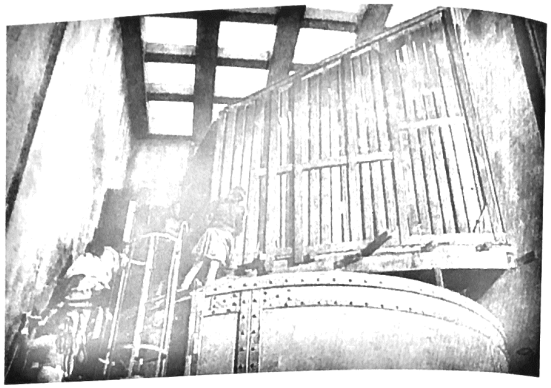

THE MYTH OF THE INTERIOR

> Hiding places there are innumerable, escape is only one,
> but possibilities of escape, again, are as many as hiding places.
> —Franz Kafka, *The Blue Octavo Notebooks*

> Ask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by
> thrusting through the wall?
> —Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Architectural space need not only be bound to enclosure—finite, measurable, and palpable. It may also transcend material boundaries, flow maddeningly like mercury, soft-hard and fluid. Such space is found within texts both written and built. We find it in literature and in architecture; it flows teasingly among words and within walls, between interiors. Such quixotic space can be produced; it can return us in force to Kafka's innumerable possibilities of escape.

Words may weave a tectonic fabric, but every piece of architecture also constructs a text whose completeness is only apparent. Incompleteness generates imbalance, knocks against walls, shifts weight toward the outside. It is a desiring force, reactive to static powers of symmetry, hierarchy, and unforgiving containment. Within cities, buildings, and rooms (hidden inside our constructed narratives) are latent possibilities for exteriority that await both desire and opportunity. It is the expression of sovereign power that produces

a desire for escape; it is the fabric of architecture, in all its material hardness, that provides the opportunity.

Interiors are the passive, self-referential and self-preserving spaces of sovereignty. And so our first image of a minor architecture is a *line of force* that redirects a thick vector of power into multiplicities of thin and thready flows. If architecture is an art, then its minor mode is an essentially politicized art of escape—challenging our fundamental understanding of container and of being contained. Containment is a relation without dynamism; it is historical, prefigured, assigned, remembered, and repeated. An interior is a segment separate from other segments and other interiors; it is from such static zones that minor architectures may emerge. Interior becomes exterior not simply by moving outside the norms and physics of architectural enclosure; its exit to the outside subverts the traditional interior/exterior dialectic of space through an assimilation of time.

Time is a critical accomplice to every act of escape. In fact, the idea of permanence can be understood as time's own interior, as time frozen or captured, as time's primal nature foiled. The act of escaping permanence is not a move toward a space without time, but rather an *exit* to time's exterior.[1] In this calculation, to escape is to reconfigure a relation to time—to undermine and overturn the authority of permanence and the self-preserving eternal. Western traditions of architecture have long been based on both the interiority of space (enclosure) and the interiority of time (permanence);[2] minor architectures release both space and time from their framed and familiar territories. Escape and duration merge into active lines of force that penetrate, blur, or even dissolve the distinguishing membranes which separate inside from out, and now from then.

What is Kafka's "indefinite postponement"[3] if not the enclosure of the present, the inability to mobilize the past or exit into the future?

> "Couldn't we open the window?" asked K. "No," replied the painter. "It is only a sheet of glass let into the roof. It can't be opened." . . . [K.] brought the flat of his hand down on the feather bed and said in a feeble voice, "That's both uncomfortable and unhealthy." "Oh no," said the painter, in defense of his window. "Because it's hermetically sealed, it keeps the warmth in much better than a double window, though it's only a simple pane of glass. And if I want to air the place, which isn't really necessary, for the air comes in everywhere through the chinks, I can always open one of the doors or even both of them."
>
> —Franz Kafka, *The Trial*

Kafka is perhaps the consummate master of absolute interiority.[4] His literary space has only elusive interiors, narratives that have no end, no beginning, no real center, in fluid language that can barely be contained.[5] But the architectural spaces within his fiction are interiority uncompromised. Particularly in the novels, doorways (but not windows) proliferate. Kafka's doors are always a way in, never a way out. His strange and paradoxical geometries establish connectivity, but without continuity. Interiors multiply relentlessly inward; they nest, like the prose of Raymond Roussel, within an inviolable edifice of enclosure.[6] Firmly they deny any possibility of escape.

In *The Trial* all rooms are stifling; everywhere is airlessness, unventilated heat, and claustrophobia. Private rooms double as offices or passageways; Josef K.'s own chamber opens into the bedroom of Fräulein Burstner, which becomes the strange first venue of his ordeal. An inspector sits behind a desk that has been moved to the middle of the room, three other men lurk in a shadowy corner, peering at framed photographs hanging on the wall. In the midst of this bureaucratic setting "[a] white blouse dangled from the latch of the open window."[7] Every scene is similarly crowded by suited men and

incongruous assemblages of objects, a commingling of officiousness and domesticity within rooms.

Directed to appear for his first formal interrogation at an obscure address in an outlying suburb, K. again encounters a set of domestic interiors that he must penetrate on his way to the Court of Inquiry. He navigates a series of apartments, each consisting of only one small chamber with a single window. On the fifth floor of the designated building, he enters one of these rooms. The tenant directs him through to another door: "K. felt as though he were entering a meeting hall. A crowd of the most variegated people—nobody troubled about the newcomer—filled a medium sized, two-windowed room, which just below the roof was surrounded by a gallery, also quite packed, where the people were able to stand only in a bent posture with their heads and backs knocking against the ceiling."[8] Some time later, while at his office at the bank, K. is visited by a manufacturer, who alludes to knowledge of his case and advises him to visit the painter Titorelli. K. at once leaves the bank and gives the address of the painter to a cab driver. He observes that he is heading in a direction exactly opposite to the suburb where his case is being tried and arrives in an "even poorer suburb"—perhaps a fitting image for the residence of a struggling painter. Upon entrance into the building he is accosted by a flock of young girls, who hang onto his coats and lead him up through the tenement staircases, along corridors, more staircases, more corridors, and up a final straight stair to an undistinguished wooden door at the top, on which is painted: *TITORELLI.* K. enters the painter's room, a hovel of plain boards crowded by a bedstead and dozens of canvases that cover the floor. (Many of the canvases are identical; Titorelli is a master of repetition.) Still, the girls' presence verges on omnipresence; they have remained at the top of the stair spying through the boards, they call out his every move even as K. attempts to focus the conversation on his case. The painter blocks and diverts the questions toward his own interests, yet K. cannot follow the thread. He lacks peripheral vision.

Again, an atmosphere of stifling domesticity. K. is encouraged to take off his jacket and to make himself comfortable on the bed; he is pushed down among the bedclothes. For some time, a second, half-hidden door escapes his notice. Eventually, the painter encourages him to leave by this means, and K. welcomes the chance to exit the room without having to run the gauntlet of young girls. As a seemingly obscure escape route, this proverbial back door is classically tantalizing. There is an awkward negotiation as K. climbs over the bed and trips over the paintings. He exits and is astonished! —the door leads not to some hidden staircase and thence to the anonymity of the street but instead into the very same courtrooms to which K. was directed immediately following his arrest. It is the same space; yet it cannot be the same space. Titorelli's suburb, presumably in the

opposite direction from the court, appears to have doubled back on itself. The straight line and the loop have converged in a Euclidean paradox, once again preventing any possibility of escape.

As Walter Benjamin points out in an essay on Kafka, all of Kafka's doorways are theoretical obstacles. He compares their effect to Arthur Eddington's description of a mathematician attempting to cross a threshold:

> I am standing on the threshold about to enter a room. It is a complicated business. In the first place I must shove against an atmosphere pressing with a force of fourteen pounds on every square inch of my body. I must make sure of landing on a plank travelling at twenty miles a second around the sun—a fraction of a second too early or too late, the plank would be miles away. I must do this whilst hanging from a round planet, head outward into space, and with a wind of aether blowing at no one knows how many miles a second through every interstice of my body. The plank has no solidity of substance. To step on it is like stepping on a swarm of flies. Shall I not slip through? . . .
>
> Verily it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a scientific man to pass through a door. And whether the door be barn door or church door it might be wiser that he should consent to be an ordinary man and walk in rather than wait till all the difficulties involved in a really scientific ingress are resolved.[9]

Like the threshold described here, Kafka's doors often stand open. Even so, they remain impassable. This is the state of mind—and the perpetual spatial consequence—that plagues Josef K. throughout *The Trial*. He may seem to move through the city, from one room to another, seeking the counsel of lawyers, businessmen, bankers, painters, and clergy—but he makes no progress whatever. Any potential discovery is effectively thwarted by and within the opaque interiors of the Law, which are in fact a single space without exit, congruent with the absolute interiority that characterizes K.'s life after his arrest.

