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TOWARD A MINOR ARCHITECTURE

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For my students

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WHAT IS A MINOR ARCHITECTURE?

> To hate all languages of masters.
> —Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka*

> And herein are indirectly comprised many minor contingencies.
> —Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Where (in the world) is architecture going? As much as any art, it relies on *languages of masters* for momentum. In former times, its masters were deities and monarchs; since the industrial revolution, these have been replaced by the more abstract economic forces of "free" markets. Architecture's recent agendas have set their shallow roots in the soils of techno-virtuosity and eco-ethics. Yet still the discipline perpetuates the syntax of interior and exterior space, the production of buildings, and the architect's heroic aspirations. In thrall to influences and desires of corporate power, the major language of architecture is yet one more product of a culture increasingly dominated by symbolic capital. Its conventions teeter at the precipice of saturation, leading us to this seemingly strange proposition: Architecture can no longer limit itself to the aesthetic pursuit of making buildings; it must now commit to a politics of selectively taking them apart.

Political and economic powers set forth conditions of complicity in which major architectures are made.[1] But once made, buildings can be challenged to relinquish their share in this complicity. Though appearing to reside comfortably within the language of the majority, buildings may provide a medium within which a *minor* architecture might be situated. In this context, a minor architecture will operate both upon architecture's grammatical constructions of (virtual) power and within its physical, material form. Thus might an ornate theater be transformed into a utilitarian parking garage, or a half-finished corporate tower be taken hostage as a vertical *favela*.[2] In these and other instances, powerful forces arise in response to vacancy—not just in the form of empty rooms adapted for reuse, but through an encoding of these vacant spaces, and a subversion of major architecture's prevailing myths.

As we begin to investigate what minor architecture might mean, we must be prepared for its precise nature to elude capture. It rejects a definite article, divides and branches toward multiplicity.[3] So let us shift to the plural. In their deceptively simple spatial strategies and in their many guises as intensely complex theoretical constructions, minor architectures will alter and dematerialize the constructed world. They will be necessarily ephemeral, slip through cracks of Euclidean convention, and pay no heed to the idea of the formal. Form will tend to dissipate; material will give way to immaterial. Three dimensions may become two, then two become one: a line. The subtle aesthetic within these spaces will likely evade even the trained eye of an architectural photographer, though a canny journalist may be able to track the intricate relations of its existence, which are wrapped up in time.

the power of the base/bottom

> A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language.
> —Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka*

The notion of minor architecture presented here emerges in response to Deleuze and Guattari's critical writing on minor literature.[4] In their study of Franz Kafka, a Czech who wrote veiled critiques of pre-Nazi Austria in the German language, they locate "minor" and "minority" as conditions that exist at the bottoms of power structures, yet hold an extraordinary potential for power. Emerging from within a major language, minor literature is that language intentionally impoverished, fractional, stripped of decoration and even of grammar.[5] In their analysis of Kafka's writing, Deleuze and Guattari slip fluidly between literary metaphor and descriptions of actual space. At one moment they identify the feminine characters in *The Trial* as "blocks," then describe and even diagram the architectural blocks of the Gentleman's Inn in *The Castle*.[6] Though writing about literature, they build a bridge between literature and architecture through the very words they use to describe Kafkan space. Blocks, segments, strata, connectors, rhizomes, planes of immanence, lines of flight—all of these describe spatial strategies and spatial effects. I borrow these terms to construct an argument for minor architecture from within the lexicon of minor literature. This is the minor squared. And like the square of any fraction, its quantitative value will continue to diminish. So while minor literatures still keep their authors in plain sight, minor architectures may tend to obscure their architects from view.

Deleuze and Guattari further define minor literature by these three characteristics: deterritorialization (and the implied reterritorialization), politicization, and collective enunciation.[7] In architecture as in literature, these traits exist in multiplicities, as both figurative and literal mechanisms, as both acts and consequences. But such

multiplicities are deceptively light; they do not produce an excess. Instead, minor architectures perpetuate conditions of *lack*. More absence than substance, their spaces (like those of minor literature) are knowingly impoverished.[8] In its minor mode, the language of architecture is reduced to primitive elements, active verbs operating on concrete nouns. At the same time, redundancies proliferate in the form of repetitions (elemental) and vibrations (visual). These contribute to reframing familiar territory, to making the familiar strange. Estrangement is not conventionally nomadic; rather, it takes place largely in situ, as existing buildings and constructions respond to desires for escape, for blurred boundaries, and for collective expression. The stripping away of excess may be literal, as minor architectures employ subtractive mechanisms that dismantle the overwrought, manufactured, "meaningful" objects of culture through political force.[9]

