to different modes of perceiving. In the multilevel labyrinths an architectural maze is situated at knee, torso and shoulder height so that the person navigates through a physical structure. In *Bioscleave House*, the absence of a visual horizon makes residents orient the top portion of the body visually and orient the lower portion proprioceptively.

To add to the disorientation, from each location in the central room I felt as though I were on higher ground. Moving faster around the central room to counteract the illusion of height, I noticed more and more asymmetry in my perception of the surroundings. I realized I had begun to construct a differential perception, with a built-in factor for anomalous relationships to compensate for my expectations of conventional built space. In a matter of hours I was reduced to guesswork in relation to the distribution of the weight, balance, size and relation to objects external to the house. At every turn *Bioscleave* the changes in elevation produce affects and effects that are required reconfigured connections. These reconfigurations act upon many operational systems and ritualized positions of engagement including: top-down and bottom-up processing, efferent and afferent transmis-

sion of impulses (toward and away from the central nervous system), organism and person, egocentric and exocentric position of the observer. Because *Bioscleave House* instigates mis-measurement in a continuous fashion, the thinking-feeling experienced while in the house reaches the point where the instability enters the automatic systems used to detect surrounds and stabilize the organism. Despite the fact that the inconsistencies of the house are fixed they only appear slowly and incessantly because they are distributed across many scales in the House and because the detail becomes perceptible after prolonged and varied perception. Checking and re-checking makes a person aware of the physiological time of perception, and in this way, the organism, the person, the observer and the subject intermingle and cleave. The newly articulated connections become flushed with landing sites, not unlike putting ice on an inflamed muscle to draw blood into that area.

The eight steps of Arakawa and Gins's "Directions for Architectural Procedure Invention and Assembly" constrain a resident-researcher to tasks that identify a specific purpose and guide him/her to edit the selection of an X most useful in the engineering of a *reversible destiny*. Based upon my interaction with the house, I chose to investigate gravity through the perception of balance and use this line of inquiry as the basis of my nascent architectural procedure. Registering gravity occurs through a compilation of sensory modalIties. To anchor a mode of measurement, a pattern can act as a point of reference. For example, a specific relation can be a point of reference if a constant is not available. Symmetry is a feature that is useful because within it one can establish regularity within a single form or establish continuity between forms.

Arakawa and Gins's "imaging landing sites" hold a place open for sites that are not directly perceivable. One tendency would be to fill an unknown site with more of what is readily perceptible. The danger here is the production of variety rather than diversity. For example, a person might assume the under side of a table to be consistent (symmetrical) with the top in texture and dimension, which of course is not always the case. The procedure that I devised in *Bioscleave*, and in response to *Bioscleave*, which I called gibbous

factoring procedure,[13] aimed to address the tendency to project symmetry onto the features of the world. This tendency indicates that we insist upon one scale to make determinations about the world. Beyond a certain scale, however, symmetry breaks down into nuance, turbulence, singularity and flow. Across scales of action the possibilities of "forming blank" and "atmospheric intricateness" may become part of the "organism that persons."

In *Bioscleave* the appearance of symmetry is designed to break down upon closer examination. In my failure to fix and plot my measurements, I began to walk around the circular central hall and take cumulative or differential measurements of fields of sensing. Taking notice of the impulse to speed up or slow down, to veer off into a room or to lean into a circular motion, these measurements did not produce observations of height, size or distance, but they did produce a situated sensing that developed into a specific "shape of awareness" as time passed (*Architectual Body* 86). The centripetal and centrifugal pulls, both sequential and simultaneous, became a texture of body and site. I also noticed an impulse to speed up in order to make the sensory field comparisons blur across one another.

Figure 9 diagrammatically indicates the feeling of space and body when they fold or pass through the sites of each other. The sensation of connection and reconnection, of apportionings and distributed awareness, of centripetal and centrifugal movements, are linked to qualities and textures of the landing-site fields. An atmospheric sensation of mobility and interconnection emerges as the sites of the body are released from their commitment to closure and can find balance based upon multiple sensory configurations that connect or disconnect from the counterweight of objects and features of the surround. That is to say, the physical boundary and the relational boundaries blur and oscillate. The perceiver also oscillates within and across these connections selecting configurations according to a contingent purpose or heuristic task. When sites of a surround become singularities, asymmetrical and differentiated and passing through each other, resemblances fall away and configuration takes shape.

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[13] Gibbous = rounded, convex, protuberant. More than half and less than fully illuminated, or in this case landed upon (generalizing tendency of imaging landing sites). It also means hunchbacked and expressive.
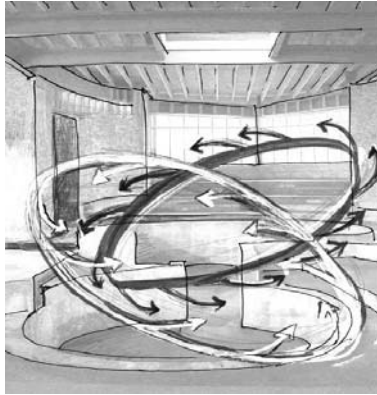
Figure 9. Centripetal and centrifugal
movements of awareness

The diagram of my sensation bears a critical resemblance to studies
done by Arakawa and Gins to track landing sites and hold them in
view (Figure 10). My experience also correlates with another image
sequence that Arakawa and Gins produced during the same period,
showing the stages of a room that folds and passes through itself
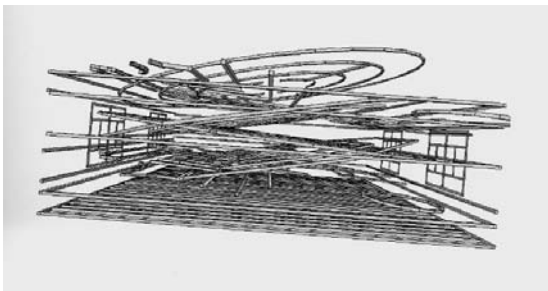(Figure 11), suggesting that the shape of awareness can be constructed
and shared, devised and detected.

Figure 10. Studies for landing sites
(*Sites of Reversible Destiny* 59)

Bioscleave House is a complex tool for tracking and checking the conditions of perception and action by articulating the component factors, enlarging or slowing them, and making re-entry possible. Re-entry is already a bio-topology reconfiguration taking full advantage of the sites and would-be sites that abound within sites. Arakawa and Gins supply a range of tools at each scale of action. At the logistic scale of action, *reversible destiny* and *crisis ethics* (foreclosing on any idea) provide a dynamic open system. At a strategic scale of action, *parlaying indirectness*, *tentativeness, forming blank* and *atmospheric intricateness* construct viable systems of relation. At the tactical scale of action, *non-ironic irony* and the *architectural procedures* produce an embodied realism by saturating organizational possibilities with procedures, constraints and modes of sensing through which bio-topological change may be achieved.

Conclusion

Arakawa and Gins mention the "real" only once. In their discussion of the assumption that everyone must die they note:

> Nobody wants to be caught not getting the "real" straight, for not accurately registering what comes to pass puts one at odds with society. How could what so evidently stares one in the face not be, after all, what it rings true as? We contend that the whole crowd has it all wrong. (*Architectural Body* xiv)

Perhaps they consider everything to be real, like Breton. Unlike Breton, they are exploring the impact of this supposition on a person's world-forming abilities. Included among these abilities are configurations of embodied cognition that escape certainty: the fictive certainties, abstract schemas, utopian tendencies, and imaginary solutions. These cognitive dispositions reconfigure identity boundaries across the organism-person-surround and are vital for the transformation of fixed structures into movement and movement into formation. Arakawa and Gins's expanded notion of body or "organism that persons" requires that an expanded notion of the real would include all forms of body-wide cognition, not merely those that pertain to the operations of the organism.

Arakawa and Gins's insistence on studying the organism-person *in situ* jeopardizes other cognitive processes such as judgment and reason, which hold habitual and preferred configurations in place. In contrast, their embodied approach to organism-surround requires that the observer re-enters the world as a perceiver. This is suggested and carried out by Arakawa and Gins using non-ironic irony, a mode of re-engagement that leads to more specificity and produces diversity. Non-ironic irony as a tactic of perception and action selects cognitive connections that would propagate modes of organization pre-adaptively. An "architectural body" will emerge from an "organism that persons" as he/she observes and learns how to re-position automatic functions along virtual or potential lines of realization.

The realization of an architectural body, one that constructs itself as perceiver, by inventing and assembling architectural procedures that approximate and anticipate the practicality of ironic suggestions, will necessitate the integration of the observer and the perceiver. The environment must be made over as a surround to account for the actual sites which abstract systems occupy in the organization of material and biological processes. As contemporary global concerns return to the real, Arakawa and Gins offer a practice of embodied cognition.

Arakawa and Gins do not accept that naturalizing phenomenological data is sufficient for studying the extent of a person. The gap that opens between what occurs "in" the cognitive system versus what is occurring "for" a thinking person does not begin to address how a person who is aware of his or her habituations, ritualizations and automaticity might recontextualize such functions. This is the case because it leaves out of the equation a person's ability to adapt and learn. The person, or observer in Maturana and Varela's terms, may not speak the natural language of the organism but can appropriate his/her own subsystems or produce internal description as if they were external descriptions and thereby speak the common language of selection.

Purpose-built architectural tools such as *Bioscleave House* supply contexts where automatic systems no longer function, and as a consequence their constructed nature becomes painfully obvious. Arakawa and Gins call this "procedural knowing," where "the instinctual and the newly ingrained get played back through operations lying outside awareness—as procedurally triggered

occurrences" (*Architectural Body* 53). Procedural knowing primes a person for encounters with other awareness and with otherness. "Atmospheric intricateness" is the sum of such encounters as persons interact and configure in unanticipated configurations of sensing.[14] Arakawa and Gins have turned towards "construction," inventively and non-ironically coordinating movements across the organism-person-surround to reshape life into daily research, daily practice.

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[14] Helen Keller is the exemplar of a pre-adaption. Under normal circumstances her modes of sensing would be described as partially functional, but when evaluated for their observational-heuristic value contextualized as body-wide research her sensory system may be described as pre-adaptive. It affords an extraordinary sense of relation, apportionment, distinguishibility and interconnectedness (cleaving).

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Illustrations:

All illustrations of Arakawa and Gins's work with permission of the artists.

Figure 1. *Bioscleave House* --Computer drawing from *INTERFACES* journal 2003 *Architecture Against Death / Architecture Contra la Mort.* v. 21/22, n. 1/2. Paris: College of Holy Cross and Paris Université 7—Dennis Diderot: back cover, v.21/22, n.1).

Figure 2. Dining table in *Bioscleave House*. INTERFACES journal, v. 21/22, n. 1, detail of back cover.

Figure 3. Bathroom in *Bioslceave House.* Image from CD-ROM of illustrations for essays in *INTERFACES* journal 2003, v. 21/22, n. 1& 2.

Figure 4. Labyrinth next to *Bioscleave House*. INTERFACES journal, v. 21/22, n. 1, detail of back cover.

Figure 5. Plan of *Bioscleave House*. Image from CD-ROM of illustrations for essays in *INTERFACES* journal 2003, v. 21/22, n. 1& 2.

Figure 6. *Bioscleave* central room still under construction. Image from CD-ROM of illustrations for essays in *INTERFACES* journal 2003, v. 21/22, n. 1& 2.

Figure 7. Ames room reconstruction. (http://psylux/psych.tu-dresden.de/i1/kaw/diverses%20Material/ www.illusionworks.co accessed 28/03/05.

Figure 8. Ames room illusion subtracting the floor. Photo by Richard Gregory. (http://psylux/psych.tu-dresden.de/i1/kaw/diverses%20 Material/www.illusionworks.co accessed 28/03/05

Figure 9. Centripetal and centrifugal movements of awareness. J. Keane drawing on image of central room from CD-ROM of illustrations for essays in *INTERFACES* journal 2003, v. 21/22, n. 1& 2.