Giorgio Agamben writes of life and law, "To show law in its non-relation to life and life in its non-relation to law means to open a space between them for human action."[10] In Kafka's universe, no such space seems to exist. Action is stifled by indolence. As we have seen in the parable of the supplicant at the gate, a man who seeks admittance to the Law is kept waiting his entire life. He is made an example, and he is on display.[11] He thinks he wants to go in, but in fact he is rooted (like Eddington's mathematician) at the threshold. The gate itself is open; the gatekeeper is the inhibition to its being crossed, a materialization (and personification) of impasse. And although the Law presumably lies unseen beyond the gate, its interiority is mythologized, sovereign, and powerful. The supplicant wishes admittance, but in fact it is another law, the law of interiority, that prevents his entering. He is actually *within* this law rather than *before* it. What lies beyond the gate is an outside that he will never reach.

Another short parable, "An Imperial Message,"[12] is embedded within the longer story "The Great Wall of China." A fleet-footed disciple visits the dying emperor at his bedside to receive a whispered message; his charge is to deliver it to a man in the remote countryside. In this tale Kafka has engendered a kind of Zeno's paradox in reverse;[13] as the messenger runs, the distance between him and his destination lengthens. An endless series of courtyards and staircases multiplies outward.[14] To pass through any of them is to gain nothing, for another set of redundant spaces lies beyond. Even in flight, the messenger is within the prison of this radiating geometry. Imprisoned at the other end is a man who sits by his window dreaming to himself, condemned to his own endless interior of frozen time (in)to which the message can never arrive.

I stood in the cell leaning against the cool iron door. I took a step and was up against the wall. I went back again to the middle of the cell, then to the left up to the wall, I turned around, leaned against it heavily, it took only two little steps to the cot at the opposite wall, I stood and looked round: the floor grey-black, made of cement, the door painted blue, an iron door, a window in one wall, I called it the window wall, a bucket on the other wall, I called it the bucket wall, the cot on the third wall, I called it the cot wall, and above the cell door in a niche a searchlight behind wire mesh. This was the cell: they had assigned it to me, and I was busy taking possession of it, taking possession of it.

—Horst Bienek, *The Cell*

Melville's epigraphic question at the beginning of this chapter may seem rhetorical, but prisoners within literature (both fiction and nonfiction) narrate events in which walls atomize and prison cells change scale and size. The prisoner reaches an outside *without* "thrusting through the wall." Escape modes include tapping, scratching, reading, writing, gazing, and pacing. Horst Bienek describes his own escape obliquely, in the form of an appropriation, a stealing of the self within the cell, a transcendence of both self *and* cell. Bienek *deterritorializes* his cell by reconstructing it;[15] this he does by giving names to things. His "line of flight" is admittedly semantic, an act of nomination. Bienek exits the cell by taking possession of its space and its contents; the possibility for escape resides in his ability to transform the space from *cell* to *room*.[16]

Room may be understood as the most basic unit of architectural interiority.[17] The first recorded use in English of the word *room* refers to the cabin of a ship.[18] This small space below deck, which for our purposes we might think subterranean, evokes Shakespeare's "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd"[19]—an antithesis to open air. But *room* has an alternate etymological history that helps to explain its agency in

mechanisms of escape.[20] The original Indo-European root is thought to be **rew*, meaning "wide, open." The Latin *rus* means "open country" (hence, "rustic"), and the German verb *raumem* means "to vacate." To "make room" is to reestablish space as wide and open, to make space empty, to create vacancy. Bienek's "taking possession" is no more than a kind of *dispossession* of the space that has taken possession of him. The transformation from cell to room is from a space that already *is* (temporally closed, crepuscular) to one in a state of *becoming* (free, temporally open).

When Denis Hollier asks, "Is prison then the generic name designating all architectural production?,"[21] he is assuming and building upon Bataille's notion that (major) architectures operate with coercive force. Actual stories of imprisonment that narrate mechanisms of escape reflect the most basic principle of minor architectures: they operate precisely *within*, but in opposition to, the major language of their hosts. Consider the protagonist in John David Morley's novel *In the Labyrinth*. Like many political prisoners of totalitarian regimes, he is taken from his home in the night and given no indication of the nature of his offense. After many weeks in his solitary cell, and suffering from illness, he hears a sepulchral voice calling the name *Lazarus*. He thinks he is dreaming or perhaps languishing at some threshold between life and death. But when he hears the more banal sound of a human cough, he calls out:

"Who are you?"

"Ah, you can hear me at last. I've been trying to get you for some time. Feeling better?"

"Thank you. But where on earth are you?" I echoed in astonishment.

"Two cells down from you. Pleased to make your acquaintance at last. My name is Tibor Benjamin Lazar."

Lazar![22]

The disembodied voice of his neighbor below has been carried by a disused water pipe buried within the wall close to their beds. The wall *hides* the pipe, which in turn permits the very conversation the walls have been designed to prevent.[23] The pipe functions literally as a vertical, auditory line of flight, an invisible conduit *out* of solitary.

And there is this example of a line of flight that is horizontal, silent, and visible. The Argentine journalist Jacobo Timerman was also arrested in his home in the dead of night, and incarcerated for speaking out against the regime during Argentina's Dirty War.[24] Imprisoned for thirty months in solitary confinement, with no due process and frequent interrogations by torture, he describes a coincidence of space and time that engendered his own sublime moment of escape:

> Tonight, a guard, not following the rules, leaves the peephole ajar. I wait a while to see what will happen but it remains open. Standing on tiptoe, I peer out. There's a narrow corridor, and across from my cell I can see at least two other doors. Indeed, I have a full view of two doors. What a sensation of freedom! An entire universe added to my Time, that elongated time which hovers over me oppressively in the cell. Time, that dangerous enemy of man, when its existence, duration and eternity are virtually palpable.

Timerman's poetic reconstruction emphasizes the fragility of an event structure in which time and space conjoin. Once again, the very architecture designed to prevent escape paradoxically provides the mechanism through which escape can occur. Through the tiny peephole, Timerman simultaneously exits two interiors—that of the predictable and scheduled (time), and that of an isolating cell (space). He continues:

> The light in the corridor is strong. Momentarily blinded, I step back, then hungrily return. I try to fill myself with the visible space. So long have I been deprived of a sense of distance and proportion that I feel suddenly unleashed. In order to look out, I must lean my face against the icy steel door. As the minutes pass, the cold becomes unbearable. My entire forehead is pressed against the steel and the cold makes my head ache. But it's been a long time—how long?—without a celebration of space. I press my ear against the door, yet hear not sound. I resume looking. *He* is doing the same.[25]

As power operates by enforcing spatial discontinuities, Timerman's narrative of that single night demonstrates how *resistance* to power can overcome the authority of those interior segments. The resistance comes necessarily from within; it links inside to inside, and by doing this it compromises the authority of the two separate cells. The guard is positioned as a functionary, attached to a sovereign state that rules by enforcing interiors. His job is to maintain separations. Thus, by leaving the peephole open, he becomes a spatial revolutionary—a minor architect. "Not following the rules," he abets an act of escape for Timerman and for the unnamed prisoner across the corridor.

Not space displaced by time, but time made spatial and given a proper name: "An entire universe added to my Time." Space extends time, and slows time down. Timerman's individual politics, his personal economy that is so radically tested through torture, exhaustion, hunger, and loneliness, is the very force of *lack* that compresses both time and space into spare but powerful infrastructures. The corridor takes on urban qualities (more a street than a road), a spatial connection between two private rooms across an in-between territory. This in-between becomes charged with unsanctioned sight—much like the courtyard in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rear Window*.