But the political is slippery, Janus-faced. Politics can be a euphemism for the State[10] and its preoccupation with becoming sovereign; or it can refer to our more terrestrial daily life and its disparities.[11] Politics can conceal its agendas within the codes of abstract ideology (in parallel with religion); it can be summoned as a weapon of control, or wielded as a liberating force. All this is to say that politics can operate (spatially) either from the top of a power structure or from the bottom; the former produces major architectures out of which minorities can emerge. A *minor* architecture is political because it is mobilized from below, from substrata that may not even register in the sanctioned operations of the profession.

Political space engages the dimension of time, variously by its categorical divisions or by its liberating flow. Space politicized from above divides time into frozen segments. The architecture of the prison, for example, stratifies the mechanized agenda of incarceration; it operates through religious adherence to temporal laws of segmentation (the daily schedule) and permanence (the incommutable sentence). Similarly, the workplace refers to a particular space of control—a time line that daily reflects a repeating set of social and spatial relations. Workplaces are configured to maintain stability (a euphemism for obedience), production efficiency, division of labor, and alienation of laborers from their space of production. From the smallest office cubicle to the crossing patterns of merchant vessels, the flow of time is subordinated to time's economic value. The clock in the back of the house measures increments of lived control—"clocking in" is a polite term for getting to work. This manifestation of the political is a space where fluid time is expelled because it is threatening to power. The segmentation of time within a politically structured workplace obliterates the eternal and nonhierarchical relation between people and nature—substituting management of a false, measurable time (the eternity of work, the Situationists' "dead time")[12] for the perceived instability of fluid time.

And so (in the other instance) to consider a political space that *liberates from below* is to smooth, collapse, or expel the stratified mechanizations of lived time. Here emerges the sense of the political with which minor architectures are concerned. As conflict rises up, it reformulates collapsed time back into an undifferentiated stream. Fluid time (and its attendant space) surrounds and overwhelms the management of lived time; it is a contestation to management. An inmate damned to formal confinement, for two years or twenty, can certainly measure his cell and count the days as they pass; but those prisoners who appear throughout this book choose not to do so. With architecture's hard matter as a subversive ally, they find ways and means to escape the laws of both spatial and temporal segmentation.

As early as 1929, Georges Bataille wrote about the architecture of the majority in terms of its coercive powers, and its concurrent disenfranchisement and intimidation of those without power.[13] Bataille's point has been more or less obvious and relevant, depending on prevailing cultural conditions; architecture's excessive force escalates in

tandem with an aggressive escalation of political authority. In the middle of the twentieth century, explicitly authoritarian buildings and spaces emerged out of totalitarian regimes, most visibly in Hitler's Germany and in the USSR after Stalin.[14] In the decades since World War II, corporate hierarchies have also reproduced themselves as architectural expressions of power. Though perhaps seeming less intimidating, these commissions are no less disenfranchising. They and their obedient offspring have so consumed our contemporary landscape that today Bataille's point strikes even truer. A half-century of architectural excess (played out through too much building with too little thought and too much ambition) has left us with a detritus of constructed objects that might serve as raw material for minor architectures politicized from below.

A familiar line from Bataille, "Architecture is the expression of the very soul of societies, just as human physiognomy is the expression of individuals' souls," is often misunderstood when taken out of its original context. For Bataille goes on:

> [But] only the ideal being of society, the one that issues orders and interdictions with authority, is expressed in architectural compositions in the strict sense of the word. . . . Thus great monuments rise up like levees, opposing the logic of majesty and authority to any confusion: Church and State in the form of cathedrals and palaces speak to the multitudes, or silence them. It is obvious that monuments inspire social good behavior in societies and often real fear. The storming of the Bastille is symbolic of this state of affairs: it is hard to explain this mass movement other than through people's animosity (animus) against the monuments that are its real masters.[15]