Figure 10. Studies for landing sites. Arakawa and Gins in Benjamin, A., ed. 1994
        Arakawa and Madeline Gins: Sites of Reversible *Destiny*. Art and Design
        Monograph Series. London: Academy Editions: 59.
Figure 11. "As the familiar passes through itself" Arakawa and Gins in Benjamin, A.,
        ed. 1994 Arakawa and Madeline Gins: Sites of *Reversible Destiny*. Art and
        Design Monograph Series. London: Academy Editions: 73.

Leafing Through a Universe: Architectural Bodies and Fictional Worlds

Ronald Shusterman

In this paper, I examine the relation between the notion of "architectural body" and certain literary experiments of the last few decades. My main claim will be that a few innovative works of literary art manage in their own way to be "procedural tools" in the sense developed by Gins and Arakawa. The claim is not merely that these works are *analogous* to architecture in that they redefine a space, but that they actually involve spatial reconfiguration, albeit a type of spatial reconfiguration that is connected to language. I will thus be underlining the plasticity and/or physicality of the reading experiences elicited by certain "successful" novels such as *House of Leaves* by Mark Danielewski. I intend to show that what Gins and Arakawa do with their own volume, *Architectural Body*, corresponds to these literary experiments. In conclusion, I argue *against* the hegemony of architecture, *for* a non-relativism of the body in the world and *for* a general commensurability of our modes of thinking this world.

Keywords: Literary experiments; Procedural tools; I.A. Richards; Mark Z. Danielewski; Plasticity/physicality of reading; Non-relativism; Commensurability.

1. Mimsy Were the Borogoves

In this paper, I propose to examine the relation between the notion of "architectural body" and certain literary and artistic experiments of the last few decades. My *least* polemical point will be that a few innovative works of art manage in their own way to be "procedural tools" in the sense developed by Arakawa and Gins. The claim is not merely that these works are *analogous* to architecture, but that they actually involve bodily experience and spatial reconfiguration of some sort. I will go on to underline the plasticity and/or physicality of the reading experiences elicited by novels such as *House of Leaves* by Mark Danielewski or *The Unfortunates* by B.S. Johnson. Furthermore, one could show that what Gins and Arakawa do with their own volume, *Architectural Body*, corresponds in a way to these literary experiments. Their own texts provoke a certain physicality and

materiality of the reading experience. This will lead me to a more
polemical conclusion, arguing *against* the hegemony of architecture,
for a non-relativism of the body in the world and *for* a general com-
mensurability of our modes of thinking this world.

To a certain extent, my paper will be a typically trivial
academic effort to prove that someone else has said or done it before,
better, just or almost as well. I will thus spend a few minutes showing
that the theorist and poet I.A. Richards had already dreamed up
pedagogical schemes designed to improve the human condition. And
indeed, improving the "event-fabric that is organism-person-environ-
ment" (Arakawa and Gins 22) is a much nobler goal than merely
proving that literature or the other arts can do some of the things that
Gins and Arakawa claim for architecture. So I will have some com-
ments to make about the deeper implications of their thought.
Obviously, exploring the procedural tools that might "foster
fundamental reconfigurings" (Arakawa and Gins 22) of human nature
is a lot more important than simply proving that Arakawa and Gins
have had illustrious predecessors and fellow travellers in their
artistico-epistemological enterprise. But the presence of these fellow
travellers shows that their project is not as quirky as some may think.

The "Mimsy were the Borogoves" in the title of this section is
not exactly an allusion to Lewis Carroll but rather to a certain *Lewis
Padgett*. This was the pseudonym of two science fiction writers,
Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore. They collaborated in 1943 to write a
rather philosophical story about the capacity of objects to change our
consciousness and to reverse our destinies. The authors imagine a
being of another dimension who accidentally sends a number of what
we might call *educational toys* back in time, first to Oxford in the 19th
century, and then to contemporary America.[1] The first recipient of the
toys is a certain Alice Liddell, who unfortunately is already too old to
be able to be shaped by these paradoxical and other-worldly objects.
She does manage, however, to get an adult friend of hers to transcribe
a certain number of instructions that the toys have communicated to
her, as well as other details and stories that she has grasped while
playing with these trans-dimensional objects. The second recipients of
these mind-shaping toys are much younger, and the two children's
destinies are altered as they are slowly moulded by the objects,

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[1]   Actually, to the America of 1943, when the story was published.

learning first how to digest their food in a special way so that they need not eat so much, figuring out trans-dimensional puzzles and eventually passing into another space-time continuum where death has no dominion. "Twas brillig" turns out to be a design for escape, that is, the beginning of the formula for leaving the mortality and constraints of our Euclidean prison. Or, as the Alice character puts it when asked what the stanza means by her adult friend, "It's the way out, I think," the girl said doubtfully. "I'm not sure yet. My magic toys told me" (Padgett 207). In the vocabulary of Arakawa and Gins, these toys are procedural tools for profoundly modifying our landing sites in order to achieve a reversed destiny.

2. The Problem of Belief

This, of course, is only science fiction. In his elegant article on "The Tense of Architecture," Jean-Jacques Lecercle turns the slogan "We have decided not to die" into a Deleuzian *event*, thus avoiding any trivializing approach that would transform this bold statement into artistic provocation or soppy metaphor. He argues convincingly that the slogan *qua* event can teach a useful lesson to the philosopher of language. But treating the statement as an "event" may not really do justice to the place of the slogan in the artistic and philosophical projects of Arakawa and Gins. Arguably, they *believe* in this idea, though they are willing to water it down at times. They offer at one point a "less radical" formulation of their ideas which merely involves "an open challenge to our species to reinvent itself and to desist from foreclosing on any possibility, even those our contemporaries judge to be impossible" (Arakawa and Gins xviii). If we follow the logic of Lecercle's argument, the less radical formulation, though meaningful, is less of an event and thus has less "anti-doxic" power (Lecercle 42). I am not so sure that I always see the difference between "trivial" artistic "provocation" and useful questioning of the doxic rigidities. It might indeed be better to keep in mind that art in general is often anti-doxic, for this would enable us to keep Arakawa and Gins at least partially in the category of artists and creators rather than turning them into pure philosophers. Art itself can be said to have an automatically "utopian" and destiny-reversing strain in it, insofar as the very act of

creating fictions and other new structures posits and underlines the possibility of change.[2]

I can appreciate a science fiction story through a momentary and willing suspension of disbelief. Can I appreciate the work of Arakawa and Gins if I do not accept their ideas? Am I betraying their *œuvre* by confining it to the realm of art? To be frank, I do see the possibility of vast changes in consciousness, but I cannot really see us *deciding* not to die. What is important to note, however, is how the slogan—indeed, how the entire joint career of Arakawa and Gins— exacerbates a problem already latent in much conceptual art, where we are often forced to ask, How close is it to the *concept*, and how close to *art*? Is this philosophy? Are we to evaluate the ideas involved in an ordinary way? In the debate between I.A. Richards and T.S. Eliot on the "problem of belief" which took place in the Thirties, Eliot held that ideas and ideology could block our appreciation, while Richards argued that such ideology is only "pseudo-statement" anyway, and we can thus brush it aside in order to pursue the implications of the aesthetic experience involved. Indeed, the Richardsian *pseudo-statement* may not be that far from the Deleuzian event—though he would probably say that it is *non*-doxic rather than anti-doxic in nature. Is it fair to Arakawa and Gins to turn their slogans into pseudo-statement? The *event* of Arakawa and Gins themselves is to problematize this very question, to render tentative and indirect their relation to both philosophy and art. The experience of this uncertainty is in itself what we might call an educational or indeed "magical" toy.

3. I.A. Richards and the Design for Escape

A questioning of categories is probably the first step in any *Design for Escape*. My third section borrows its title from an essay published in 1968 by Richards as part of his involvement in pedagogical theory and what we might call today *Media Studies*. Richards saw "world education through modern media" (the subtitle of the volume) as providing a "design for escape"—that is, a plan to avoid catastrophe

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[2]   I count myself as a "Utopian" of art in this sense as defined—and rejected—by Noel Carroll in an article on the relation between ethics and aesthetics. See Carroll 2001 and Shusterman 2003.

by increasing the "effective capability" of human beings (5). All of this is formulated in terminology borrowed from the cognitive sciences of the late Sixties, much of which is probably out of date by now. What interests me is not the accuracy or feasibility of the project—whether or not television and computer-assisted teaching can help save the world—but the spirit behind the various exercises proposed. For Richards was basically involved in creating playthings for our consciousness as well. Take what he called the "Twiddle Box"—a pedagogical device designed with a team of researchers at Harvard:
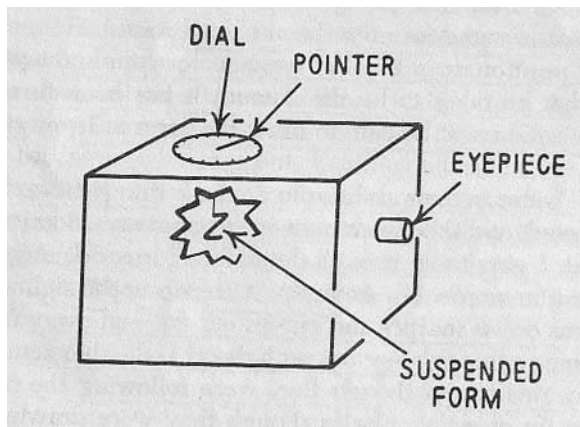
(Richards 111)

The subject looks through the eyepiece at a suspended form (for example, a twisted paper clip) whose position is registered on the dial; as the object is rotated, the subject is asked to record his response. This is how Richards describes one of the experiments:

> One of the Comparing Games we studied with the Twiddle Box went like this: The subject examines the form through the peephole until he says he is as sure as he can be as to what the form looks like (or ?'is?). We then switch the light off and rotate the form a certain number of degrees. Then on goes the light again and the subject tries to perceive how the form has been turned round. He marks the new position on a dial we provide for him and writes down what he takes to be the amount it has been turned. Then we ask him, if he can, to draw the form in its original position. (112)

This little exercise, described in a section called "Points of View" is quite obviously teaching us something about the multiplicity of per-

spectives and the fluidity of perception. I do not think it would be unfair to say that the subject is brought to modify and readjust his *landing sites* in exactly the same way he must in an experimental installation such as the *Site of Reversible Destiny* in Yoro. Richards thinks that this kind of exercise can help people "push up their percipience and performance levels" (107) and he concludes that

> what is needed—and not only in this period of world crisis—is NOT so much some improved philosophic or psychological doctrine, though no one should despise that—as sets of sequenced exercises through which millions of people could explore, *for themselves*, their own abilities and grow in capacity, practical and intelligential, as a result. In most cases, this amounts to offering them *assisted* invitations to attempt to find out just what they are trying to do and thereby how to do it. (111)

As Arakawa and Gins put it, when the "procedural" is brought into "palpable view" its "fixed sequence of actions can be altered" (56) and thus improved. I see Richards as saying more or less the same thing.

And despite the Foucaldian insistence on the "post-human" that some critics project onto the work of Arakawa and Gins, I see very humanistic implications in their advice. "Ability to coordinate a greater number of skills leads to a freer and wider-ranging and more perspicacious intellect"—that is actually Arakawa and Gins (54), but it sounds like Richards at the end of his career. Of course, the main difference is that Richards granted *language* a primordial role, and Arakawa and Gins seem to want to minimize the verbal. But I hope to have shown that Richards, whatever his ties to the word, did spend a lot of time exploring the powers of visual and spatial thinking as well.