Geometrically, the corridor is an effective material barrier by which to maintain and enforce the security of the block, and as a

conduit to deliver food and to escort new prisoners to their cells. Across this seemingly linear space, Timerman's perpendicular gaze complicates the geometry, providing a cross grain that contradicts the hierarchical mechanisms of ordered incarceration. A particular kind of temporal emptiness, which is itself engendered through a guard's revolutionary act of omission, puts the meaning of the corridor into disequilibrium. Within this room (*open space, vacancy*) on that night, provoked by a reduction to the barest of human circumstances, an affirmation takes place. Timerman describes it even as a love affair, though he is not even sure if his lover is man or woman. "You blinked. I clearly recall you blinking. And that flutter of movement proved conclusively that I was not the last human survivor on earth in this universe of torturing custodians."[26] Through this minor event the corridor is both transgressed and possessed, both crossed and occupied. A new, lateral space violates the sovereign, axial one, and the peephole is transformed from a passive mechanism of surveillance into an active conduit that profanes the institutionalized, domesticated solitude. It becomes a tectonic force of escape, and bears out the Deleuzian axiom: "Sovereignty can only rule over what it is capable of interiorizing."[27]

> Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!
> —Ronald Reagan, 1987

The Berlin Wall was first breached in November 1989, and in the early days of December those who could get their hands on a hammer and chisel converged to celebrate and participate in its physical destruction.[28] Within days, vertical gaps (what Paul Virilio calls "anorthoscopic slits")[29] opened up around the iron reinforcing bars embedded in the concrete. As with Timerman's peephole, these slots captured particular and fleeting views between an East and a West still separate enough to be powerfully joined. The slots were not only apertures for sight; hands reached through to make intimate contact between people (like Timerman and his fellow prisoner) who could not see each other clearly, had never before met, and might never meet again. These too were minor architectural events, the result of a passionate force *through*, producing lines of escape perpendicular to the line of the Wall. We can speculate, in retrospect, that the two Berlins had never been more intimately connected, even as their separate identities and interiors began to overlap, even as the separation between them began to dissolve.[30] By the summer of 1990 the Wall was literally gone; the space between the two Berlins, for such a short time thickened into a zone of exteriority, had disappeared into a new interior legislated by the laws of Western commerce and its bureaucratic servants of urban planning. The thirty-year history of a particularly ambiguous geography had come to an end.

In August of 1961, the Wall was decreed and its first phase executed in a matter of days, tracing lines mapped years before.[31] Even more than with most politically motivated constructions, the necessity for stealth and efficiency prevailed.[32] First came a wire fence, quickly unreeled across gaps between buildings, and then improved over the next several years. In 1965 the fence was replaced with an opaque wall of masonry blocks. At first, existing buildings were expediently assumed into its length, quickly effaced and defenestrated. This construction took more time, though in places the Wall rose quickly. In one moment during its construction, a photographer captured an elderly couple facing the half-built wall with their backs to the camera. They are being walled into exile. What fell within their sight, what remains in the photograph, was gone minutes later with the laying of the next tier of blocks. We see them at the moment just before an exterior denied to them became physically explicit.

For those within the wall and those without (who were actually within), the Wall embodied the paranoia, paradoxes, and contradictions inherent in Berlin's peculiar politics and compound geometry. As a barrier it functioned in multiple ways: physical deterrent, virtual intimidation, visible symbol of the Iron Curtain, provocation for improved technologies of escape. The German Democratic Republic officially named the wall the Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart, suggesting that Nazi sentiments might still exist in the West. But though publicly stated to be a barrier to keep Westerners out, its private agenda (and in history's hindsight its primary role) was to keep East Berliners and East Germans in.

Maps drawn between 1961 and 1989 reveal the relative interiority of the two Berlins as artfully ambiguous. On the map produced by the West, the wall is no more than a shaded line, lost in the proliferation of prosaic, more politically neutral information. On the East German map, the territory of the West is entirely unmarked, a white expanse as unknown and as exterior as the open sea on charts made long ago when the world was still known to be flat. These two maps tell their stories separately; each expresses its own distinct political illusion. Measured as geometry, the interior appears to be West Berlin. But the enforced interior is the East—an isolated urban prison that paradoxically surrounded the "free" space. Outside was *contained* by inside.

Peter Schneider's novel *The Wall Jumper*, published in 1983, features the Wall itself as its literary protagonist. The author's tone is wryly nonpartisan, and the cast of characters, neatly caricatured, are mere instruments and evidence of Berlin's complex identity. Throughout the novel, interior and exterior exchange roles. The narrator tells the story of Mr. Kabe, a West Berliner who made fifteen successful jumps *toward* the East, even though he would have been free to pass through the legal checkpoints.

> He ignored the calls of officials trying to explain to him which was East and which was West. The interrogators could think of no better explanation for this extraordinary reversal in direction than that Kabe had several screws loose. They sent him to the psychiatric clinic at Buch, but the doctors could find nothing wrong with him, other than a pathological desire to overcome the Wall. Kabe enjoyed a special position at the clinic as a blockade runner whose jump had defined the points of the compass anew.[35]

These are lines of escape that resist not simply the political limits themselves, but the mythology of those limits. Kabe turns the geometry of legislated space inside out, much in the way that Walter Benjamin, decades earlier in the same city, exposed the myth of interiority as child's play.

> Among the nightshirts, aprons and undershirts which were kept there in the back was the thing that turned the wardrobe into an adventure for me. I had to clear a way for myself to its farthest corner. There I would come upon my socks, which lay piled in traditional fashion—that is to say, rolled up and turned inside out. Every pair had the appearance of a little pocket. For me, nothing surpassed the pleasure of thrusting my hand as deeply as possible into its interior. I did not do this for the sake of the pocket's warmth . . . but when I had brought out "the present," "the pocket" in which it had lain was no longer there. I could not repeat the experiment on this phenomenon often enough. It taught me that form and content, veil and what is veiled, are the same.
> —Walter Benjamin, *A Berlin Childhood*

To Benjamin as a child, the disappearance of his socks' interior seemed a conjurer's trick. Like the perverse topology of Felix Klein's bottle,[34] the elusive pocket defied any apparent logic of interior/exterior relationships. There was a game to be played again and again, and never in quite the same way twice. The simple instructions liberated the manner of play, and for this reason the quest inside his wardrobe provided young Benjamin with endless entertainment. His active desire to possess the interior repeatedly erased the very space that was the subject of his search. This seemingly naive parable suggests the paradox of an interior set free by its excessively soft geometry.

Decades later, in an essay on the Italian city of Naples coauthored with Asja Lacis, Benjamin again pursued that phenomenon of an inside seeking to become (then becoming) its exterior. He described elements of Neapolitan building and topography as indiscernible from one another: cellars and natural grottos at the base of deep crevices, staircases and cliffs rising up from where the city met the sea. Benjamin contrasts the form of "house" in its Nordic sense

(a structure with explicit, inviolable domestic interiority) with the rambling tenement blocks of Naples, where the dramas of daily life exited the domestic interior onto a public stage. He emphasizes that dramatic action is critical to this interpenetration of private and public zones: "Porosity results not only from the indolence of the Southern artisans, but also, above all, from the passion for improvisation,

which demands that space and opportunity be at any price preserved."[35] Much like the maddeningly ambiguous footwear of his childhood, the streets of Naples refuse to be codified by a formal separation of interior from exterior. The idea of public space in the tradition of the large piazza (San Marco in Venice, for example) is replaced by an informal honeycomb of fine-grained interstices—staircases, doorways, balconies, halls, porches, and narrow streets—in which layers of urban and domestic territories blur not only the physical condition of the craggy city but its social stratification as well.[36] It is no coincidence that Benjamin discovered in Naples a congruence between the city's physical tapestry and its society, wherein elements of minor lawlessness were interwoven into the more innocent patterns of quotidian life.

> "Harry," she said, "You're outdoors! How funny of you."
> And it is true, Park Villas with its vaunted quarter-acre lots and the compulsory barbeque chimneys does not tempt its residents outdoors, even the children in summer. In the snug brick neighborhood of Rabbit's childhood you were always outdoors, hiding in hollowed-out bushes, scuffling in the gravel alleys, secure in the closeness of windows from at least one of which an adult was always watching. Here, there is a prairie sadness, a barren sky raked by slender aerials. A sky poisoned by radio waves. A desolate smell from underground.
> —John Updike, *Rabbit Redux*

Outdoors, out of doors, out the door. *Door* shares its Indo-European root **dhwer* with *forest*. This linguistic kinship suggests that the two words functioned similarly in early language—that they referred to the nondomestic, the (door)way out, toward the (forest) hunting ground.[37] In spite of their textural complexity, forests resist segmentation. A forest is a smoothish space dense with details and ecological interdependencies; in the atlas of symbolic environments, it is a primary domain of the lost and the unknown. It is uncultivated, uncivilized, outside the house, and outside the agrarian landscape. Even more, the forest is outside the city. Its very "otherness" leads toward a fresh if unstable image of exteriority. In the realm of minor architectures, all doors lead outward toward the forest, away from the inexorable domestication through which all sense of the original, primordial forest has been erased.