Opportunities for minor architectures emerge when the soul of a society is understood as more than a singularity, when—though a major soul constructs—minor souls await opportunities to de(con) struct. Minor architectures are, in fact, opportunistic events in response to latent but powerful desires to undo structures of power; and as such, minor architectures are precisely (if perversely) concerned with the privilege and circumstances of major architecture, the architecture of State and economic authority. Here it is useful to introduce Deleuze and Guattari's concept of striated and smooth space. Striated space is the sedentary, segmented space of the State, with its codes, logical orders, piecemeal differences, identities, and laws. Smooth space is non-Euclidean space, "a field without conduits or channels."[16] Striated and smooth form a dialectical pair; one would not exist without the other. And yet the distinction between the two is not like night and day. The space between them is immeasurable; they are a mixture with blurring, slippage, and overlap. Power triumphs by constructing striations. A desire to subvert the power of these constructions is a smoothing force. Minor architectures operate in that mercurial, indeterminate state that is the passage from striated to smooth, from closed system to open space.[17]

think of unfenced pastures

> He was forced instead to make his way through numerous little rooms, along continually curving passages and down tiny flights of stairs, one after the other, and then through an empty room with an abandoned desk in it until, eventually, only ever having gone this way once or twice previously, and then in the company of others, he found that he was totally and utterly lost.
> —Franz Kafka, *Amerika*

Though Kafka's novels and stories contradict and escape prevailing literary paradigms in ways made clear by Deleuze and Guattari, the architectural structures within his fiction are coercive, claustrophobic,

labyrinths of relentless interiority (*The Trial*) and authoritarian object/subject constructions (*The Castle*/Klamm). This inescapable world, at first glance so remote from any "real" world, so seemingly isolated within an Escher-like geometry of self-conforming and self-referential relationships, mirrored the rise of new social and economic structures in the first half of the twentieth century. More precisely, Kafka possessed an uncanny ability to recognize the spaces of bureaucratic and authoritarian regimes before they had fully emerged. This was his genius, and one of the reasons he became an increasingly important figure as the cultural and political conditions of the twentieth century unfolded. His universe is a hermetic construct, a purely architectonic landscape. In his stories and novels, hierarchical spaces of industrial production and fiduciary management are brought under the roof of a singular narrative edifice within which there is no line of flight, no escape, not even any true arrival.[18]

Embedded in *The Trial* is a short (and also separately published) parable, "Before the Law." A supplicant seeking admittance to the Law is held at a threshold indefinitely by the authority of a doorkeeper who claims: "I am powerful. And I am only the least of the doorkeepers. From hall to hall there is one doorkeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third doorkeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him." His arguments are so intimidating that the protagonist "decides that it is better to wait until he gets permission to enter. . . . There he sits for days and years."[19] Within this parable is evidence of three myths that have dominated the major Western canons of architectural production. The first is the *interior myth*, a perception that an interior space (the space of the Law) lies beyond the gate and the gatekeeper. The supplicant is outside, waiting to be allowed in. But he is also *inside*, waiting to be let out; he is imprisoned within the system of belief that tells him the significance of the gate. The second is the *object myth*, embodied by Law as an object beyond the gate. The law/object is the central paradigm of *The Trial*, as it is of many of Kafka's stories. It appears solid and impermeable, and hovers with ever-ominous significance over all characters and all actions. The third is the *subject myth* in the person of the gatekeeper, whose horrifying face is potentially rendered almost amiable by the specter of an even more horrible gatekeeper that looms beyond the next gate, and so on, and on. But the supplicant cannot disbelieve the gatekeeper's powerful presence; he is paralyzed by the perceived authority, as though the gatekeeper himself were the architect of the law/object and sovereign over its interior.

These mythologies apply variously to all three of Kafka's novels. The setting of *The Trial* is an apparently generic city, though perhaps one with a non-Euclidean geometry. Its interiority is so absolute that to head in opposite directions can bring two travelers to the same location. The site of *The Castle*, with its density of unreachable fortress and impenetrable bureaucracy, is more a mythic village. It has no interior; its solidity is inviolable. In *Amerika*, vast spaces stretch infinitely toward Oklahoma. Objects are far apart, but each individual object (like the Occidental Hotel) is complex, functional, and repetitive, generated through the commodity machine that has consumed the landscape of the North American continent. These three fictional sites prefigure three key spatial conditions of the twentieth century, each of which contains a latent opposite. The space of *The Castle* is a fascist machine, pressing bodies and documents together into a solidified obstacle to the Castle itself, which is the ultimate architectural object, symbolic and unattainable. *The Trial* constructs a seemingly more passive model of totalitarian space, keeping bodies apart through intimidation and miscommunication, rendering interiority absolute. *Amerika* reflects that new-world engine of territorial exploitation disguised as opportunity. Each of these sites has a corresponding architectural form; each site, each form, is characterized above all by segmentation.