4. Leafing Through a Universe: Procedural Tools Throughout the Arts

One might question, of course, the apparent inadequacy of the word that Arakawa and Gins seem to posit in their search for procedural tools. They seem to grant a primacy to "architecture" that could be challenged. But before making the point that procedural tools are, in a sense, *everywhere*, we might also argue, as a corollary, that architecture is *not* really everywhere in the sense they seem to imply—unless the term *architecture* becomes synonymous in some

way for the totality of all experience. Take the following claim: "Context is all, and all contexts lead to the architectural context…" (xiv). Is this true? Is architecture everywhere? Can one not distinguish between architecture and *environment*, and are there not some environments which we traverse but do not design? Further on we read: "Putting only a single artifact into an environment will … turn it into an architectural surround" (43). One might argue that even putting just a *person* into an environment turns it into a surround, since a person comes with a culture and with pragmatic needs and consequences. If I sit on a rock in some virgin territory of Antarctica, I have made a *structure* even if there are no *artefacts* around. But, in another sense, this environment persists without me (if I may be so naïve as to forget for a minute global warming) and thus there is a difference to be maintained between the *designed* and *designated* space of architecture and the other environments that we may encounter and whose existence ought to be seen as an end in itself rather than being instrumentalized for the needs of our consciousness.

But enough of this facile eco-criticism and on to my main point, that the procedural tools associated with architecture are in fact active throughout the arts. Robert Musil, by the way, was perhaps close to some of the doctrines of *Architectural Body* when he has the main character of *The Man Without Qualities* dream up "impracticable rooms, revolving rooms, kaleidoscopic interiors, adjustable scenery for the soul" (Musil 15). My point is going to be that "adjustable scenery for the soul" is manufactured by *all* of our engagements with art.

The most obvious examples will come from the realm of sculpture, but one might argue that all of the visual arts are always already forms of architecture. Something like the Roden crater by James Turrell is clearly an exploration or a re-articulation of some of our most important *cosmic* landing sites. We can note, for example, how Anish Kapoor has moved from compositions that one merely looks at to things that one is drawn to *enter*, sometimes quite literally. This injects a kinetic element into some of his most recent work and does indeed involve the physical exploration of structure. Works such as *At the Edge of the World* (1998):

or *Marsyas* (2002):

can be seen as creating *procedural tools* in a sense, since they foster perceptual and conceptual tentativeness and provoke kinetic experience that leads to a reorganization of landing sites. Perhaps these do not amount to "architectural procedure" in the fullest sense,

since they do not aim at some practical aspect of life or some human project that we could then go on to pursue. But I think the objection misses the point, since if we value indirectness, as Arakawa and Gins surely do, then we have to admit that *any* experience which leads to a reconfiguration of perception and of our sense of space and movement is a step towards the modification of consciousness that is at the heart of all of this. But I do not want to belabor the connection to sculpture, since the argument is too easy. One might mention, however, that there is nothing particularly new in these examples of perceptual reorganization through what cognitive scientists call "noise." Take the following remark, in one article of the *Interfaces* volume, on the role of perceptual disorientation in contemporary art:

> The aim of such visual and verbal paradoxes is to encourage us to put the ambivalence of the (poetic) sign to direct use and extend it to address how we can combat the irreversibility of our perception of space-time and our use of language by neutralizing the deadening effects of habit and repetition. (Delville 197)

But could we not say that the artists of the Italian Annunciations were already doing precisely that by deconstructing the rules of perspective, by rendering complex our perception of a space that could not indeed be used to represent that infinite which they nevertheless needed to represent? This point has been amply demonstrated by the late art historian Daniel Arasse, but I might offer here my own example, the following painting by Pietro Perugino:[3]

[3]   Pietro Vanucci, *Saint Sébastien et Sainte Apolline*, Musée de Grenoble.
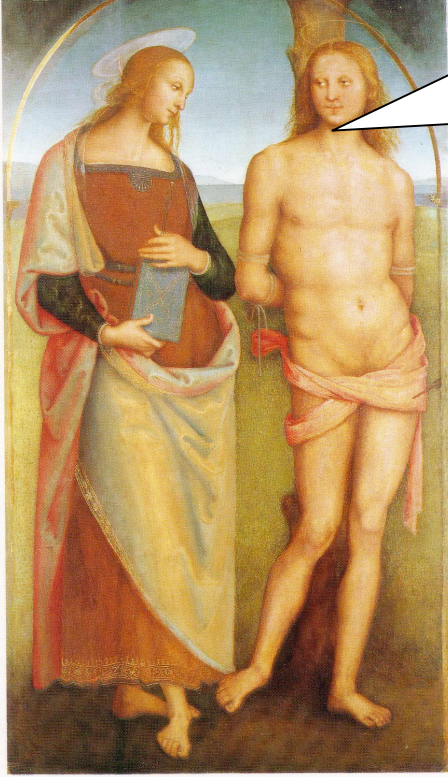
But, again, it is too easy to argue that the plastic arts have always re-structured our bodily experience and our perceptual landing sites. I turn now to literature and to its capacity to be not only a thought experiment but a bodily experience as well.
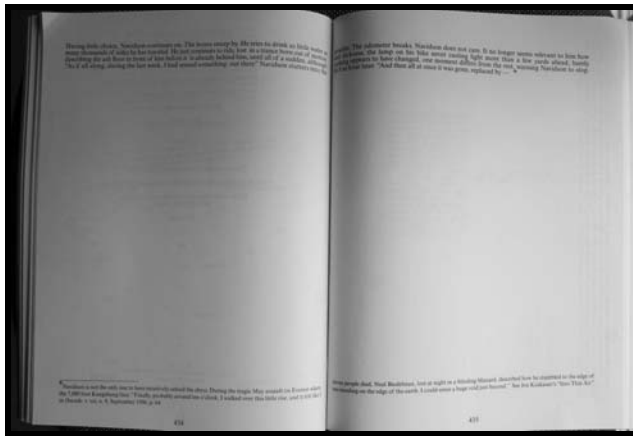
The *Ubiquitous Site House* is a "procedural tool" insofar as it "examines and reorders the sensorium" (Gins and Arakawa 30). What I would like to argue is that the reading experience can also produce such a reordering. Gins and Arakawa constantly emphasize the value of indirection and indirectness: "In a world of persistent inexpli-cability," they observe, "everyone will be fairly directionless, even those appearing to have chosen a definite course of action" (32). I believe we can find several examples of a similar exploration of indirection and reordering in the experimental literature of B.S. John-son. To take only the most famous example, his unbound and un-ordered novel, *The Unfortunates* does indeed provoke a bodily and
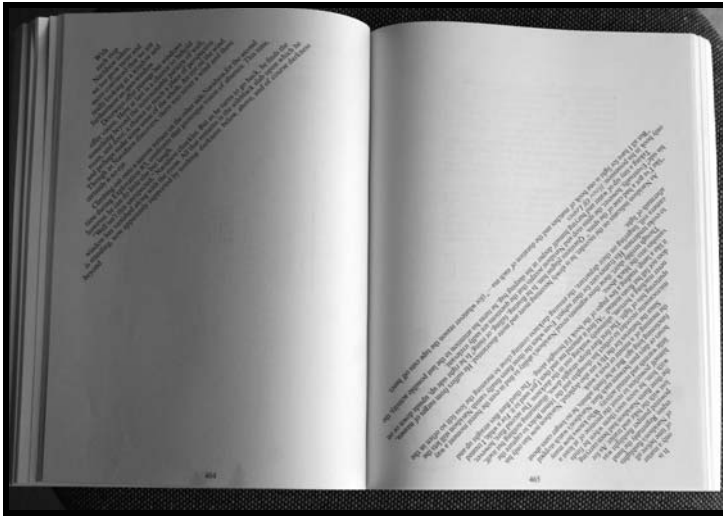
spatial experience insofar as reading involves not only mentally reconstructing a plot but also opening a box, shuffling the chapters, choosing a sequence, and so on. Like all of Johnson's novels, this one deals with death, and the act of putting the text back in its box at the end does seem to echo, physically, the closing of a coffin. To claim, as some critics and friends have done, that his work is profoundly uninteresting—simply because the plots of his novels are rather dreary—is to miss the point of the experiment. It is like saying that it would not be very pleasant to live in the *Ubiquitous Site House*.

An abode that would indeed be very unpleasant to live in has been described in *House of Leaves*, a very successful experimental novel by Mark Danielewski. In this work which combines graphic innovation, narratological complexity and plain old science fiction fun, we meet the inhabitants of a home that apparently changes dimensions by itself, swallowing up characters in caves and corridors that are no longer there upon the next visit. This sounds a lot like the *Ubiquitous Site House*, and the reaction of "Angela" in *Architectural Body*: "This is quite scary. It keeps changing … volumes open with my every motion …" (Gins and Arakawa 25), could be a line from the novel instead. But, the reader will object, this is merely the *description* of bodily experience via the medium of language—it is not a physical experience in itself. True, but I have not come to the real interest of this novel, which is the graphic innovation which manages to echo and embody—in the fullest sense of the term—the dimensional complexity of the plot. First of all, *House of Leaves* is a massive volume, with all that this implies in terms of effects on the reader's body. Secondly, the page layout involves spatial acrobatics that necessarily have a direct effect on the body. Take the following two pages as a first example (Danielewski 123-4):
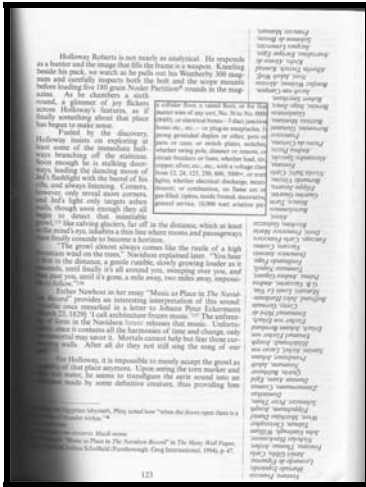
Aside from the variety of the type script and the upside down printing, one also notices that the boxed text on page 124 is a mirror image of the text on page 123, placed exactly on the opposite side, which means that in a sense we are reading *through* the space. This is something that Lewis Carroll already did, but Danielewski does it extensively, and even at times calls on the reader to read sideways or backwards as well. We can find this especially in the following examples: the first line of page 434 continues as the first line of page 435, making us read across the page in an unconventional way; the sole paragraph of page 436 is printed on the side, page 438 necessitates a bi-directional reading with the original direction coming back on 439; pages 440 and 441 are printed sideways again, but are designed to be read from left to right which in fact turns out to be from bottom up (once you flip the book on its side to be able to read the text); pages 464 and 465 are printed diagonally from the corner, but of course not in the same direction, and one encounters footnotes, often indicated by confusing arrows, that are often printed in another direction still.

I must confess that several times I actually lost track of the sequence, becoming literally directionless as I could not remember which way I was meant to turn the page. When reading, you are constantly twisting one's head or flipping the heavy volume around; you have to crane your neck, as you page forward and backwards, leafing through this fictional universe. Now it may well be that, as a work of art, *House of Leaves* is not worth the muscular strain involved, and that we are better off turning the staid pages of even the least enticing canonical novel than struggling with this unwieldy tome. But I think it does show conclusively that the reading experience can be a spatial and bodily experience as well.

Of course, *Architectural Body* deals with this issue in the chapter entitled "Critical Holder." For a "multilevel labyrinth" to work, "it needs to be in physical contact with you and you need to be both guided and blocked by it *as you move through it*" (Gins and Arakawa 87; italics in the text). This is followed by a tactile exercise in *feeling* their volume, the point apparently being that this is not what *ordinary* reading is like. But one could argue that we "move through" their book even when we are not consciously exploring tactile qualia. Notice the use of dialogue at several places in their essay. This technique, as used in chapter 3, is itself a means of restructuring both text and experience. A printed poem such as the one by Francis Ponge

(Arakawa and Gins 25-6) is not simply a verbal entity, but also an organization of graphic space that can affect us both conventionally and naturally. Even the symbol for infinity (∞), used throughout the volume to separate paragraphs, can probably be seen as an *iconotext* combining both conventional and natural elements capable of having a bodily effect. In other words, even if I do not push my fist into *Architectural Body* or stare mindlessly at the printed page (as they suggest on page 88), I am still interacting with physical elements that are part of space and time. A book, as a house of leaves, is never merely a mental experience.