To be "out of doors" is (ostensibly) to breach the segmented interior; yet in Updike's second *Rabbit* novel Harry Angstrom's physical location cannot transcend his essentially interiorized condition. He is caught in a hard segment, an unfluid space insidiously constructed through a set of cultural paradigms that emerged in the United States in the decades following the Second World War. Harry's memory of a childhood replete with outdoor hiding places, alleys, and surrogate family keeping him safe invokes a granular texture reminiscent of Benjamin's Naples. But his grownup house manifests an interior in which he is captured and metaphorically incarcerated through paradigms of "success," "upward mobility," and "progress." Each of these establishes its own segmentations, its set of unbreachable interiors.

It is perhaps ironic that the development of this segmentation and erasure of the outside was perpetrated through legislation with an opposite agenda—the smoothing of our continental nation-space through the Interstate Highway Act of 1956.[38] This massive construction effort, as grand a public works project as any of the New Deal, was concurrent with the escalation of the Cold War, a war that capitalized on anticipation of an atomic event to gain public approval for the expenditure. The federal government commissioned a web of asphalt corridors from coast to coast and border to border, part Baron

Haussmann, part Robert Moses on a grander scale. Connecting all major cities to one another, these interstate highways were calibrated to accommodate a great exodus from metropolitan targets and to facilitate the movement of troops and materials across the country—should the Cold War specter of nuclear holocaust occur. The highways in turn engendered the development of farmland into hard segments of shopping malls with their attendant oceans of parking, and new suburban municipalities with their tentacled dead ends. Like the interstate roads, suburban streets were planned wider than the intimate neighborhoods warranted, again for the purpose of hasty evacuation. Yet these streets and yards are not fluid, nor do they tempt their residents outdoors.

Harry's neighborhood of Penn Villas is in Pennsylvania, the state named for the woods of William Penn. Penn's sylvan landscape is conspicuously absent, the original forest having given way first to agricultural production, then in the postwar years to an explosion of developments like those of William Levitt. The several Levittowns and their immediate progeny were euphorically lauded and embraced for their affordability (the G.I. Bill), community (good schools), and safe, friendly, accessible outdoors. But by 1970 Updike's canny eye perceived that "prairie sadness" in an outdoors empty not only of woods but of *any* kind of life. Why indeed had Harry ventured outside? He may have been momentarily lured there by subliminal memories of a primordial forest that no longer existed.[39] Perhaps he intuitively rebelled against an interiority firmly insulated from the exterior world, for his larger predicament includes a lack of empathy with his own domestic rooms, in which a "slippery disposable gloss"[40] repels any human encounter. The American suburb, particularly as it developed in the 1970s and '80s,[41] may be the consummate striated space.

> Whenever humanity seems condemned to heaviness, I think I should fly like Perseus into a different space.
> —Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*

Interiors are heavy, weighted by gravity on all sides. Flight is an exit from gravity, a defiance of enclosure. A popular image these days, accessible through a digital search engine, is that of literal "lines of flight" strung across the global map, lines that connect airport to airport, city to city.[42] These lines are manifest in real time. They constitute a diagram that challenges every geographical interior—physically constructed, politically legislated, and geologically evolved. Lines of flight are transgressions of interiority; their multiplicity generates a uniquely fluid space that, though vast, is minoritarian. Invisible to any system that defines space in terms of fixed geometry, measurability, and materiality, these lines cannot be reduced to laws of space or laws of time. They are lines of pure escape.

If we acknowledge the mythic figure of Daedalus as the original architect of Western tradition,[43] then the first architecture of escape (also a literal line of flight) is the escape of the first architect. Daedalus is the architect of at least four major works: hollow cow, labyrinth, dancing floor, and feathered wings. The first is an interior disguised within an animal/object made of wood, in which the cursed queen Pasiphae could conceal her shameful lust. Hidden within the hollow cow, she safely approached and coupled with the bull that was the object of her desire. Their illicit child was the Minotaur who became, in turn, the object of Daedalus's second work of architecture when King Minos enjoined his architect to construct a labyrinth from which the beast could not escape.[44] These first two works were interiors with explicit centers, commissioned by Minos to bury and conceal his own deviances (his offense to Poseidon, his consequently cursed wife, his monstrous stepson). He authorized these interiors to maintain his sprawling sovereignty. In contrast, Daedalus's third

construction—a dancing floor (*choros*) for Ariadne—is an architecture without an interior, a pattern wrought (or woven) to encourage the continual cycle of making and remaking space. For the *choros* is not only a floor for dancing; it is also the dance itself.[45]

When Ariadne gave to Theseus a thread that allowed him to penetrate the labyrinth, kill the Minotaur, and then escape, the king blamed Daedalus and incarcerated him and his son Icarus within that very same labyrinth. The architect thus became prisoner in the prison of his own design. From within the labyrinth, Daedalus conceived his fourth great work. Neither object nor interior, it was a machine that defied the very concept of interior, an apparatus designed explicitly for escape.[46] Centuries before Leonardo da Vinci made his speculative drawings of flying machines, mythical Daedalus fabricated wings of feathers and wax; he and his son flew up and out of the enclosure, which had no roof. With hindsight we can claim that they violated the rules of perspective that assume a level, solid, and steady ground separated from the amorphous sky by a horizon, and a point on the horizon to which all lines of sight converge. For Icarus, the escape was only a foreshadowing of his fall to death, thus condemning his father to yet another (metaphorical) prison of mourning and isolation.

The nineteenth century can lay claim to an emerging philosophy of the interior,[47] the twentieth century to a multidisciplinary assault on all that interiority represented. Following the publication of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899, the development of psychiatry as a formal discipline challenged the privacy of mind with a medical rationale for bringing all one's interior thoughts (even the hidden matter of dreams) out into the light and space of day.[48] In the 1950s the French novelist Alain Robbe-Grillet advocated a similar transformation for literature, writing a manifesto that called for replacing the richness of plot and character that had defined the novel in the nineteenth century with flattened narratives of pure surface.[49] In Robbe-Grillet's own novels, the distinct strata formerly thought necessary to produce literary antagonisms give way to a single plane, a continuous and transparent canvas that preempts both private obsessions and dispersed interiors.

Architecture too professed to join this emerging trend toward transparency, which became one of modernism's expressions of virtue. But despite their rhetorical claims, modern architects failed to construct a fundamental challenge to interiority. Instead, their utopian visions postulated another kind of interior, a closed set of formal principles that were idealized, self-referential, and static. Symmetries and centers, with their attendant hierarchies, continued to prevail, and these preserved their interiors absolutely. Power relies on such centered and concentric diagrams.[50] Through the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, buildings have continued to hold their interiors hostage, even when given skins of glass. Once within the orbit of these structures, it is impossible to gain the outside. A state of interiority has been written into the codes of both their spaces and their politics.

Architecture in a minor mode will necessarily render its interiors contingent, diminished, and fragile. In this state, interior space can no longer oppose exterior; it emerges onto the threshold of *becoming* exterior. Thus exteriority is a state that remains elusive, that can never be fully realized. A perceived exterior becomes the next interior; we are always in pursuit of an exit, desiring an outside. The spatial version of such desiring has hardly been tested.

Perhaps the architect Piranesi had a similar vision in the eighteenth century, when he made his *Carceri d'invenzione* etchings.[51] In most of the series there are no prisoners except the viewer, whose gaze seeks a route of escape from the distorted perspective, multiple vanishing points, and lack of a horizon. These spaces are contiguous and

held together by their Kafkan contradictions, including an absence of exits. The drawings are prophetic not of future architectural spaces per se, but of a post-Cartesian state of mind. Though written in lines rather than words, they nevertheless construct a narrative about the emerging potential for architectural relativity. And while the compositions are perceived as more interior than exterior (the reference to prison certainly suggests their territory as bounded), these interiors have no limits. Space flies off in every direction, but without clear lines of flight. Vanishing points contradict the rules of classical geometry and lie far off the margins of the page. Outside is not straight

ahead; it is around corners, up stairs, across bridges—invisible, elusive, and likely unattainable.