Consider two pervasive hard segmentations in architectural discourse: the dichotomous private and public and the even more fundamental binary of nature and culture. Minor architectures can blur these boundaries, turning hard segments soft. Obviously domination and authority can flourish in private, but they do also (and more subversively) in public. Who is more public than a Guantánamo detainee, what more than the execution of Saddam Hussein, the crush of Katrina victims into the New Orleans Superdome, or the endless stream of reality television? Certainly the space of the *public* is, in these contexts, a euphemism for the space of the State; but in fact the State forms a wall between public and private. We cannot blithely argue (as various discourses of environmental design commonly do) that spaces earmarked as "public" and "cultural" necessarily produce spaces of democracy. Culture and nature deploy an equally powerful spatial currency; the State apparatus is an organized power that has insidiously built an illusory distinction between them. Rodents in our national parks are protected; rats in our cities are exterminated.

Power structures operate by fabricating such dichotomous distinctions: by stratifying, filing, sequencing, making categories and concordances, endlessly organizing. In Deleuzian terms, these all form blocks. The blocks leave gaps between them. (In the construction of the Great Wall of China, the strength of the wall lies not in its physical continuity but in the very myth and legend of its existence.)[20] Minor architectures may emerge either in the movement from one segment to another or as lines of force within the zones *between* segments. These forces are purposeful but unstable. They obliterate conventional geometries to bend and join with time. They reshape space by transforming it.

Lines of force may resist enclosure (interiority) and become lines of flight. They may reject image, weight, and solidity, causing volumes (objects) to shatter. The force of collective desire may displace some perceived authority (subject) from its central position of power. The constructions of culture may be repositioned as a primal (natural) landscape.

> I am well aware that I have never written anything but fiction.
> —Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*

Kafka's fiction seems to contain apparent and latent conditions from within which minor spaces might emerge; yet they cannot do so, precisely because their architectonic structures are so inflexible. But in other regions of literature's universe, elements of minor architecture are already embedded (perhaps one could even say hidden) within larger narratives, Often such literary fragments are tangential to their author's intentions. The investigation of their spatiality is not within the discipline of literary criticism. Instead, literature provides the medium for an oblique but critical approach to architecture.

Let us introduce two images, each set in the 1970s and each from a work of fiction. The first: in an Argentine prison a journalist sits on her bed in a solitary cell, reading into the walls a mnemonic text through which she records her ordeal. The second: in New York's affluent Westchester County, a man reclines alongside a backyard pool, contemplating a swim home along a metaphorical river named for his wife. Embedded within these stories are examples of seemingly polar conditions of politicized space: imprisonment and territorial freedom. But each scene operates through a spatial paradox that is not readily apparent; each in fact is an enactment of its perceived opposite. Cecelia and Neddy (who reappear later in this book) are mere instruments of their stories' true and shared protagonist, which is space itself.

As Walter Benjamin read the elemental artifacts of nineteenth-century Paris as though they were texts,[21] so can we read elemental fragments of twentieth-century fiction as though they are architecture.

Fiction offers nonvisual images of space that the camera cannot reach, and temporal/spatial enactments that lie outside the conventions of architectural representation. The spatial conditions that appear within these narratives may seem tangential by-products of other forces; they sneak through cracks in the primary plot. In certain genres of modern literature,[22] space is particularly active. It replaces character (Robbe-Grillet), it becomes evocative (Proust), threatening (Poe), politicized (Orwell, Atwood), or animated (Borges). An unsung protagonist, space may be willful and present without or beyond its author's intentions. Here is the paradox of fiction as a source and measure of minor architectures: the medium that relies on discourse and metaphor yields, in those zones between strata, spaces that confront and even deny their metaphoric and territorial contexts. An absence of authorial intent allows literary sites their politicized, minor quality; this is also true for the architectural spaces within them. We might say that a work of minor architecture is architecture in its most literary mode.

So in the following chapters I call on classics and lesser-known works of twentieth-century fiction, locating fragments within which occur elements of minority or the explicit exclusion of minority. This then becomes a new narrative, one that transcends both plot and style, and forms a consistent plane upon which the potential for minor architectures in "our" world may become legible. The broad context of this literary landscape is like a vast archaeological site, but the retrieved fragments (like pottery shards in the ruin of a dwelling, or bones in a tomb) are small, perhaps seeming inconsequential. Each one is its own tactical line of force, and also a potential piece of a new assemblage. Though their lines may intersect, the fabric remains unfinished and inconclusive. Each line points toward where it may never arrive.