5. The Democracy of the Senses and the Commensurability of their Modes of Thought

"Leafing through a universe turns it into the world," write Arakawa and Gins (9). At first glance, this seems highly relativistic and close to the various constructivisms of Goodman, Deleuze, or Jacques Rancière. There is, however, a tension in the statement that I would like to bring out in my conclusion, via a more general argument against one of Wittgenstein's more famous positions. Indeed, Arakawa and Gins are quite right in some of their implicit or explicit arguments against Wittgenstein. Their writings and projects show, I think, how wrong it is to claim that "the limits of my language are the limits of my world." Wittgenstein's slogan fails to take into account kinetic and bodily experience. *International Klein Blue*, for example, existed, as a color, before it had a name, and there are countless other qualia out there for us to experience even if we do not really have a word for them. Emphasizing the body in space is a way of getting us away from an excessive linguistic hegemony.

Yet it may turn out that the deeper message of Arakawa and Gins is less relativistic than it seems, precisely because of this primacy of the body over language. Lecercle writes: "It is the syntax of our language which is constitutive of the structure of our (lived) world, a structure that is materialised in the language of architecture" (44). This does sound like constructivism, for it seems to imply that different languages constitute different worlds, which is, of course, the old Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Arakawa and Gins, however, seem to posit *phenomenology* rather than language as the bedrock of our existence. "We cannot get beyond the world," they observe, for

example, at the beginning of *Architectural Body* (xii), and though they argue that we make up the world, there does seem to be an implication that the world is in some sense unique—it is *the* world rather than *a* world among many. All of their calls for a "heightened attention towards one's surroundings" (Delville 193) can sound like the pleas of *realists* who are finding fault with the distortions that our rigid subjectivity has unnecessarily imposed on a reality which is rich and multifaceted but nevertheless a whole. A good instance of the tension between constructivism and relativism can be seen in the following quote from another specialist:

> We are now in a position to specify the radical gambit pursued by Arakawa and Gins: put bluntly, they seek the excess of the human being over itself not in a contingent encounter with the truth *but in the very animal condition that characterizes it* as an organism that persons. For them, it is not a question of directing the body toward a fidelity beyond itself, but rather one of extending, through the encounter with architecture, that of which the body is capable. If the human organism is necessarily in excess over the person, that is because its embodiment brings a flexibility that lets it reconfigure itself so as to maximize life. (Hansen 76)

This analysis starts out by arguing that Arakawa and Gins *do not* posit any fixed reality or ideal to which the body owes "fidelity," but then it ends up claiming that certain reconfigurations can indeed maximize life. But this means that we are reacting to some given, and if we can *improve* our relationship to this given, then it is not merely constructed. Other critics (see for example Kolb 387) have argued that Arakawa and Gins's tone and their concrete suggestions, are not really culture-specific. Their projects are conceived for all humanity, and this too shows a kind of universalism at the heart of their thought. All this seems to imply that though we may be leafing through the universe in various ways and in various media, what we leaf through remains a single universe with a more or less fixed set of potentialities and constraints.

And that means that our various *leafings* will ultimately have a degree of commensurability that it would be wise not to ignore. For Arakawa and Gins, "A person who is held in the grip of language alone will have lost touch with many other scales of action vital to her existence" (82). Their main goal is to see "architecture as the supreme context for the examined life, a stage set for body-wide thought experiments" (62). I have been simply trying to argue that *all* of the

arts are engaged in exercises of mental and corporeal plasticity. But there should be nothing surprising about that, since spatial manipulation and bodily context is just simply who we are and what we do. "In the eighties," writes David Kolb, "the inclined planes one climbed to see [Arakawa's] paintings began the spatial manipulation of the viewer" (383). But, I claim, there is nothing particularly *architectural* about spatial manipulation; this physical dimension is in all of our engagements with the world. If a speaker mumbles a sentence, this may make you lean forward; were he to shout it, you would inevitably cringe.[4] And I can ape this in writing by using a *very small font that can make the reader lean closer to the page*. In other words, the physical/tactile/active body is present in all of our encounters.

It may indeed be the special role of the arts, of *all* the arts, to conduct experiments in plasticity. In the long run, the difference in spatial implication between the different arts may not be of great import. For the body is everywhere, just as the social is everywhere— everywhere we are—and though the senses remain epistemologically distinct it is not philosophically sound to grant a special status to any one of them. It is not only through new styles of *architecture* that we can hope or petition for a change of heart.

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[4] Those who have read *L'Emprise des signes* might think I am contradicting my arguments there (see Shusterman, *L'Emprise* 65-67) against the materiality of language defended by Lecercle. But here I am indeed talking about an actual physical component of language, rather than the purely semantic one (which was at the heart of Lecercle's argument).

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Arakawa & Gins's *Architectural Body*: a Transgeneric Manifesto

Simone Rinzler

This article focuses on the relation between language and architecture and more precisely the role played by language in *Architectural Body.* Thanks to its varied and in many ways quite remarkable style and because of the hybridity of its generic status, Gins & Arakawa's *Architectural Body* challenges the relationships between language and architecture, or more widely between language and 20th century art. This article proposes to study *Architectural Body* as an aesthetic manifesto which challenges generic divides.

Keywords: Aesthetic manifesto; Generic hybridity; Language.

> *Artists who produce great art do not ask the question 'what does the public want?' They seek to express something through their art, rather than merely produce an object for sale.* (Furedi,109)

According to French architect Le Corbusier, *academism* is a "*way of not thinking*" for those frightened by the anguish of creation, in spite of the joy of discovery (back cover). This anguish does not seem to affect Gins and Arakawa who cannot in any sense be reproached with being partial to academism. As "artists-architects-poets" (Arakawa and Gins 101), they are inclined to shock, a propensity which, according to Denis, is the stamp of committed writers who need the bourgeois to be shocked in order to nurture their art. For him, the committed writer is necessarily a "*polygraphe*", a French term which means that s/he continually crosses the borders of the various available genres. Whoever discovers *Architectural Body* for the first time realizes immediately, from the very first page, that they are not going to read just any ordinary treatise of architecture. This is energetically demonstrated by the editorial paratext which discloses

how far from being orthodox their conception of architecture is. Proof of this can be found in the singular collocation of two near-oxymoronic terms: *Poetics/Architecture* (Arakawa and Gins cover page) suggesting that their undertaking is as unique as the single occurrence of the collocation. Since any editorial paratext is a way of guiding the reading of a text, the language specialist cannot miss this fore-foreword addressed to the reader. As the text is crammed with the notion of *tentativeness*, I will try in this paper to define the genre of this book.

Thanks to its varied and somewhat stunning style and because of the hybridity of its generic status, Arakawa and Gins's *Architectural Body* challenges the relationships between language and architecture, or more widely between language and 20th-century art. The question at stake in this astonishing text is: Could there be now such a thing as a language-free architecture? Although this may not be the first question that comes to mind when reading any architectural project, it demonstrates how in the case of *Architectural Body*, language or God-Logos has come to be fetishized in 20th-century Western culture in an interlacing of fields, styles and genres. For the purpose of this study, rather than dealing extensively with the assumption that architecture, in its need to be thought, strongly relies on language, I will rather dwell on what, through language, the mixed generic features of this text reveal of its epoch.

1. The Pragmatics of a Genre

From the point of view of a language specialist, the main question posed by *Architectural Body* is that of its *genre*. Its style is so varied that the impression left on the reader is not that s/he has been reading a treatise of philosophy or of architecture, but that s/he may have read an avant-garde piece of poetics, so much so that, in the end, the question is: *What kind of genre does* Architectural Body *belong to? Is it a treatise, a piece of poetry, an attempt at drama, a science-fiction experimental novel, the vulgarization of scientific knowledge or one more claim about the advent of a "New Age"?* The list is not ex-haustive.

Drawing on Denis and his Sartrian and Barthesian stance that any text made public is equivalent to a manifesto, I will contend that this text is an avant-garde manifesto, typical of the passions that have

prevailed in the 20th century: the passion for language coupled with the passion for (often very radical) manifestos. The contention that *Architectural Body* is a transgeneric manifesto raises the pragmatic issue of its intended (and actual) reception: *To whom is* Architectural Body *addressed? And for what pragmatic aim? Has it been devised for people interested in poetics, contemporary art, architecture or philosophy? Or rather does it aim at all such readers in a unifying creative stance or movement?* Answering the question of the intended expectations of the readers may help us draw the line between the various genres to be found in this very unconventional text, whose peculiarity is precisely that, being unconventional, it shows all the features that have become, paradoxically enough, conventional in the emerging genre of the avant-garde manifesto. I am following here the definition of the avant-garde manifesto given by Puchner in *Poetry of the Revolution*:

> There existed a conduit for the manifesto move from politics to art: the notion of the avant-garde. Originally a military word, used to designate the advance corps of an army, the term "avant-garde" was appropriated in the early nineteenth century by what Marx called the utopian socialists …. Here it designated a small group of individuals who deemed themselves to be "advanced" in relation to the majority of their contemporaries, one step closer to a utopia that lay in the future but whose realization was already under way. This use of the term presumes some unified historical axis along which humanity moves, some being ahead and some being behind, the axis of progress that would soon be internalized by the manifesto. When the term infiltrated the arts, it meant that movements and schools began to style themselves as an advanced group, transporting the value of the new into art. A new movement's claim to fame resided not in its intrinsic qualities but in the mere fact of its being new and therefore ahead of the majority, which hopefully would catch up in good time.
> More, however is implied here than simply a sense of progressive advancement. In keeping with its military origin, "avant-garde" also suggests a collective esprit de corps, a sense of the danger but also the privilege associated with being a member of a group so much ahead of everyone else. The exposed position of the avant-garde requires not only individual daring and recklessness but also some form of military discipline. (77)

Apart from the question of military discipline, which does not seem to be relevant here (although the injunctions at the end of the book seem to suggest that the reader should comply), the definition is perfect for our text and its authors.

The question of genre is not to be trifled with in that what constitutes a genre unconsciously reveals the hidden agenda of a time. By determining the genre of *Architectural Body*, one may very well propose an interpretation of the whole philosophical meaning of the text itself and its positioning in the history of the 20th century. What I propose to do here, thanks to a study of a few linguistic markers and of the pragmatic construction of the text, is to try and give an interpretation of what such a hybrid text stands for. I contend that, in spite of its variegated style, *Architectural Body* presents a unity which epitomizes both the main thought of the twentieth century, namely *Language is the universal medicine* and one of its main unthought ideas: *Language could even cure us from our mortal condition*, an idea hidden behind the authorial stance according to which architecture will cure us of mortality.

With Arakawa & Gins's projects, the "addiction to the Real" suggested by Badiou in *Le Siècle* finds its fulfilment in the personal, thriving style of the "Collective Assemblage of Enunciation" (Deleuze) shouldered by the two authors. Their stylistic brilliance produces a "stammering" or "stuttering" of language in the Deleuzean sense. For Deleuze, a great artist "stutters language" / "stutters in her language": she is "bègue de la langue" (*Critique et Clinique*). This stuttering is fit for expressing not only a genuine personal style but also an original thought linking architecture with philosophy.