Piranesi's vertiginous interiors challenge the myth of interiority; they even seem to anticipate the beginning of the end of the interior. It is impossible to imagine an architectural object that can contain them.

THE MYTH OF THE OBJECT

> Ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them.
> —Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library"

> All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks.
> —Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

On that ubiquitous sea of our reluctant present float the visible objects of architecture. They drift along highways and across hillsides; they anchor whole city blocks.[1] In magazines they can incite an alternative sexual energy; in catalogs they exhibit the newest, thinnest, and shiniest commodities of the construction industry. At metropolitan fringes they are barges of stuff in oceans of parking; in urban centers, attenuated to pierce the clouds. In spite of their often-stated transparency, their interiors hide behind mirrored facades. What lies concealed beneath these material masks, and how might we shake the hidden matter free?

While the assault on the interior is through mechanisms of escape as lines of flight, an object can be exhausted *by* its interior. The myth of the architectural object is inevitably tied to its own fundamental, nonspatial capture—its closed identity as a commodity and

its function as currency. It is made solid by these attributes. To subvert the object myth is necessarily to subtract both the commodity identity and the currency function from an object, to deobjectify through physical, political, and syntactical means. Vibrations, set in motion by latent desires that reside deep within pyramids of corporate or totalitarian power, may weaken an object's solidity and fracture its singularity. These politicized forces, more even than escapes from the spatial interior, tend to take place *in* place; architectural objects respond to lines of force, but not necessarily through lines of flight. They atomize; *forms* transform to *fields*.[2]

Interior may be to exterior as red is to green, but object is to field as red is to not red; the two cannot coexist within the same space. Every object becomes the definitive center of the space around it, but the essence of a field is its absence of center, of symmetry, and of hierarchy.[3] Fields are precursor to the nets and webs that now consume our global spatial imagination. These conceptual forms of space emerged around 1910,[4] when developments in the arts and sciences shattered a certain model of space that had prevailed since the Renaissance. During the decade that followed, the futurist group in Italy dematerialized objects by introducing the energy of motion; they *inserted* the dimension of time and the aura of speed into the space of the object. At around the same time, cubist painters in France reduced the object and the space around it to a nonhierarchical assemblage of flattened fragments;[5] they *eliminated* the idea of center and the dimension of depth. In physics, Einstein's papers of 1905 and 1915 unite these two transformations within a conceptual space-time continuum in which "field" refers both to a region of space and to the laws that control the relations in that region (for example, a gravitational field). Physics, literature, music, and the visual arts (but not architecture) introduced and embraced these highly unstable and relative fields, upsetting both Cartesian laws of space and Newtonian laws of motion.

Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
—T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

Eliot's Chinese jar is not the first vessel-object[6] to figure as a dominant character in a poem. Keats's Grecian urn tells the story of Platonic Beauty wedded to Truth,[7] and Wallace Stevens's jar in Tennessee "tamed / the slovenly wilderness" and "took dominion everywhere." But Eliot's jar rejects such philosophical and spatial authority. Making no claim to either truth or power, it "moves perpetually in its stillness." Its vibrations are speech at its most primitive; Deleuze might have said that the jar began to stutter.[8] Or, in Kafka's universe, it might emit nearly silent sounds like the incessant humming of the mouse Josephine. At the threshold of relinquishing all objectivity and object status, the vessel is actively becoming contingent. Like the prose of *Finnegans Wake* that hums along for over 600 pages, Eliot's jar represents twentieth-century cultural transformations in which motions replace meaning, and sounds replace sense.

Around the same time that Eliot set his Chinese jar a-trembling, certain social conditions in Europe were already threatened by those "diabolical powers" at Kafka's door. Within the next three decades, particular expressions of minoritarian space emerged from within those demonic structures—in subversive underground tactics of the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto as German troops patrolled the streets above, in communications through prison walls in the Soviet gulags.[9] Eliot's Chinese jar only tenuously retains its object status. No longer singular, it is consumed by patterns (which is to say, repetitions); it

approaches an indeterminate and nearly fluid state. Eliot has offered us a poetic representation of language's (or architecture's) endless possibilities for producing multiplicity, and for becoming minor.

> The village lay under deep snow. There was no sign of the Castle hill, fog and darkness surrounded it, not even the faintest gleam of light suggested the large Castle. K. stood a long time on the wooden bridge that leads from the main road to the village, gazing upward into the seeming emptiness.
> —Franz Kafka, *The Castle*

We turn again to Kafka, as the land surveyor K. arrives at an unnamed village in late evening. Above looms the Castle/object, invisible but powerful, both architectural structure and parent authority beneath which all other objects reside. Its sovereignty is mythic, unseen. Connected to its mystique is the figure of Klamm who, like Orwell's Big Brother, governs by reputation rather than by manifestations of physical force. The object (Castle) and the objectification of authority (Klamm's image) merge. Throughout the novel (and in spite of its impoverished language) this power dominates. Objects are mute, communication is an illusion, and telephones reduce language to noise. As the Chairman explains to K., "All those contacts are merely apparent. . . . Here on our local telephones we hear that constant telephoning as a murmuring and singing, you must have heard it too. Well this murmuring and singing is the only reliable thing that the local telephones convey to us, everything else is deceptive."[10] Unlike the setting of *The Trial*, which approximates the texture of a European city (Prague perhaps), the village at the base of the Castle is allegorical, generic, and remote—a place of exile.[11] It is less a segmented space than a single hard segment, a pyramidal object of law with Klamm and the Castle at the top.

Much of the novel takes place at the Gentleman's Inn, where K. finds lodging on his first night in the village. Unlike the sealed, claustrophobic chambers of *The Trial*, rooms at the Inn are drafty; noise and air penetrate everywhere. Nevertheless the space feels full, dense with the weight of paper documents. These form a heavy, singularly impenetrable block—a meta-object that complements (but does not mirror) the invisible authority of the Castle itself.[12] While the spaces within *The Trial* engage the architectonics of doorways, courtrooms, banks, staircases, and corridors, *The Castle* comprises an infinite redundancy of files and folders. *The Trial* is a landscape of nested and frozen interiors; *The Castle* is the objectification of that space, constructed of the literal *materials* of bureaucracy, not its processes. At the Inn, guest rooms along the corridor are only tenuously defined. There is no privacy. Doors, like those of toilet stalls, stop short of the floor and ceiling. Within each room men sit in their beds, working endlessly and unproductively through dense stacks of paper. The documents make solid what would otherwise be interior space. A person can scarcely squeeze through; there is no vacancy at this inn.

> By destroying all space between men and pressing men against each other, even the productive potentialities of isolation are annihilated.
> —Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

The same kind of authority that particularizes and frames an interior for its own purposes constructs an object not only as a physical form, recognizable by its shape, iconography, and intent, but also as an object-system, a body of law that prescribes all relationships, including spatial ones. This kind of system is a sanctioned construction of ordered experience, the law of life lived. It is here that we might distinguish the Nazi regime and its spatial products as a particular form

of totalitarian project. While Stalinist/Soviet space (for example) was defined by its systematic construction of limited, interior, and opaque rooms of propagandized thought (the kinds of spaces and language that Orwell made so explicit in *Nineteen Eighty-four*), the Nazi project established no interior at all; rather, it reconstructed human identities into object-relations.

In the Castle's shadow is the camp.[13] For the German state to establish sovereignty, it had to create the specific social relation of nationalism by objectifying through exclusion all bodies that did not belong to the idealized nation. The concentration and extermination camps emerged through this form of reason. In the camps, inmates' names were replaced with numbers. Instead of producing segmentation, this indexing served to erase all distinction between individuals and to make of the assemblage a singular block—the result of an inflexible process of rationalization. Like the masses of files at the Gentleman's Inn, the numbered bodies in the camps transformed the space of the barracks figuratively into a single object, solidifying (and consequently erasing) both the interior and the humanity within. Objectification, in this sense, is not merely the stripping of humanity and human relations from individuals; it is also the process by which the elemental object (in this case the population of camp inmates) *hides* human relations and qualities. The distinction is important because it allows us to identify this process within the larger circulating economy. An object at the end of a rationalized production line masks the very identities that produced the object. In the camps, the crowd itself *became* (rather than produced) the final object. In this particular process of objectification, "crowd" was assigned a (negative) value achieved only through its destruction. Extermination followed objectification; it was not people but a perceived *other* that was being destroyed—that which was not the *Volk*.