> The archdeacon gazed at the gigantic edifice for some time in silence, then extending his right hand, with a sigh, towards the printed book which lay open on the table, and his left towards Notre-Dame, and turning a sad glance from the book to the church,—"Alas," he said, "this will kill that."
> —Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

Hugo's "this" is the ephemeral space of words within books; he warns that it may gain power and become more solid than those "books" of stone which we call buildings.[23] Some might argue that this has indeed come to pass, that first the printed book and now the proliferation of social and economic spaces produced through electronic media have rendered architecture impotent. Yet architecture still conveys a particular kind of spatial power. The modern condition of estrangement (or alienation) has become perversely palpable through buildings, the very material of which implies permanence, stability, and community. Particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, alienation associated with labor, and specifically the *division* of labor, was gradually subsumed by a different kind of alienation, tied more closely to geography than to history. This occurred at roughly the same time that the division of labor turned from blue-collar to white-collar work, from a Fordist (state-capitalist) economy to one of (neoliberal) flexible accumulation.[24] In the decades following World War II, this shift (e.g., from the making of a car to the selling of a car) produced a body of architectural work that is now almost universally acknowledged as both strange and estranging. What is it that makes this dominant paradigm seem strange, when it so carefully adheres to the grammars of architecture's current official language? Perhaps in order to engage minor architecture as a practice, we must first propose the axiom that *there can be no official language of architecture.*

For more than two millennia, we have endlessly debated the aesthetic vocabulary of buildings, their formal diagram, the means of their production, the efficiency of their function, and the nuances of their meaning. At the same time we have accepted nearly without argument the fundamental notion of their durability, which also means permanence. Marx's historical materialism, when made spatial, unmasks the myth of architectural permanence. His metaphoric description of the revolutions of 1848 as "small fractures and fissures in the dry crust of European society"[25] prophetically sets the stage onto which the premise for a minor architecture can enter. The buildings of the past fifty years are themselves such a dry crust, seemingly solid but primarily air. Their shells obtain the illusory images of obsolescent institutions. These days the edifice is frequently empty; yet still it conveys a weighty ambition that even high rates of vacancy cannot vanquish.

Space is pure act.
—Joseph Raphson

Walter Benjamin's *destructive character* "knows only one watchword: make room; only one activity, clearing away. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred."[26] But turned toward a minoritarian agenda, the action that Benjamin calls *de*structive becomes *con*structive. The clearing away of material and the activity of making room are both experiments with space and experiences of space.[27] Minor architectures are acts of clearing. Each act yields an emergent, revolutionary space, even as that space begins to close in behind. It is space displaced, a *deterritorialization*. It challenges authority and its management of time; it is *political*. It overrides heroic aspirations with an inclusive, *collective voice*. The lines of force that generate minor architectures begin always in the middle, yet not from the center. They have only their elastic length, with never a true beginning or end. These lines are complex trajectories that open outward. Their calculus is more that of Leibniz than of Newton,[28] an approach to zero-degree space. A line of desire locates a weak point within a seemingly orthodox and stable form; it is a pry bar that forces open a crack of thin space that weaves into and intersects with other thinnesses. Minor architectures tend to proliferate; their thready multiplicity is highly unstable, variously generative, subtractive, and reactive.

If we invert Raphson's axiom to read, "Action is pure space," then we encounter architecture's back door. Yet there is no arrival; instead, this door is an exit toward uncertainty. It gives way to another door, and then another. Unlike in Kafka's parable, no gatekeeper guards this gate. Neither the law (object) nor the sovereign (subject) lies within, for there is no interior, only multiple thresholds that imply architecture's desiring state—to become exterior, to find an outside. Minor architectures operate from outside the major economy, potentially outside the architectural profession, and outside prevailing critical frameworks—outside these dominant cultural paradigms, but *inside* architecture's physical body. And from this inside, they establish *outside* as an oblique destination. A building's interior may truly shed its hard enclosure, like a reptile emerging from its obsolete skin. But transformations may also transcend this literal, material mode of escape; new spaces may disappear *into* the image of their major host. This is often a matter of economy, for minor architectures tend to rely on minor resources.