In spite of my raw materialistic distrust in Arakawa and Gins's project, I am strongly drawn towards this text which I consider as the epitome of how the 20th century has dealt with language in its attempt to reshape the real, and in their case, to reshape our whole world by conceptualizing an architecture "to be done with" death (Badiou), thus proposing a stance revising our essence as mortal human beings. Although I do not share in the least Arakawa & Gins's utopian project for an architecture "To not to die" (sic) — to me, this kind of project is both nonsensical and frightening to the utmost degree — I still find it highly thought-provoking in that apparent nonsensicality tinged with a modicum of folly is no reason for discarding a text with undeserved contempt. Deleuze and Lecercle have shown the path by paying attention to "*fous littéraires*" and to the meaning encased in their seemingly nonsensical texts. What *Architectural Body* does best is reveal the hidden ideology of the "very short" 20th century (Hobsbawm 127) and its mania for political, aesthetic and artistic

claims in the guise of revolutionary or avant-garde manifestos advocating a necessary breakaway with tradition (Puchner 22), a mania backed by a limitless passion for language and for radical poetics. It also symbolizes the highly interpellative/counter-inter-pellative quality of the manifesto, a textual speech act supposed to arouse the still unconscious masses. Having been brought up in the second half of the twentieth century, I share with my contemporaries the feeling of admiration towards people who are foolhardy enough to think the unthinkable with the tools of their epoch, embodying what Michel Onfray calls a "Magnifique" or a "Condottiere" (31-49). These "Magnifiques" or "Condottieri" play the part of the highly revered "hero," a character that has been constantly praised in Western societies in the wake of the First World War (Mosse 11-4). In addition, in his study of Victorian nonsense, Lecercle has shown that what seems to be senseless is definitely not so, and reveals the ideology of a society as well as its position towards the philosophy of language. In this instance, the true "heroes" of the 20th century are people who have resorted to language not only to reshape their environment, but to claim their identity publicly, as if claiming had become being.

In spite of my tremors at Arakawa and Gins's radical project of architectural immortality, I would like to state my fascination and admiration for what Anzieu would have called the "décollage créateur" or the "creative take-off" of the two authors. My aim in this paper is to explain that, although the status of this manifesto is hybrid, the book clearly belongs to the tradition of a very popular new genre that has thrived all through the 20th century, namely that of the manifesto, derived from Marx and Engel's trailblazing yardstick (see Burger and Puchner). Ever since, manifestos have always lingered between radical politics, reaction, avant-garde and rearguard, but their common feature is always that their authors intend to galvanize their audience first into awareness, then into action (Puchner). Although I am in no way convinced by the idea of becoming immortal (in spite of my utter fear of dying), I find this book—and the work of Arakawa and Gins in general—a wonderful philosophical, historical and sociological undertaking liable to show the hidden ideology of the 20th century, still valid at the beginning of the 21st century. This is proof enough that, whether you like the claims of the manifesto or not, they cannot leave you indifferent. A manifesto is *per se* the pragmatic

speech act of the 20th century, and of course, *Architectural Body* is no exception.

I intend to speak from the vantage point of a linguist belonging to the French enunciation school, bearing in mind a philosophy of nonsense and a Marxist philosophy of language (Deleuze and Lecercle).

2. The Linguistic Markers of a Manifesto

In spite of Deleuze and Guattari's somewhat provocative contention that "linguistics has done a lot of harm" (*Capitalisme* 95), I will start my analysis with a brief linguistic study of a few markers, to show how the use of language games (Wittgenstein) together with games with language (Deleuze) can help us to try and define the various genres used.

If, as Searle has noted (101-19), linguistic markers are not sufficient to determine the genre of a text, they can nevertheless be of great help to reveal a state of mind, and when added to a host of clues, may yet prove to be significant enough. I contend that this text is a manifesto in that a present crisis is denounced at the moment of utterance (T_1) in the present tense, an assessment of the present situation has then to be made in the present perfect, leading to the necessity for the authors-activists to bring their readers to awareness. I am adapting here Burger's pragmatic model of the manifesto to the field of English linguistics. The authors write a necessary and pressing appeal to their readers and in return expect a response from them. The readers, in their turn, are supposed to share the authors' enthusiasm for activism and to react in the near future since the aim of a manifesto is to warn its readers that there is no time to lose (Puchner).

In the way it uses the range of tenses and aspects typical of the manifesto (assessment of the present situation explained by the past and envisaging an immediate action for a better future), *Architectural Body* responds to the definition of the manifesto given by Burger (79-116). In chapter 3, Burger explains the paradox of the isolated lampoonist (80-1). For him, the addressors of a manifesto work for the well-being of the whole community. In our case, the two addressors, having acquired legitimacy thanks to their world recognition as "artists-architects-poets" (Arakawa and Gins 101), feel fully entitled to write a manifesto in the name of a "Collective Assemblage of

Enunciation" (Deleuze) and not a mere lampoon signed by a single angry or bitter author addressing herself to a single reader (Angenot).

The reader can expect first an assessment of the situation denounced by the book, leading to the use of grammatical forms that favor any type of assessment. I am thinking, of course, of the present perfect with its aspectual value of assessment endorsed by the "HAVE + *Past Participle*" form conjoined with the present tense, but also the Simple Present with its generic value, the identification marker BE and the localisation marker HAVE, especially when used in the Present tense, all leading to the construction of a kind of genericity valid at the moment of utterance (or enunciation) and which are the traces of the cause which has self-authorized the artists-activists into authoring their key manifesto for the future (thus entailing the constrained use of the modal auxiliary WILL):

> Although our species, like every other species, *has* a characteristic architecture that *serves* its members well by increasing their chances of survival, it **is** far from *having* an architecture that could redefine life. The architecture we speak of in *this* book *is* within our species' reach. It *will be* a way to undo, loosening to widen and re-cast, the concept of person. *People will not be* defeatists about a condition—the human condition— about which something *can be done*. The procedural architecture outlined in the pages that follow *will function* both as spur to and mainstay of an all-out effort to alter the *untenable* human lot. (Arakawa and Gins xi-xii, my emphases)

The first person of the addressors is essential to set up the pragmatic device linking the authors to the readers through the language of the text (and the reader will recognize a set phrase recalling *We, the people*… of the *Declaration of Independence*):

> *We, the members of this species, have thus far failed to come up with a set of explanatory statements* that could be universally countenanced as the definitive figuring out of ourselves. (Arakawa and Gins xii, my emphasis)

Here, the first-person pronoun is ambiguous since it refers to the addressors as well as to the addressees in a slightly imperceptible move that activates the transformation of speech into a speech act involving its recipients. In the following sentence, *we* has clearly become inclusive and involves both authors and readers:

> To figure ourselves out, to find out the operative basis of what moves as us
> and what we find fit to accord value to, *we need to learn* what makes the
> world tick. (Arakawa and Gins xii, my emphasis)

If we consider the opening sentences of the introduction, we can notice that it displays the typical linguistic features of a manifesto:

> Having observed near and far how the body moves through its
> surroundings, having thought lengthily of still other ways to surround it, and
> having built a few tactically posed surroundings, we now notice ourselves to
> have been tracing an architectural body, or at least a landscape for one. We
> see architecture not merely as that which stands by and gets linked up with,
> as structures that life lightly avails itself of in passing; not passive, not
> passively. (Arakawa and Gins xi)

The call for action is always-already present, hinted at by the use of the adjective *passive* intensified by the semantic repetition with the adverb *passively*, suggesting that an urgent action in response to the call is expected to get away from the passivity denounced. The participial "–ING + Past Participle" forms *having observed, having thought* and *having built* prepare the assessment to come as the result of a preliminary study called up by the verbs *observe, think* and *build* arranged in the appropriate order. The assessment in the present is clear enough in the introductory sentence of the manifesto with *we now notice ourselves to have been tracing an architectural body*, resorting to the Present tense together with *now*. The path to claiming has now been open, thanks to the assessment of the present situation leading to the evocation of the future:

> Architecture, in anyone's definition of it, *exists* primarily to be at the service
> of the body. … Serving the body to the nth degree *will include* as much as
> the body bargains for and more.
> Once people realize that the human race has not yet availed itself of its
> greatest tool for learning how not to die, they *will cease* being defeatists in
> the matter. (Arakawa and Gins xi, my emphases)

Now that the road to change has been paved, the two authors can expect their readers to follow them in the future, as the use of *will* rapidly suggests in the second and third paragraphs.

All this leads to the assumption that our 20th-century society may well be labelled as the "Have+-Past Participle society" or the "society of assessment." This must be regarded together with the tendency to

issue claims of the selfsame society, a tendency which can be found in the use of imperative forms or "*mots d'ordre*" or slogans (in the Deleuzean sense derived from Lenin) imposed willy-nilly on the readers assigned to the place of the underling (the notion of assignation is borrowed from Althusser in Lecercle, *Une Philosophie Marxiste* 94-100):

> La force du mot d'ordre n'est pas seulement performative, elle est constitutive de la classe qu'elle appelle à l'existence […] Le mot d'ordre anticipe sur le corps politique qu'il organise. (96)

If, as Lecercle contends in his Marxist philosophy of language, the "*mot d'ordre*" or slogan has not only a performative value, but also constitutes the class thus ontologically called into existence, then in the case of Arakawa and Gins, the class called to being by the authors of *Architectural Body* is that of *transhumans* who at the time of reading the manifesto still do not know consciously that they form a political body in its own right, a body which has been organized by the force of language (hence the emergency of the call).

The other clues found here show the tendency of the authors to refuse to accept the real as it is, and this shows in the lexicon used. The abundance of word coining, in the field of spatiality for example (*neargrounds, middlegrounds* and *fargrounds, nearnearground, near-middleground, nearfarground, middlenearground, middlemiddleground, middlefarground, farnearground, farmiddleground, farfarground*—but neither of the two existing words *background* and *foreground*), are the traces that the existing language is not sufficient for the authors who, feeling they have to forge new concepts because of their Deleuzean philosophical stance, need to come up with the (missing) necessary tools to give a true account of their intended "tentativeness."

3. Transgenericity of the Manifesto

3.1. A Hybrid Genre that Epitomizes the Key Genre of the 20th Century: The Performative Manifesto of Identity Claim

The variegated styles and genres to be found in *Architectural Body* turn the text into a hybrid text. The paratext on the cover mentions the double label *Poetics/Architecture*, which is not a usual collocation concerning the generic classification of a book. This very hybridity is

symptomatic of postmodernity, characteristic of the blurring of genres. It epitomizes the genre of the manifesto. Through its unconventional tone and variety of styles used, *Architectural Body* may seem very unconventional. My take is that it is actually not as unconventional as it seems in that it both contains and transcends all the mannerisms characteristic of the epoch, which is what makes it so fascinating to study. Its main feature is that, in the last resort, the claim is apparently neither political nor aesthetic but rather a claim of identity, a feature which has thrived in the course of the 20th century. What is being advocated here is the identity of the new 21st-century humans, namely *transhumans*.

3.2. A Literary Experience: Fictionalisation, Experimental Literature (Drama or Sci-fi) or Avant-garde Literary Manifesto?

The avant-garde literary manifesto is probably, with the political manifesto, one of two great successful types of manifestos of the time. If the political (and social) aspect is, only apparently, curiously missing in *Architectural Body* (but no political message is a political message all the same), the literary aspect is what strikes the reader most. The conversation between Robert and Angela, the visitors of the house, and its architects is more relevant for an off-off theatrical performance in an avant-garde festival than for an everyday conversation between buyers and sellers of a house (Arakawa and Gins 23-5, 29-30, 32-8). The reader has no way of knowing whether the visitors are true or fictitious. The status of the verbal exchange being unknown, we are prone to ask ourselves whether the dialogued piece is not the fictionalization of the visit of a very peculiar new house since practical details such as how to cook an egg are hastily discarded, proving, if necessary, that in spite of ceaseless claims concerning the body, the ergonomic aspect does not seem to be the main concern of the two architect-philosophers.

No wonder the fringe theatre interpretation is operative here, since for Puchner an avant-garde manifesto strongly relies on theatricality. Everything seems to prove that the conversation here pertains more to fiction or perhaps to dreaming of a better world than to the wording of an architectural project. The question, then, would be to wonder whether it should be possible that the more Arakawa and Gins dwell on the shores of philosophy, the furthest they find

themselves from what they declare they are doing, namely conceptualizing an architectural project.

3.3. A Critical Experience: Architecture and Literature or Ponge, Swift, Carroll and Shakespeare Revisited

The literary intertext is rich. The poem *L'Escargot* by Francis Ponge is the locus for an intertextual play leading to the concept of "humansnails" whereas Gulliver (Arakawa and Gins 77), Alice and Goldilocks play an acting part in the defamiliarizing architectural experience offered to the reader in the way they help the reader envisage the experience of living in too small or too big an environment. Even the ghost of Prospero looms over the text: "how to reassume the mantle of yourself" (Arakawa and Gins 94). The intertext is too complex to be fully developed here, but its presence is prevalent. *Architectural Body* is definitely not intended for a philistine audience.