Segregation is one method of spatial control; crowding is another.[14] The first is the method of the prison, or the official segmentation of cities in times of plague.[15] The second is the means employed in concentration camps. When space is crowded with bodies, it becomes itself an object that conceals each individual *subject*, and even conceals the visible object that *is* the human body. As Arendt suggests, communication requires distance. Eliminating space between people precludes communication and all its attendant humanity. It is a process that objectifies *through abstraction*. The Nazi holocaust is a particularly explicit example of this phenomenon, because it was repeatedly made spatial through the crowding into enclaves, into train cars, into barracks, into chambers full of lethal gas.[16]

> On Friday evenings, in that crowded kitchen, the tiny table was spread with a cloth and two candles glowed on an overturned plate. An air of Sabbath eve festivity pervaded that cramped space, reminding me of my childhood home.
>
> —Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*

Within the city of Warsaw, a different mode of crowding preceded the "relocation to the east." The Jewish Residential Quarter[17] was publicly announced on Yom Kippur in 1940; a month later the ghetto was sealed. This small section of the city became home to nearly 400,000 people. It was seemingly a place of no exit, a walled enclave. Over the next year the population was continually reduced through deportations; but as the area was made progressively smaller in four separate stages, the extreme density persisted. Within houses, even within walls, the construction of hiding places developed into a thriving industry.[18] These too were spaces without exit, blocks within blocks, individually conceived, frozen, and isolating. But as German troops continued the process of round-ups and deportations, the group of Jews committed to forceful resistance dug out irregular

bunkers below ground. "Seemingly overnight, the ghetto, particularly in the central area, had become a city on two levels—houses above ground, and cellars and tunnels below."[19] Here the subtle architectural reverberations that we call *minor* found opportunities. To preserve an effective network of communication, the members of the underground group excavated tunnels *between* bunkers, and in some instances managed to tunnel through to meet with sympathizers on the Aryan side of the wall.[20] Over a period of several months, the plan of the ghetto's underground complex was in a continual state of evolution, of perpetual constructions and deconstructions. Politicized literally from below, these shifting asymmetries and a constantly evolving system of exits allowed the Jews of Warsaw to survive as long as they did.[21]

Deleuze and Guattari say of minor literature that "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics."[22] In their context, "cramped space" is a metaphor; in the ghetto it was literal. But in each case, the same condition that precludes political action also authorizes a new space in which such action can occur. This paradox unfolds within a matrix of gestures that build toward resistance. A resistance to equilibrium—an urge to be improper and to desecrate—can bind human desire to architectural acts. Architecture that supports violence (the torture chamber) is thus translated into violence *upon* architecture (the violation of the chamber). Hidden beneath the overt politics of the State is the latent, perhaps original, "politics" with which we are concerned: forces that unpack captured time and unfold the hidden spatial relations bound within objects. In the Warsaw ghetto, politics was removed from the nexus between law and violence (law-sustaining or law-creating) and returned to the nexus between humanity and violence—Benjamin's "divine violence."[23]

A state of exception exists as a condition bound to sovereignty.[24] Now let us imagine a *space* of exception that emerges in opposition to the sovereign State.[25] It is a paradox of Agamben's theory of bare life,[26] with its reduction of all that is human to the merest conditions for survival, that these extreme conditions of lack force open the cracks within which resistance can take hold. True resistance is never an intellectual move; it is a physical, spatial response to the intersection of authority and immanence. This is to say that minor architectures open within a seemingly opaque object system an entirely different order of experience, an entirely new *nomos* as a spatial text. Hence a space of exception arises at the threshold of bare life, *from within the very State that prohibits its existence*. The authority of the state of exception to exclude such space is overturned.

> The kitchen on one side, the living room on the other, are visible. The furniture that frames his life looks Martian in the morning light: an armchair covered in synthetic fabric enlivened by a silver thread, a sofa of airfoam slabs, . . . a piece of driftwood that is a lamp, nothing shaped directly for its purpose, gadgets designed to repel repair, nothing straight from a human hand, furniture Rabbit has lived among but never known, made of substances he cannot name, that has aged as in a department store window, worn out without once conforming to his body.
> —John Updike, *Rabbit Redux*

How is it that we can so fluidly move from the Nazi concentration camps in Poland to Harry Angstrom's living room in suburban Pennsylvania? These contexts seem unbridgeable: fascism and capitalism, old world and new, extermination and upward mobility. On one side, cremation ovens surrounded by barbed wire; on the other, detached houses surrounded by manicured lawns. The quintessentially American suburban paradigm (though now globally ubiquitous) seems at an opposite pole from the horrors of Auschwitz.[27] Yet these systems are each fabrications of their respective regimes, and

every regime produces objects that further its agenda.[28] Camp and suburb each has its inmates, its victims.

The close of World War II ironically precipitated an American ideology in which the objectification of property redefined the new-world democratic ideal.[29] Property (which included a mortgaged house, suites of matching furniture, two cars, and sometimes a swimming pool) became ever more intently commodified. Houses became "homes" and gardens became "yards";[30] the land surrounding the house also became an object of ownership. Its value was simultaneously heavy and abstract—heavy because it occupied space and abstract because in its new nonagrarian state it had become essentially useless. Thus were the productive spaces of both house and garden stripped of their former material and spatial qualities, and repackaged as products. Within that house that "does not tempt its residents outdoors," Harry Angstrom is imprisoned in alienation and discomfort, surrounded by those mysterious objects of mysterious "substances he cannot name" that he, like everyone, has been coerced to consume. He does not own them in the intimate sense that Walter Benjamin owns his books; *they* own *him*.

These commodities claim space, but what space exactly?[31] It is space absent of use, but is it not also space without time, without occasion?[32] For the producer, objects structure time into a rational matrix of production efficiencies; but for the consumer, objects *freeze* time. Once taken home (or at a larger scale, once the home is acquired), an object's allure is replaced by the deadening weight of its presence, and a dread of its immanent obsolescence.[33] For all objects, ends justify means. Just as every child longs for the end of the journey ("Are we there yet?"), every client longs for the end of construction ("When will it be finished?"). Eventually, though often not soon enough, the ribbon is cut. A photographer is called in. Materials and construction techniques are praised for their lifespan, and products are warranted for twenty years. Necessary maintenance and repairs

are considered signs of failure. Thus consumed, the object is closed to question. We are there, finished; time has been explicitly vanquished. This makes an object weigh heavily.

Buildings represent a multiplicity of powers congealed to form a single weighty object with a singular power, whose authority is, above all else, to repel change. Perhaps we could say that the overwhelming weight of an architectural object is this stated ability to resist change, which is, after all, the most predictable constant of our world. Frozen in that illusion of being and remaining complete, buildings produce an ironic and subliminal longing for their own different futures.

> "Honored guests! I have, admittedly, broken a world record. If, however, you were to ask me how I have achieved this, I could not answer adequately. Actually, I cannot even swim. I have always wanted to learn, but have never had the opportunity. How then did it come to be that I was sent by my country to the Olympic Games? This is, of course, also the question I ask of myself. I must first explain that I am not now in my fatherland and, in spite of considerable effort, cannot understand a word of what has been spoken."
> —Franz Kafka, "Fragment"

The segmented American landscape can be understood as an apparatus composed of objects: automobiles throttling down a divided freeway, reticent houses discrete from neighbors and street, captive waters of private pools.[34] A great spatial paradox of the United States is that its original, rootless, and rhizomatic character so evident in the cultural practices of the Native Americans was aggressively segmented by the descendants of European settlers. "America" is a land

developed to fulfill dreams; but these dreams have tended increasingly toward illusions, becoming indistinguishable from the object/commodities that so effectively replaced the originally intended, intangible and fluid new-world values of liberty and happiness.