The spatial conditions we are calling minor may already be close by, latent within our consumer objects, veiled by property relations. To tease them out is to think outside conventional visual paradigms, to resist the linearity of time and the seduction of progress. The study of minor architectures is itself a study in architectural kinships—but not those derived from geographical responsiveness (regionalism),

aesthetic canons (style), or program-driven institutions (typology). Instead, it uncovers a shared spatial code that transcends conventional categories, ensuring that minor architectures will always operate through complex multiplicities.

If, as Michel de Certeau suggests, "space is practiced place,"[29] these minor operations might be construed as *practiced space*. Through actions that are often small in scope but powerful in their effects, and in the absence of both behavioral and aesthetic agendas, minor architectures can seem simultaneously insignificant and subversively instrumental—possessing an alchemy that dissolves material, privileges air, inscribes meaning onto surfaces, folds exteriors inward and interiors outward, and blurs definitive objects into contingent relationships. The idealized modernist belief of physical determinism is turned on its head, revealing those conditions in which space can be the result of action rather than the cause of behavior.

Minor architectures operate through verbs, not as nouns. Provoked by desires for resistance, fragmentation, and opposition, they may be mobilized *within* buildings that are underutilized or diminished by real or perceived obsolescence. These sites of origin are not autonomous; rather, they are part of an enormous construct, an ur-urbanism that reaches beyond city limits to engage all that has been built "according to plan." Minor actions form assemblages of space; they disassemble binary oppositions of inside and outside, public and private, sanctioned and subversive, large and small. They reframe the definition of architecture from *the making of buildings with materials of nature* to *the making of spaces within the already built*. Such works may remain unrecognized, and they will likely leave some wreckage in their wake even as they challenge the perceived wreckage that precedes them. They will have consequences of incompleteness and imperfection; but minor architects delight in imperfect, incomplete outcomes.

At the end of his scathing critique of architecture's beholden state, Manfredo Tafuri refers to "impotent and ineffectual myths" that hold the profession hostage to the powers of capital.[30] It is now thirty years later, and these myths have gained even greater currency. Recurring conditions of crisis—foreclosure, bankruptcy, abandonment, poverty, environmental collapse, and corporate scandal—frame a physical landscape rife with multifarious forms of excess. Along the road to any airport in almost any city in the world, the buildings that crowd our view represent the certainty of a global

majority language: the language of profit. Most we deem ugly;[31] they provoke the disdain even of many within the profession that produced them, and that continues to do so. Vacancies are currently high; yet these buildings repel our desire, so we avert our gaze. Yet here in full force (though in radically different form) are the architectures of power that Bataille so precisely described seventy years ago. They place the argument for alternate and subversive spatial strategies squarely at our doorstep.

Our prevailing attitude to these chain hotels, office parks, discount stores, and planned developments reflects the professional elite's predilection for moral judgment. But if we suspend our judgment, these buildings can perversely provoke a spirit of play. To embrace this approach is to acknowledge architecture's relationship to its own characteristic law—that is, the law of space, or "space as law." At the same time, we can challenge and play with laws *outside* of space—the policies, codes, agreements, and approvals that are normal prerequisites for the practice of architecture. As with the buildings themselves, these perceived obstructions may open opportunities for minor but revolutionary architectural events.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to diabolical powers knocking at Kafka's door,[32] suggesting Kafka's prescient anticipation of three significant twentieth-century developments: Soviet Communism, National Socialism, and late capitalism. Each of these arose out of a highly ordered, determined system. Totalitarian space privileges interiority; it is passive, self-preserving, and frozen, with an agenda of subjugation. As a distinct kind of totalizing machine, Fascist space objectifies; it is active, destructive, and mobile, with an agenda of extermination. Neoliberal space is passive-aggressive, self-aggrandizing, and immaterial, with an agenda of profit. These spatial typologies map onto the interior, object, and subject myths that form the warp of this book.

We proceed from three assumptions: the interior takes flight, the object fractures, the subject dissolves. There are projects and tactics, experiments and statements that address all three. The chapters that follow do not remain territorialized within their rooms. Interior and object do not simply make a binary pair, nor do object and subject. The edges that appear to segment them from each other blur, thicken, and fuse into subtle indeterminacies. Vulnerable, permeable, and unstable, minor architectures appear only obliquely, within gaps formed and shadows cast by majority rule.

Poised now at the threshold of the interior, we turn to discover lines of escape that pass through seemingly solidified boundaries, provoking architecture to bend toward its own (minor) immanence.