3.4. A Theoretical Tentativeness: Non-fiction For A Treatise or A Serious Manifesto?

As a serious treatise, some sections of the book propose a (so-called) neutral, technical scientific style, such as described by linguists specialised in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or "*langue de spécialité.*" The markers of subjectivity such as adjectives, adverbs and dialogic first- and second-person pronouns are scarce, leaving room for a distanced discourse of genericity endorsed by the present tense and an extensive use of passive and impersonal forms as can be seen in the following example:

> Acknowledging that a person experiences not only sites but also depths, we posit a composite landing site (a landing-site "molecule" formed of the two landing site "atoms" we have named perceptual and imaging). *A dimensionalising landing site registers location and position* relative to the body. […] A chair *is pictured or held in place* by perceptual landing sites. […] *Dimensionalising is conducted cross-modally*, as are all the actions of a person. […] *It has been shown* that the illusion generated by the Ames room—giant boy, tiny adult—vanishes when *the viewer*, armed with a stick so as to probe the room's interior, learns tactically and kinaesthetically that the floor slopes, and gathers that what she has imagined to be an ordinary room is anything but ordinary. (Arakawa and Gins 21, my emphases)

If the vocabulary were not so curious and the idea so challenging, one would think one is reading a scientific account or a technical treatise.

3.5. A Scientific Popularization or The Attempt To Marry Science and Art

But apart from what seems the serious language for a serious treatise, the same linguistic and lexical tools are used in the same way as in popularized science. The style is apparently "neutral," distanced and simple. The use of everyday language is one of the linguistic and stylistic features of political rather than avant-garde manifestos. Efficiency being at stake, the audience must understand quickly. Here, the benevolence towards the reader goes so far as to lead the authors to add expressions to trigger what might otherwise diminish the reader's interest or attention. The strategy used is the addition of entertaining examples and experiences such as in the case of the *polyomino* (Arakawa and Gins 14). A footnote (Arakawa and Gins 15) informs the reader that the source of information is an interview. This shows the proximity of manifestos to journalism and everyday language and their sometimes distance from high-brow, formalist, muddled experimental poetics (Puchner).

  Many other explanations remind the reader of Escher's or Vasarely's *trompe-l'oeils* or of optical art designed here not to lure the eye and visual perception but to lure all the senses. This kind of art was very popular in the 20th century and can be assimilated with the vein of pop art, a form of art designed for the massification of culture.

3.6. A Philosophical Popularization Experience or A Handbook of Philosophy For Beginners: Revisiting the Experience of Reading

After the massification of science and art comes the massification of philosophy. This is the case when philosophy is popularized through an impressive revisiting of the experience of reading:

> Who now holds this book has, as our theory goes, an architectural body; […] *Let us, then, together as a team, begin to construct here a description of a multilevel labyrinth. Make* a loose fist and push it in the book's seam. *Choose* palm or back of hand and follow the terrain of the 86 pages mounting on the left, then *follow* the terrain of the pages remaining on the right. […] *Press your* fingertips into the book's seams and *step out* of the reading process and back into the world-at-large once more. […] *Extricate yourself* once again from the reading process to simply stare at the printed

> page. […] Alternatively, *take* any labyrinth and *shrink* it down to six inches high, thinning its wall proportionately. *Fit* to room size and stack as described above and there *you* have it—a multilevel labyrinth. (Arakawa and Gins 86-9, my emphases)

It bears all the marks of the interpellation and of the appeal to the cooperation of the reader that can be found in handbooks of "philosophy for beginners."

In this section, second-person pronouns (*you, yourself*) or determiners (*your*) reappear. An interaction between authors and readers is organized linguistically: *Let us, together as a team*. It is achieved by the use of the pronoun *you* and of the procedural verbs *make, choose, follow, press, step out, extricate yourself, take* (*shrink* and *fit* being the most astonishing examples of procedural verbs), together with the constrained imperative forms typical of "*mots d'ordre.*"

The ALTER model (Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*) requiring an interpellation/counter-interpellation of the reader by the author *via* the text and vice-versa is clearly illustrated linguistically here.

3.7. A Politics-fiction Experience: A User's Guide to A New "Topian" Utopia or Instructions For Use and Slogans As Injunctions Towards Action

Then, the style dramatically changes in the last chapter (Arakawa and Gins 97-100) and the book turns into a user's guide, not to the Reversible Destiny Galaxy, but to a new utopia with a constrained architectural "topia" or location.

> 1. *Play off your tactically posed surround like crazy* until you have constructed a precise tentativeness for yourself. 2. *Vary the size and shape of your body* by dwelling into your linkings-up with features and elements of your tactically posed surround […]. 3. *Attempt to assign more than one size and shape at a time to the body you take to be yours* for the nonce. (Arakawa and Gins 97, my emphasis)

Twenty-one imperative forms functioning as "*mots d'ordre*" or slogans are imposed upon the readers, suggesting that the authors, after assessing a crisis in the present, have decided to make readers aware of the need to conform to their slogans to act for a change for the better, which is precisely what is typical of manifestos made

public to incite the readers to take action. Lecercle contends in *Deleuze and Language* that imperative forms are not meant to be "obeyed" as "orders" (the term *mot d'ordre* is ambiguous in French because of the term *ordre*) but to be "followed" as necessary rules by a convinced audience.

Usually, a utopia has no material location but is a product of the mind. In this project, contrarily to Deleuze's cat looking for a place to die (*L'Abécédaire*), Arakawa and Gins are devising a place or a location, a *topia* that cannot be left alone if undying is linked to living inside a certain type of architecture.

Conclusion

This text deconstructs the usual author/reader model of communication so that the question "What text by what authors for what readers?" is relevant to determine the genre of the text. Depending on the representations the authors have of the readers and vice-versa and of their respective intentions (Lecercle, *Interpretation*), one may give a very different analysis of the same text which, in the process, seems to give an answer to any type of problem, which may lead us to Badiou's contention that the past century has been "totalitarian" with the obsession (*pour en finir avec…*) to be done with practically anything. In that way, Arakawa and Gins's writing technique, in spite of their vigorous optimism, has totalitarian implications in that their radicalism leads them to propose radical solutions that cannot be tampered with.

Their committed art is not to be categorized as art-for-art's-sake, since it bears the marks of its intended pragmatic aim typical of the 20th century. These artists do not indulge in the selfish pleasure of creating for the pleasure of the senses but they pursue a great pragmatic altruistic aim in which their Great Work replaces the Grand Narrative (said to be missing in the postmodern age). Their goal is twofold since they intend to create new concepts *and* to live as artists and philosophers, which are two opposite ways of considering oneself a philosopher (Deleuze had opted for the first one while Onfray, following Epicure, is dedicated to the second). Depending on how the text is considered, the representations that the readers will have of the authors will change as well as the authors' representations of their readers (Lecercle, *Interpretation*).

But if we consider that *Architectural Body* not only has been written by two people but is spoken and authored by the *encyclopaedia* (or culture) prevalent in the society in which this project has developed, then it must be said that authors as well as readers must be considered as Collective Assemblages of Enunciation representative of the epoch. The hybridity of the genre leads to a manifold built-in interpretation of the text so that the philosophical treatise aspect will meet the expectations of the reader with a philosophical outlook, whereas the lover of literature will be fascinated by the inventiveness of the architectural fiction and by the playfulness of the "stuttering." I will not list all the possibilities, but the very structure of the text, be it linguistic or generic, leads it to generate a favourable reception at, at least, one point.

I have just used the ALTER pragmatic interpretive model (Lecercle, *Interpretation*, and Lecercle and Shusterman, *L'Emprise*) and adapted it to the genre of the manifesto. A more cynical and less theoretical critic would rather say that Arakawa and Gins have learnt a lot from our communication society and its propaganda techniques (Breton) to make sure their message is efficiently conveyed to their readers. This would not be surprising: manifestos, propaganda and the marketability of the message conveyed have practically always worked hand in hand (Puchner).

The most striking aspect of *Architectural Body* is the variation of styles that can be found in it. According to Deleuze (*L'Abécédaire*) and Lecercle (*L'Emprise*), style is not a fixed feature and has a tendency to evolve from "stuttering" (or "stammering") to purity, from a new creative jargon to everyday language. This is partially the case, since the end of the book, with its "*mots d'ordre*", seems more "neutral"—which is nevertheless characteristic of a style. And at the same time, by using language as a marker of power, especially with the use of the final imperative forms as "*mots d'ordre*" or slogans, the artists manage to achieve their hubristic self-empowerment, thus gaining the justification of their artistic/philosophical gesture.

Another important feature of the style to be found here could be called "the joy of the text." Thanks to an apparently nonsensical joyful text, both authors are able to make their "stammering" meaningful rather than nonsensical for our greatest pleasure and I must admit how much I enjoyed interpreting this original piece of logos (the musical metaphor is intentional). This probably means that the philosophical

interpretation of *Architectural Body* cannot be separated by artificial boundaries from its literary, linguistic, generic, stylistic and aesthetic interpretations, showing thus the coherence of a very emblematic manifesto.

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"No Mere Play on Words."
A Stylistic Analysis of *Architectural Body*

Linda Pillière

This article sets out to examine whether a connection can be made between Arakawa and Gins'ss radical theories regarding architecture, as expressed in *Architectural Body*, and the language used to represent them. In other words, how far does their restructuring of the mind/body relation necessitate a restructuring of habitual syntactic and semantic functions? How does the language that they use enhance and support the ideas expressed?

Keywords: Architecture and discourse; Restructuring syntactic and semantic functions.

That a connection can be made between architecture and discourse should come as no surprise to anyone who has read *Architectural Body*. Published in a series devoted to "poetics," the importance of language and its relationship to architecture recurs throughout the work. Thus, not only do the two authors posit that "an architectural procedure resembles its predecessor, a word" (57), they also analyze the reading process and show how it can become a multilevel labyrinth (87-9). Furthermore, the relationship between the body and the world is portrayed in terms of discourse: one "leafs through the universe" as one might a book (9), "a person parses the world" (6), and the body "is always in the process of reading surroundings" (xx).

Yet the idea that the text can itself reflect the innovative theories on architecture is not so obvious. In the chapter entitled "Architecture as Hypothesis," two people visit a house where the rooms take form depending on how they, the people, move. The authors write that such architecture is "constructed to exist in the tense of *what if*, it presents itself as intentionally provisional, replacing definite form with tentative form, the notion of a lasting structure with that of an adaptive one." (29) The notions of tentativeness, indeterminacy, the provisional, recur frequently in the work. Arakawa and Gins believe that architecture should be "a tentative constructing

toward a holding in place" (23), and that walking into a building should be walking "into a purposeful guess." As a result, architecture is no longer considered as being static but dynamic. As they write themselves: "The tense of architecture should be not that of 'this is this' but instead that of 'what's going on?'" (49). The sentence as "a tentative constructing toward a holding in place" is of particular interest as it contains many of the basic premises of the authors' theory: indeterminacy, uncertainty through the use of the adjective "tentative;" an open-ended process through the use of the *-ing* form "constructing," and the term "holding in place," which suggests something which can never be permanent or definite.

The question that needs to be asked is how can a text, which is by its very nature linear in space and in reading time, fixed through the printed page, become "tentative"? How can the reading process become similar to "walking into a purposeful guess," a "holding in place"? Firstly, it needs to be remembered that textual meaning is created through the use of language and specific language patterns. As Roger Fowler remarks:

> Linguistic codes do not reflect reality neutrally; they interpret, organize, and classify the subjects of discourse. They embody theories of how the world is arranged: world-views or ideologies. (27)

Both language and thought are closely intertwined. One obvious way in which the two interact is in the choice of the lexis. Revolutionary ideas necessitate new terminology. Just as any new technology invents a new word to describe itself, just as any new philosophy seeks to redefine its theories and premises, so Arakawa and Gins have recourse to new terms and redefine old ones with the aim of explaining their theory. However, I would argue that it is not only the neologisms that are the direct result of these innovative ideas. Lexical choice is but one aspect of their distinctive style. Equally of interest is the syntax, the formation and combination of the words and sentences, the building of the text. I therefore propose to study first the choice of vocabulary before analyzing the clausal patterns and syntax to see how specific linguistic choices are linked to the ideas being expressed.