And where are these illusory dreams made more vulnerable than at an inward-facing backyard cocktail party, surrounded by one's upwardly mobile neighbors and friends? It is here that we meet Neddy Merrill in John Cheever's story "The Swimmer." No foreshadowing of melancholy mars Neddy's inspiration to swim home across Westchester County. On a perfect summer day at the euphoric end of an afternoon, he imagines the rectangles of backyard pools merged into a fluid stream leading home: "He seemed to see, with a cartographer's eye, that string of swimming pools, that quasi-subterranean stream that curved across the county. He had made a discovery, a contribution to modern geography; he would name the stream Lucinda after his wife."[35]

And so Neddy sets out on his journey along the Lucinda River. Over the next hours, he passes through successive states: striated spaces and smooth ones. The first state is the condition of the Westchester County neighborhood itself, segmented in spite of its convivial, neighborly pretensions. (Backyard gatherings provide an illusion of community; in reality, they manifest the most competitive aspects of that culture: the beauty and thinness of the wives, the quality and names of the drinks, the flaunting of planned vacations, the arrogance of infidelities.) The second state of architecture emerges in Neddy's imagination as a smooth, continuous space; with the invention of the stream Lucinda, he attempts to correct the segmented assemblage, to erase the blocks. He approaches this vision with confident abandon. Yet the waters turn progressively colder; a busy road proves a dangerous obstruction. As Neddy makes his way from house to house, pool to pool, friend to former friend, he understands less and less of what he sees and hears. The segmented condition

reconvenes. Like Kafka's Great Swimmer, he is a stranger within his own language. Over the course of an afternoon (or perhaps as much as a decade), Neddy's tour through backyards and social circles seems to confirm his habitual behaviors, even as it abets his heightened state of exclusion.

Neddy's swim is denial set against and within a matrix of capture: the risk of revealing oneself, the loss of suburban social graces, the possibility of bankruptcy and foreclosure, and the breakdown of his seemingly ideal family structure. He wants to sublimate the private pools into a flowing river, to have these private enclosures take into full account what has happened to him, to remove from these objects their boundaries. Swimming through—that is to say, entering into—a series of private properties, Neddy attempts to draw a fluid line of force, but finds himself blocked by a sequence of ossified, fortified interiors. To enter them, he must assume certain behaviors: the flirtatious, confident, leisurely swagger of the County. Thus the sense of well-being that provoked him to embark on his swim is endangered by the very context that becomes for him a foreign territory. His construction is an illusion. In fact, over the course of his swim, the blocks become ever more discontinuous, segmented by boundaries of time as well as space. As hours lengthen into years, he is estranged by the very temporalities that should hold his daily life in place. Though space is the agency and theater of action, he is ultimately a victim of duplicitous time.

If a fool's paradise is a wise man's hell, Neddy would appear to have sacrificed everything for wisdom. Like Kafka's fleet-footed messenger, he is trapped within temporal discontinuities. As if in that dream state of running without covering any ground, his forward motion is frustrated by his past transgressions. The machine-like nature of his swim, climbing out of one pool and running toward another, might reach a smooth state were it not for the social, economic, and architectural obstructions that prevent fluidity. His tour

is not an escape so much as it is an attempt at reassimilation; but to assimilate requires the destruction of the partitioned objects. Yet he finds that the objects' boundaries are inviolable; no amount of bare-chested youthful charm can draw a seamless line across the territory, for the very power of Westchester County *depends* on its segmentation. And so in spite of Neddy's riparian vision, the boundaries of the yards cannot be breached. Lot lines act with vengeful exaggeration, manning the barricades. By the time he reaches what he thinks is home, years have passed; his neighbors have scorned and shamed him for his weakness and indiscretions; his house is in ruined abandon and his wife and daughters have disappeared. This is the final architecture of the story: the return to blocks in the form of segmented time. Poor Neddy falls victim to a certain kind of commodity power that renders smoothness impossible.

Delight in Blindness.
—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

If, as Melville says, "objects are but as pasteboard masks," then blindness may reveal what the object hides. At the exact center of T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is Tiresias, the blind prophet who can see "the substance of the poem."[36] What is this substance? It is a *tex*ture not readily apparent from the poem's linear structure and its segmentation into five discrete, separately titled sections. Tiresias is, as Eliot says, "a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character,' [and] yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest."[37] He is the fluid force that reveals the poem's minor dimension; the indeterminate center and its blind occupant are measures of smooth space that reshape the architecture of the poem from within.

To think of blindness and of architecture is also to think of Jorge Luis Borges, the blind Argentine author whose fictions have so engaged our spatial imagination. Kafkan space sets the stage for the Borgesian worlds of libraries and labyrinths, and Borges once directly stated, "Well, I felt that I owed so much to Kafka that I really didn't need to exist."[38] Yet his universe is different from Kafka's; his fiction combines a pure imaginary with a vast storehouse of literary and historical references. The architecture within his stories challenges conventional geometries more (and also less) than Kafka's politicized constructions. Borges invents entire worlds; his characters are subverted not by their inability to act but by the absolute nature of the spatial abstractions that surround them—vaguely urban, quasi-historical, partly literary situations in which Ariadne's mythic thread becomes hopelessly tangled in repetitive, impossible warps of space and time.

Borges's essays and stories are an unfolding of his own preoccupations through the writers and myths that he inherits: not only Kafka but Paul Valéry, Rudyard Kipling, the paradox of Zeno, and the mysteries of Pascal. His fictional "Library of Babel" is a collection of every imaginable text, the ultimate Deleuzian structure whose "center is everywhere and circumference is inaccessible."[39] The architecture of the library is relentlessly repetitive, but the texts themselves are infinitely varied. Each is a minoritarian event within the multiplicity of the library/universe. Nothing is indexed, so content is discovered only by chance, each bit a minor reward within an endless search.

Borges compares the act of reading itself to a wandering journey through the texture of a text; he claims as a nearsighted child to have searched for the minotaur within the maze of letters on a page. Labyrinths—of time as well as space—became a prevailing theme of his stories. His fiction describes only mathematical, generic spatial conditions. We encounter more mirrors than what the mirrors might reveal, more abstractions of stairs and courtyards than concrete evidence of buildings and things. The absence of visual references and

the ubiquitous presence of literary texts are directly linked to his affection for words, and his conviction that our visual world is not always congruent with our spatial one.[40] His architecture embodies the space of blindness, relentlessly multidimensional and never pictorial. (By contrast, Kafka's rooms are full of paintings and photographs.) Because for Borges time as well as space is cyclical, we are never sure whether lines of sight go forward or backward. Though there appear to be no lines of flight, there is also a distinct absence of objects. Thus in spite of their singular brand of interiority, architectures in the Borgesian universe bend toward the minor.

Buildings are normally defined by their appearance. For architecture to approach a condition of minority, it must first become not visible. This may happen through the agency of imagination, which, ironically, has no need of the image. The imagination sets the image free; to look with imagination is to forget an object and its meaning, to forget its commodity function, and to become lost in a sightless space where invention, propelled by lines of force, becomes possible.[41] Blindness—as an individual subjective condition—is a partial subtraction from the realm of the sensual, a "forgetting" of the visual. As other senses take over, they blur into one another; they vibrate with intensities and intersect without design, without awareness. This stuttering and meandering of the senses is precisely the condition that reveals human relations. For our purposes, it destroys not only an object's image but also its material limits, its past associations, and its present context—its frozen meaning.

"Put some people in there now. What's a cathedral
without people?"
—Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"

In Carver's story "Cathedral," blindness emerges as a minor agent in the destruction (and reconstruction) of a canonical architectural object; it also *constructs* a relationship between two people, a spatial relation that becomes more powerful than the separate identity of either one. This relation, this new space, destroys the cathedral/object much as the space between Timerman and his fellow prisoner destroys the prison/interior.

When a blind man who is a friend of the narrator's wife is invited to the couple's home for a visit, the host is apprehensive: "I wasn't enthusiastic about his visit. He was no one I knew. . . . Now this same blind man was coming to sleep in my house."[42] He distrusts the blind man; or perhaps he distrusts the condition of blindness itself. For the first part of the evening and through dinner, his wife facilitates the conversation; but eventually she falls asleep on the couch, and the two men are left together in awkward silence. The television is on, a program about the cathedrals of Europe. The host finally asks the blind man, "Do you know what a cathedral looks like? . . . They're really big. . . . They're massive. They're built of stone. Marble, too, sometimes." The blind man asks his new friend to draw a cathedral for him. (Why would he who has no sight ask this?) The host gets a paper bag from the kitchen, and a pencil. He draws a box, a door, a steeple; he describes these object-things with inadequate words, words that refer only to the visible. The cathedral—this particular object far away and its image broadcast through television—is fragmented into a set of known and visual attributes; this necessarily fragments the relation between the two men. And so the object must be withdrawn from its visibility. "'Close your eyes now,' the blind man said to me. I did

it. I closed them just like he said."[43] The blind man clasps his own hand around the host's drawing hand as it continues to makes lines on paper. The valence of the entire object and its constituent parts—its flying buttresses, spires, windows, and great hanging doors—is deconstructed through the act of drawing blind. The cathedral is collapsed and yet remarkably reconceived onto the thick brown paper.

Objects simultaneously express human relations and hide them. In "Cathedral" the architectural object is recast and its essence deconstructed—for the blind man's concern is that he cannot see the image. For it to be reimaged onto paper, transformed from its alien strangeness, is to necessarily demonstrate its reality: to transform the object *into a relation*, which is to say, into an object that has de-objectified itself. This erases not only the canonical version of a Gothic cathedral and its singular soaring space, but also the space of a quotidian American living room in which after-dinner drinks and smokes have taken place. No objects remain, nor even any interior. The space engendered through the act of drawing is both deterritorializing and liberating. The narrator concludes, "I was in my house. I knew that. But I didn't feel like I was inside anything. 'It's really something,' I said."[44]

The men's escape into the space of a cathedral is within neither a Euclidean nor even an Einsteinian space; rather, it bleeds into the interstices of Deleuzian strata. This cathedral has separated itself from the historical canon, from all codified scholastic and structural relations. If seen on paper, the drawing will not resemble any known work of architecture; its lines, drawn without the benefit of sight, overlap and intersect in unpredictable ways. The result certainly does not adhere to any conventions of draftsmanship. Yet it satisfies not only the blind man but his sighted host as well. The cathedral as drawn might be compared to Mallarmé's flower—the one "absent from all bouquets" but referring to none in particular.[45] Yet Carver's cathedral cannot remain in the realm of a Mallarméan ideal. The drawing as an image is irrelevant; it is the *act* of drawing that brings the cathedral back—not as an object or even the idea of an object, but as an event.

The penultimate chapter of *The Trial* also takes place in a cathedral. Here the edifice is the figure of the Court—in particular the court of the condemned, for the priest that appears and addresses K. directly by name is the prison chaplain. It is clear at this point that K. has been found guilty. The space of the cathedral has becomes the space of law, and of judgment by law. It is here too that the priest recites to K. the parable "Before the Law" in which, as we have seen, the power of the law-as-object keeps the supplicant frozen for eternity at the gate.

In Carver's story, something opposite takes place. The cathedral acts not as the husk of a building that has appropriated another function, but as an imaginative force that enters into a most prosaic space (living room) and time (after dinner). The cathedral virtually escapes from the towns of France, through the television transmission of the BBC, into the house of an ordinary American and thence to the fingers of a man who cannot see. When the blind man places his hand on the hand of his host, he is asking to be shown "what a cathedral is like," not what it *looks* like. Blind from birth, he has no frame of reference, and may or may not understand the concepts of a spatial interior or a facade. The narrator, with no interest in architecture, has fallen victim to circumstance in two instances, first the arrival of the blind man at his house, and second the coincidence of the television documentary on cathedrals. What does he decide to depict, he who has neither training in architecture nor interest in artistic expression? He does not decide. He closes his eyes, the hand of the blind man riding his own. Denying himself the limits of sight, he deconstructs the cathedral by repositioning his senses. He pulls the pencil across the paper. He *draws*.

> The legend of the childishness of my drawing must have originated from those linear compositions of mine in which I tried to combine a concrete image, say that of a man, with the pure representation of the linear element.
> —Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*

For architects (and even for painters), drawing is a preamble, a necessary step in practice that leads toward the construction of the "real" work. But Leonardo da Vinci *practiced* in reverse. While still quite young he gave up painting and sculpture and spent the rest of his decades drawing and writing. Lines and words became the means for endless experimentation; his focus went from production to free speculation. Valéry identifies the work in Leonardo's *Notebooks* as the essence of his method, and argues that these drawings are his most potent work. He compares the drawings to a ring of smoke, wherein "a system of altogether interior energies lay claim to a perfect independence and indivisibility. . . . The old is so much utilized, the new so promptly appreciated; and the value of total relationships so clearly re-established, that it seems as though in this realm of pure activity nothing can begin and nothing end."[46] Thus Leonardo is an excellent role model for minor architects. His notebooks full of sketches and notes for unrealized but ambitious ideas are not representations of unbuilt objects; they are both active texts and potent repositories of latent force. In this sense, texts both written and drawn stand *in opposition to* objects. They are nets and fields without beginnings or ends; they de-objectify. Mapped onto a space filled with objects, a text is not a connection among spaces but becomes in itself a singular and complex space that compromises the objects within its scope. (Much of what is written is not textual, because it is has no power.) Through texts, objects can be made to forfeit their symmetry and equilibrium. Texts are lines of force *drawn* with the power to deconstruct.

To *object* (v) to the object (n). To register objections is to draw lines through ~~objects of power~~, objects that are the result of institutions, which in turn rely on knowledge. Knowledge itself is a massive heavy object, with enormous foundations and a reliance on gravity. Theories and philosophies are constructed on the backs of canonical precedents. Like doctrines, they are dangerously authoritarian. Religions, monarchies, systems of law, corporations—these historical patrons of architecture have provided us with the objects upon which minor architects can write (or draw) their objections.

The English word *draw* comes from the root **dhragh*, which it shares with the word *draft*, meaning "to pull." Draft beer is pulled from the tap, the draft horse pulls the wagon, the draftsman pulls the pencil across the page. We draw people out in conversation, we draw conclusions from evidence. A line of force has the same pull as the pull of the draft, the draw, the art of drafting,[47] which is also the *disegno*, the design. The act of drawing a line *through* an object is politicized by the force of the draw. This gives a building new agency.

Decades before Deleuze articulated his theory of the rhizome as a means by which to rethink methods of philosophical inquiry, Paul Klee made rhizomatic drawings. He defined the act of drawing as

"taking a line for a walk."[48] This suggests spontaneity but also continuity. The walking line intersects itself. In Klee's drawings, objects are barely implied, indistinguishable from the fields in which they float without substance or gravity. Pages are unequivocally flat, with no implications of depth. Uniformly textured patterns of lines originate space rather than occupy it. Yet the drawings are precise and deliberate; they have force. Valéry might have said that they are "light like a bird, not like a feather."[49] The drawing that Carver's blind man makes

of a cathedral may be much like a drawing by Klee. As draftsmen, the blind man and his host pull the pencil across the page. These lines would likely be notable for their absence of beginnings and ends; they are lines that pass *through* without going *to*.

Minor architectures' lines of force, pulled through existing structures, function much like Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of the singing voices in Kafka, voices that deterritorialize language by replacing the solidity of words with vibrato sounds pulled through the vocal chords. Thus attenuated beyond their institutional meanings, these lines (or sounds) express a pure desire.[50] The limit of the language of architecture is this threshold of dematerialization. A minor architecture is *becoming space* rather than *being form*. It hums along restlessly, turning away from the stale auras of commodity, originality, permanence, and perfection, and toward incompleteness and immanance. Klee's reference to the act of drawing as naive, or childish, is in itself illuminating, suggesting that minor architectures might be drawn (pulled, extracted) through a spirit of play.

> One day humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use but to free them from it for good.
> —Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*

Toys and games are two sets of assemblages that claim to facilitate play; but as facilitators they are not equal. Toys are fundamentally nouns—frozen objects severed from the flow of play. A toy's central attribute is its commodity status and its ability to function as an apparatus. The form of a toy determines not just a manner of play but its *limits* of play. A toy is a mere image of play, held in place by empirical features, properties, and trademarks. Unlike Agamben's "disused objects," when a toy enters a disused state (usually soon after its luster fades) there is little hope of liberating it from its intended use. It becomes a waste object.

Games on the other hand are assemblages defined by their *field* of play; without this field they do not exist. A game is fundamentally a verb. Many games need no objects at all. For those that do—the deck of cards, balls of various sizes, discs, tokens, a pair of dice—these things have no *objective* identity. They are tools, instruments of action to be deployed upon a field. The field is the genesis of the game. Whether chessboard or soccer pitch, it awaits the events that establish its manner of play, which never repeat exactly.[51] Games cannot be objectified.[52] Unlike toys, which as objects mold the individual subject to their nature, games release the individual subject into a collective imaginary. Benjamin's "destructive character" becomes a revolutionary (minor) architect when the act of clearing away is acted within and upon the objects of architecture—not in a wholesale manner of destruction but in a playful manner of de(con)struction.

To play with the laws of architecture and with the disused objects of architecture is to imagine (the major objects of) architecture as a field of play.