1. Rearrangements of the World (xiv): Rearrangements of the Words

The first aspect of the language used in *Architectural Body* that strikes the reader is the use of neologisms. Neologisms are created through affixation as in "over-allness" and "variegatedly" (40), neither of which have a dictionary entry though other attested uses appear on the internet. Other examples are "circumjacency" (39), "perspectiveless" (69) and "sizelessness" (69). Further neologisms are coined through compounding as in: "Ø Puzzle creatures to ourselves" (xii), "self-marmot" (xx), "an event-fabric" (49).

However, one of the most productive ways of coining new words in English is the process of conversion or zero-derivation, whereby a word-form changes word-class or category but still maintains the same morphology as in "a hammer," "to hammer." In *Architectural Body*, conversion operates at several levels. Firstly, the change of category may occur within the same word class as in the change from uncountable to countable nouns. This is a common phenomenon in English: a chicken is generally considered to be a countable noun, but if one is referring to the meat and wants to eat "some chicken" then it is used as an uncountable noun. In similar fashion, in *Architectural Body*, "hesitancy" is used as a countable noun "a hesitancy" (46). "Bioscleave," on the other hand, is used as an uncountable noun in: "Ø bioscleave would go missing" (48). In so far as "bioscleave" is modelled on "biosphere," one would expect it to be a countable noun. Similarly "layout" and "composition," usually countable nouns, are also used as uncountable nouns in the sentence: "A person's capacity to perform actions is keyed to Ø layout and composition of her architectural body" (67). One would expect the use of the definite article here. Moreover "surroundings," with the plural morpheme, is used with a verb in the singular: "every surroundings elicits from those within it a characteristic series of ubiquitous sitings" (9).

The change of category within the same word class is also to be found when transitive verbs are converted into intransitive ones and vice versa. In the opening chapter we read "Who has been accepted as a person by other persons is really nothing more than the set of ways an organism that persons behaves" (1); "behave" here is used as a transitive verb. In "This that is I—an organism behaving as a person—

ascribes" (2), the verb "ascribe" is used intransitively, as is "abstract" in "people are forced to abstract in order to proceed" (52). Moreover, concepts become the subjects of material processes, verbs more easily identified with human agents, as in "when it stands up to be counted and entered, this built argument of discourse will manifestly turn us inside out" (59). While a person may stand up and be counted, it is unusual to apply this verb to an argument.

Clear cases of conversion which concern change of word class are notably examples of noun to verb conversion: "to person," "to giraffe," "to cockroach" (1), "to architect" (44), "to toggle-switch (37), "to uptake" (66). The predominance of this kind of conversion, from noun to verb, can be explained by Arakawa and Gins's desire to expound their theory that architecture is a dynamic process. Furthermore, adverbs become nouns as in "the everywhere" (22), conjunctions are converted into adverbs as in "she ... as-if palpates" (62), phrases into nouns: "that inquiry-on-the-go continues" (73).

Conversion is a widely-used process in English for coining new words, yet I would argue that the creation of neologisms in *Architectural Body* does not stem merely from the need to find new words to express new ideas. It also reflects the authors' desire to disconcert the reader, to create an effect of surprise, thereby rendering the act of reading itself more difficult, more "tentative" as the reader deals with and processes the information. The reader is unable to take the text for granted, and clear-cut distinctions between one word class and another become blurred. It is possible to draw a parallel here between the reading experience and the experience of visiting experimental architecture. The reading process challenges the reader's habitual conceptions of text, just as one of Arakawa and Gins's homes challenges a person's typical conception of time and space.

At the same time, an initial reading of a sentence is frequently challenged and undermined as the reader progresses. Take for example a sentence such as "each of us becomes an everywhere evenly distributed agent" (34). What at first seems to be a case of conversion from adverb to noun, "an everywhere," is then shown to be qualifying the noun "agent." Similarly, the following extract also requires the reader to modify their initial interpretation as the sentence unfolds: "Ready and waiting to be entered, even when in disarray, [architectural surrounds] are always-encountered and often-noticed but little-understood atmospheric conditioners" (41). "Encountered"

and "often-noticed but little understood" appear at first to be participles, given the fact that they are preceded by *are*, and therefore seem to mark the end of the sentence, only to be later interpreted by the reader as having the grammatical role of adjectives qualifying "atmospheric conditioners."

Just as the visitors to the experimental house in the chapter entitled "Architecture as hypothesis" discover that rooms form depending on how they move (27), so too the sentence forms and changes as it is read. Far from being static, it becomes a dynamic phenomenon. Thus, though the lay-out on the page is still a sequence of linear sentences, meaning itself is far from being fixed and certain.

The use of known lexical items in new collocations also causes the reader to readjust their reading patterns. Thus a person "parses the world" not sentences, "flexes her surroundings" (40) and not her muscles, "throws tentatives" (46) rather than an object, "adjust(s) new territories" (1) rather than an item of clothing. "Body-wide acquiescing," in itself a neologism, "buds, then blooms open" (73), verbs more commonly associated with flowers. At other moments it is the juxtaposition of the familiar everyday colloquial expression with the technical theoretical framework that surprises. "The body-in-action" is called "the main fiddler at the fair" (50), the term "architectural body" is found side by side with "letting the world go hang," architectural procedures "exist in the tense of the supremely iffy" (86). Furthermore, if the human species is defined as "puzzle creatures" and "visitations of inexplicability" it is also, more prosaically, "those who sniff around this planet as us" (xii).

If changes in "bodily position alter the shape of awareness" (85), changes in a word's usage also affect the reader's perceptions. A grammatical feature that, I would argue, works in a similar way is the use of the pronoun "she" throughout the text to refer to a person as in "no one should consider herself a finished product or a non-puzzle" (xx). While political correctness has eliminated the use of "he" as a generic term, the use of the feminine third person singular is still a marked term and usually shows that the writer wishes to underline that language use is habitually sexist. By using the pronoun "she" for generic use, the two authors make the reader more aware of what they are (or should I say she is?) are reading. Arakawa and Gins are only too aware that when one is reading "everything that asserts its pertinence to something gets put on hold" (86), the reading is a

process "that continues to read on" (87). Therefore any procedure that forces the reader to become aware of the process, whether it be neologisms or unusual collocations or the generic use of "she," turns the reading process into a dynamic one.

2. The Dynamics of the Text

The *-ing* form is ubiquitous in *Architectural Body* and is frequently preferred to a noun. Thus we find "determining" (xii) not determination, "the preserving of life" (xviii) not "preservation," "on-the spot observing" (3) not "observation," "the continual pursuing" (4) not "pursuit," "specific locatings" (10) not "locations," "the arraying of possibilities" (42) not "array," "spectrum of body-wide knowing" (58) not "knowledge," "coordinating" (63) not coordination, and the body "initiates pointing, selecting, electing, determining, and considering" (5). Once more this tendency reflects Arakawa and Gins'ss desire to portray the text as a dynamic entity. Even the notion of an architectural surround, which might at first appear to indicate something of a static nature, has amongst its features actions introduced by the *-ing* form. Thus the city is not just a set of buildings but also "all those bustling or ambling through" and a kitchen is not just a set of appliances but also "the woman putting a roast in the oven" (39). For two authors so concerned about the tentativeness and dynamics of architecture, the *-ing* form has the advantage of presenting an action imperfectively, as an open-ended process. As Michael Toolan remarks in the use of the *-ing* form in Faulkner's novels:

> The form usually indicates that the action or event described is perceived by the speaker as occurring not as a unified and clearly bounded particle but as a multi-phase wave of activity without sharply defined points of origin and termination. (103)

This comment is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, Toolan draws attention to the fact that the *-ing* form gives no clear indication of beginning or end. Compatible with past, future and present time reference, the *-ing* form does not of itself contain temporal reference and so, unlike a conjugated tense, it cannot be included in a sequence, temporal or otherwise. Rather it evokes continuing action, and this notion of "imperfectivity" has frequently been commented upon by

linguists and grammarians alike. The form is thus ideally chosen to represent an on-going process. However, it is not just the form itself that is of interest but its place within the sentence structure. As Arakawa and Gins remark, "surroundings can pose questions by virtue of how their elements and features are posed" (xiv), and this is equally applicable to the syntax, the element of Arakawa and Gins's style that I now wish to study.

3. "A Patchwork Quilt That Never Stays the Same" (12): the Syntax

One of the striking features of the syntax used in *Architectural Body* is the use of pre-posed participial clauses. Such clauses may contain present or past participles. Take the following examples, where the present participle is pre-posed:

(1) Blending the surroundings and blending into the surroundings, they [imaging landing sites] have hardly any shape at all. (12)

(2) Acknowledging that a person experiences not only sites but also depths, we posit a composite landing site. (21)

(3) Transposing how, in sum, the puzzle pieces felt to his touch as he held them at various angles and moved his fingers over them, he endows the imaged pieces with some solidity. (21)

(4) Moving within an architectural surround, a person fashions an evolving matrix. (40)

(5) Pre-existing those who enter them, architectural surrounds stand as elaborately structured pretexts for action. (41)

(6) Activating an architectural procedure, a person comes alive to her own tacit knowing.

(7) Taking our lead from vision without wanting to privilege it, we thought, in constructing Gaze Brace, of bracing, and making a brace for, or of inventing a steadying apparatus for etc. (86)

(8) Bodily inserting every last finger of herself into the multilevel labyrinth, she propels and squeezes her body through it. (90)

Most of these could be rewritten with the participial clause post-posed, as in the following examples:

(2a) We posit a composite landing site, acknowledging that a person experiences not only sites but also depths.

(3a) He endows the imaged pieces with some solidity, transposing how, in sum, the puzzle pieces felt to his touch as he held them at various angles and moved his fingers over them.

(8a) She propels and squeezes her body through (the multilevel labyrinth) bodily inserting every last finger of herself into (it).

The stylistic effect, however, is different, even if, to all intents and purposes, the information conveyed remains the same. Post-posed the participial clause amplifies upon what has been mentioned previously, pre-posed it anticipates. In similar fashion, with similar effects, we find pre-posed past-participles:

(9)   Struck by how greatly a bird's-eye view of a room differs from a view of it looking straight on, we decided to construct a room and the bird's-eye view of it side by side.

(10) Reined in by a labyrinth's narrow passageways, the architectural body stays near and tactility comes immediately into play. (93)

(11) Constrained by her environment, she proceeds to piece together an architectural surround. (40)

If we take the first example we can notice that the pre-positioning of the participial clauses focuses the reader's attention on the subject of the main clause: *she*. If the participial clause is post-positioned as in the following example:

(11a) She proceeds to piece together an architectural surround, constrained by her environment.

then the emphasis is less on the subject and more on the verb "proceeds." In all events, the pre-positioning creates a movement forward in the sentence. Pre-positioned participial clauses belong to what Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short call "anticipatory constituents" (225). As the two authors quite rightly point out:

anticipatory constituents bring an element of suspense into syntax. A dependent constituent is one which cannot stand on its own, and hence

> cannot be interpreted in isolation. An anticipatory constituent must therefore be held in the memory until the major constituent of which it is a part has been interpreted. (226)

In other words, anticipatory constituents, by delaying the main subject of a clause, require more from a reader's memory. Only when the reader reaches the end of a sentence can he or she truly piece together the constituent parts of the whole: meaning is delayed, creating a forward movement in the syntax, and, at the same time, disrupting the canonical word order.

Another recurrent feature of the syntax, which is also an anticipatory constituent, is the use of appositions and parentheses, as in the following examples:

> (12) An integrally intelligent whole, always capable of bringing conscious reflection into the mix, the organism-person thinks its (way through an) environment. (3)

> (13) Amorphous accordings of more information than is directly supplied, imaging landing sites exist as even less discrete patches of world than perceptual landing sites. (12)

> (14) A summing and rounding up of a person's occurrent landing sites or a grand tour of all a person subtends, the architectural body is of value to us as a heuristic device. (67)

The predilection for apposition and parentheses results in an intricate syntax. At times, it is difficult for the reader to identify the subject of the structure, or, more precisely, what appears at first to be the subject, is in fact an apposition, so that the reader has to readjust their initial interpretation accordingly, just as in a procedural house they have to adapt themselves to ever-changing surrounds. The lack of punctuation adds to the ambiguity and complicates the reading process, as in the following example:

> (15) Accepting that the world can be sorted out, at each instant, into only a limited number of landing sites that can readily be kept track of and maneuvering with this information without trying to overreach it amounts to taking a neutral stance. (9)

Once again, any interpretation of the sentence remains "tentative," provisional, something which is continually being constructed but never completely permanent.

4. "Constructing Toward a Holding in Place" (48): A Tentative Discourse

Indeed, these parentheses and appositions create the impression that the writers are feeling their way towards their conclusions, "tentatively" moving towards a theory that includes the reader. The use of modal auxiliaries (*may* and *can*) and modal adverbs (*possibly*), as in the following examples, increases this impression of tentativeness:

> (16) Anything perceived can count as both a landing site in and of itself and as part of a larger landing site. (9)

> (17) A shape may be formed first as one perceptual landing site and then considered to be defined by ten, after which it might be judged to have been defined by one hundred or any number of such sites. (11)

> (18) They are, indeed, possibly without scale. (13)

At times the reader is informed first of what something is not and then of what it is:

> (19) Neither blocking the view nor significantly limiting it, the multilevel labyrinth helps people get a grip on getting hold of taking a hold of the all-over-the-place architectural body. (89)

> (20) Not a fixed set of called-for actions, an architectural procedure is a spatiotemporal collaboration between a moving body and a tactically posed surround. (73)

or he or she is faced with sentences that both affirm and deny "procedures do and do not walk up to one to introduce themselves" (53). Even the title of *Architectural Body* is both affirmed and denied by the discussion on the front cover where the authors ask themselves whether they should have given it a different title. At times, the reader is invited to "fill in" the text themselves through ellipsis and

juxtaposition as in the following passage, where the sentence is not completed:

> (21) Glancing in that direction again, but this time having lifted, for example, her right leg to start walking toward X, she…. (40)

The punctuation invites the reader to add their own ending to the sentence—there is indeed no fixed meaning given. In fact, the work itself finishes in mid-air as there is no final full stop. In the words of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, what we have is a text "not made of sentences laid end to end, but of sentences built, if an image helps, into arcades and domes" (79). Interestingly, Woolf has recourse to architectural terms to explain what she means: "built," "arcades," "domes." Meaning is constructed not progressively through a linear sequence but radiates upwards and outwards, expanding in the reader's mind.

Thus a number of linguistic devices are used by Arakawa and Gins to counteract the linearity and fixed order of the sentence so that the reader is constantly being invited to question his or her original interpretation or assumption, whether that be the meaning of an everyday word or the relationships between the words in the sentence. As a result, the reader's attention is called to focus on their own reading. This is most obvious in the chapter entitled "Critical holder" where the reader is invited to carry out a number of exercises and to construct a multilevel labyrinth with the book itself, with the volume and shape of the page changing as each sentence is read:

> Make a loose fist and push it into the book's seam … follow the terrain of the 86 pages mounting on the left, then follow the terrain of the pages remaining on the right … hold this book vertically … now expand this page to fit an 8x11 sheet of paper … breathe through this first expansion … scale the image you are holding up to the height of the tallest tree you can imagine … scale the page up to the height of the room that you are in … The top line rests on the ceiling and the bottom sits on the floor. The lines extend from one side of the room straight across to the other. The characters spread straight out the back of the virtual sheet of paper (8x11) and straight out in front of it as well. (87-8)

This attempt to make the reader aware of the process of reading itself is an immeasurably difficult task, for as Arakawa and Gins explain:

> when the reading process becomes the co-ordinating skill that is in ascendancy, when one is engrossed in reading (accord us this), all the following, and much else are put on hold: time of day, ambient light, sounds in the vicinity, that one is sitting, and where one is sitting. (86)

The dedication at the beginning of the book is one example of how the authors carry out their attempt:

> To those who have wanted to go on
>
> living and been unable to
>
> and therefore
>
> even more so
>
> To transhumans

The sentences are fragmented and broken, so that instead of facing a linear flow, the reader is compelled to change lines. While the sentence could end at "go on," the reader then has to reinterpret the verb as introducing "living" and therefore expects "unable to" to be followed in the next line by an infinitive. This expectation is frustrated, however, by the appearance of the conjunction *and*. Moreover, the use of capitals at the beginning of the last line questions the status of "to transhumans," giving it an independence from what precedes. The disorientating layout of the dedication therefore forces the reader to become aware of the act of reading.

5. "Juxtaposed Repeatable and Re-combinable Items" (56): Repetition and Variation

The final aspect of Arakawa and Gins'ss style to be considered, which also contributes to the meaning of the text itself, is their use of repetition. Repetition in a text can be reassuring: a case of situating the reader in known territory. Children's stories make frequent use of repetition for this very purpose. However, in *Architectural Body* repetition is disarming to say the least, for it is always accompanied by variations. The authors underline the fact that "no two moments have identical streams in which to rest a weary foot and wiggle one's toes. For that matter, no two moments offer up an identical foot for insertion into a cooling stream" (4).

At the beginning of Chapter Two, *Landing Sites*, there is a systematic repetition of the phrase "being apportioned out" accompanied by minor changes:

> Were nothing being apportioned out, no world could form. What is being apportioned out, no one is able to say. That which is being apportioned out is in the process of landing. To be apportioned out involves being cognizant of sites. To be cognizant of a site amounts to having greeted it in some manner or to having in some way landed on it. There is that which gets apportioned out as the world. There is an apportioning out that can register and an apportioning out that happens more indeterminately. A systematic approximating of how things are apportioned out should be possible. (5)

Just as in the *Rotation House* rooms seem to alter their shape and size, just as in the *disperse-to-contrast procedure* different but nearly identical architectural surrounds are created, so the slight modifications of form (from the progressive to the infinitive, from verb to noun) disorient the reader, forcing him or her to reconstruct meaning as the text advances. This constant modification of a lexical form is common in *Architectural Body*. At a later point in the work, for example, the term "procedural knowing" declines through singular noun "a procedure" to adverb "procedurally" to plural "procedures" within the space of a few lines (52).

Sometimes a sentence can be repeated word for word and then expanded upon, suggesting that further expansion is also possible:

> An architecturally imbued person will architect every manner of surroundings. An architecturally imbued person will architect every manner of surroundings, even a vast open plain. Any architectural surround she once experienced can become a four-dimensional point of reference for a person standing on an open plain. (44)

At other times, the authors make use of chiasmus:

> (27) Much of the liveliness on this planet registers numb. In the numb register—so much of this that we find around us. Muted life for fear of a terrifying death—all death is terrifying—is well documented. (xvi)

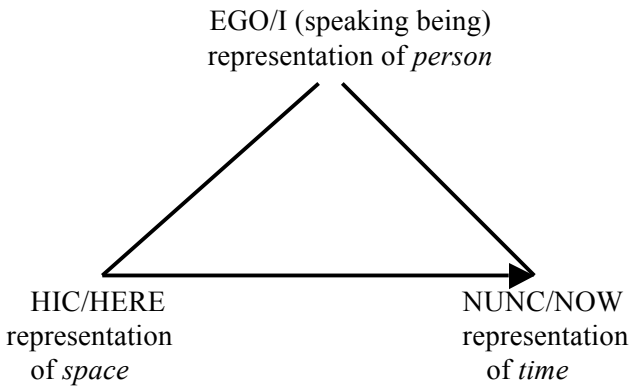> (28) Context is all, and all contexts lead to the architectural context. (xiv)

> (29) … unless the setup is right. A right setup frames actions. (xix)

The co-existence of similarities and differences, the use of what could be called dynamic repetition, means that once again the text is open-ended, provisional in so far as each repetition or reformulation develops the preceding sentence, underlining the fact that it is not complete but can be reiterated ad infinitum. In addition, the repetition has repercussions on the linearity of the text as the sentences no longer follow on in a predictable sequence but interact with each other, making the reader re-read what preceded:

> Architectural surrounds that reappear in different contexts and thereby generate the disperse-to-contrast procedure will, when repeat occurrences are built at different scales, also harbor the tentativeness-cradling procedure. (77)

6. "A Way to Undo, Loosening to Widen and Re-cast, the Concept of Person" (xi-ii)

The dynamic aspect of the text presents some interesting repercussions for literary and linguistic theory. Jean-Jacques Lecercle, in his article "The Tense of Architecture" (2003), points to the importance of the authors' theory for enunciation linguistics. While the Culiolian linguistic theory, examined by Lecercle, offers no variable of localization, other theories, such as that expounded by André Joly and Dairine O'Kelly (18), introduce an enunciative triad, linking person, place and time. Drawing on Damourette and Pichon's definition that "le langage est naturellement centré sur le moi-ici-maintenant," language is centred on the *I, Here,* and *Now* with the relationship being illustrated as a triangular structure:

EGO/I (speaking being)
representation of *person*

HIC/HERE
representation
of *space*

NUNC/NOW
representation
of *time*

However, this representation firmly places the subject at the apex of the triangle, dominating both space and time. Moreover, the arrow is unidirectional. What is striking about Arakawa and Gins'ss theory is that they see the subject as interacting both with space and time. In the chapter "Architecture as Hypothesis," the house "prompts" the actions of the people within it and at the same time is responsive to the people's movements (35). As Lecercle points out, this means that the separation between subject and object has been overcome (50). This concept is not just applied at the theoretical level, but is reflected in the very language used in the text and, I would suggest, in the reading process. The spatial and temporal dimensions of the text are not static but act upon the reader just as the reader, through his or her interpretation, acts upon the text. It is a two-way process with the person, *I*, no longer dominating both space and time.

To conclude then, the use of language in *Architectural Body* is indeed no "mere play on words" (xiv) but reflects the very theory that is being put forward by the authors. Whether it be the lexis, or the syntax or the grammatical forms, the reader's expectations are continually being questioned and challenged. The reading process itself is disrupted, the reader's memory constantly solicited. If, as the authors say, "part of being a person is to feel uncertain in regard to and tentative about what comes next" (45), part of being a reader of *Architectural Body* is also to feel one's way through and round the text.

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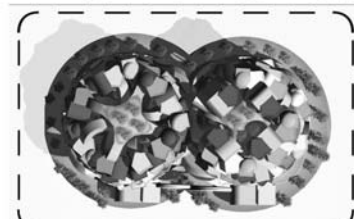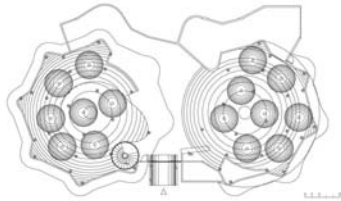
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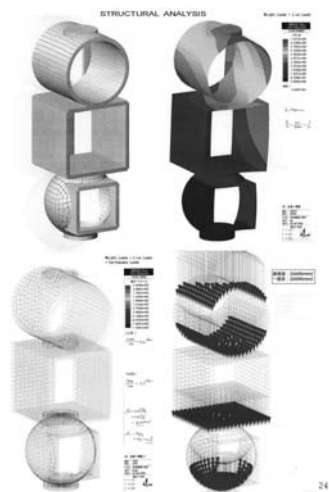
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