of its own phallocentrism that architecture must undertake. Such a critique is not to be mistaken for the charges of gender imbalance, which are certainly relevant, but correcting the imbalance is not enough. Architecture, like all other disciplines, needs to come to grips with its own *phallocentrism*, which is to say, its own structures of disavowed debt and obligation, to a recognition that its "identity," as fluctuating and fragile as it might be, is contingent upon that which it "others" or excludes. This other is its "feminine," the virtualities not actualized in the present, the impetus for the future anterior.

4. The relation between bodies, social structures, and built living and work environments and their ideal interactions is not a question that can be settled: the very acknowledgment of the multiplicity of bodies and their varying political interests and ideals implies that there are a multiplicity of idealized solutions to living arrangements, arrangements about collective coexistence, but it is no longer clear that a single set of relations, a single goal or ideal, will ever adequately serve as the neutral ground for any consensual utopic form. Utopias are precisely not about consensus but about the enactment of ideals of the privileged, ideals of the government by the few of the many, ideals not derived from consensus but designed to produce or enforce it. In short, ideals need to be produced over and over again, and their proliferation and multiplication is an ongoing process, always a measure of dissatisfaction with the past and present, always the representation of ever-receding futures. The task for architecture, as for philosophy, is not to settle on utopias, models, concrete ideals, but instead to embark on the process of endless questioning.

The transition to a new age requires a change in our perception and conception of space-time, *the* inhabiting of places, *and of* containers, *or* envelopes of identity. *It assumes and entails an evolution or a transformation of forms, of the relations of* matter *and* form *and of the interval* between: *the trilogy of the constitution of place.*

Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*

Nine Architectures of Excess

1. Spatial Excess

I am concerned in this chapter with the ways in which architecture and conceptions of space and habitation always contain within themselves an excess, an extra dimension, that takes them above and beyond the concerns of mere functionality, their relevance for the present, and into the realm of the future where they may function differently. To understand the excessiveness, the abundance and potential for proliferation in architecture, one might address not only the ways in which it addresses social and community needs, but also the ways in which it leaves unaddressed that which is left out of social collectives, which glues collectives together while finding its existence only outside, as marginalized. There is a community, a collective of those who have nothing in common. This concept of a community of the lost, of strangers, of the marginalized and outcast is borrowed from the work of Alphonso Lingis, and especially from his concern with community not as that which is united through common bonds, goals, language, or descent, but as that which opens itself to the stranger, to the dying, to the one with whom one has nothing in

common, the one who is not like oneself. Lingis is concerned with the community that is possible only with an alien, that is, an otherness that cannot be absorbed into commonness:

> Community forms when one exposes oneself to the naked one, the destitute one, the outcast, the dying one. One enters into community not by affirming oneself and one's forces but by exposing oneself to expenditure at a loss, to sacrifice. Community forms in a movement by which one exposes oneself to the other, to forces and powers outside oneself, to death and to the others who die.[1]

Communities, which make language, culture, and thus architecture their modes of existence and expression, come into being not through the recognition, generation, or establishment of common interests, values, and needs, and the establishment of universal, neutral laws and conventions that bind and enforce them (as social contractarians proclaim), but through the remainders they cast out, the figures they reject, the terms that they consider unassimilable, that they attempt to sacrifice, revile, and expel.[2] There are many names for this unassimilable residue: the other, the abject, the scapegoat, the marginalized, the destitute, the refugee, the dying, etc. I will call this residue "more" or "excess," but this "more" is not simply superadded but also undermines and problematizes.

Excess is a concept that itself has a long and illustrious philosophical history, being the object of reflection from at least the time of Aristotle—the great theorist of moderation, to whom I will return. However, the greatest theorists of excess arguably must be understood in the lineage of philosophers that follows in the tradition from Nietzsche: most especially the tradition of French Nietzscheans—Marcel Mauss, Georges Bataille, Pierre Klossowski, René Girard, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray. This conception of excess as that which outstrips and finds no stable place in orderly systems, or within systematicity itself, as that whose very systematicity defies the laws of system, can be identified, on the one hand, through the dramatizations of Bataille, of the excess as the order of the excremental; and on the other, in the writings of Irigaray, where this excess is cast as the maternal-feminine.

For Bataille, dirt, disorder, contagion, expenditure, filth, immoderation—and above all, shit—exceed the proper, what constitutes "good taste," good form, measured production. If the world of the proper, the system, form, regulated production, constitutes an economy—a restricted economy—a world of exchange, use, and expedience, then there is an excess, a remainder, an uncontained element, the "accursed share"—a "general economy"—a world or order governed by immoderation, excess, and sacrifice, an economy of excremental proliferations, which expresses itself most ably in "unproductive expenditure: luxury, mourning, war, cults, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity."[3] Bataille posits one economy of production and consumption that constitutes an ordered and measured system of circulation, and another economy preoccupied with conspicuous and disproportionate expenditure, with consumption and a logic of crippling obligation. This distinction runs through not only social, cultural, and economic relations; significantly, it also underlies a distinction between types of art, and within particular forms of art, the arts or crafts of use and reference, and those of proliferation, the superficial, and the ornamental.

On the one hand, Bataille claims that architecture itself may function as a measured, calculated economy. Indeed, in his earlier writings, he develops a rather banal,

quasi-psychoanalytic understanding of the skyscraper and of architectural functioning as phallic symbol in an aggressive access to the feminine sky it "scrapes."[4] As he first defines it, architecture is that which places man midway between the monkey and the machine: "Man would seem to represent merely an intermediary stage within the morphological development between monkey and building."[5] Architecture represents an intermediary between the animal and the mechanical, retaining some of the traces of its inhuman, animal origin, as well as the anticipation or movement toward the fully mechanized, the reign of authoritarian control. In this sense, architecture, as Bataille describes it, represents not the physiognomy of the people, or of culture as a whole, but of its bureaucratic and petty officials; and the spirit of excess is perhaps best represented in the *destruction* of monumental architecture rather than in any positive architectural production:

> In fact, only society's ideal nature—that of authoritative command and prohibition—expresses itself in actual architectural constructions. Thus great monuments rise up like dams, opposing a logic of majesty and authority to all unquiet elements. . . . Indeed, monuments obviously inspire good social behaviour and often even genuine fear. The fall of the Bastille is symbolic of this state of things. This mass movement is difficult to explain otherwise than by popular hostility towards monuments which are their veritable masters.[6]

If rage and destruction—the fall of the Bastille—are the provocative response of the masses to the increasing functionality and bureaucratization of interwar architecture, Bataille suggests that perhaps a return to expenditure, to the animal, to the excessive and the redundant, to tread a path already explored in painting (one imagines here a reference to Dada and surrealism) in the architectural may

pose an alternative model: "However strange this may seem when a creature as elegant as the human being is involved, a path—traced by the painters—opens up toward bestial monstrosity, as if there were no other way of escaping the architectural straitjacket."[7]

As Bataille identifies it, architecture must seek its own excesses, its bestial monstrosity, its allegiances with forces, affects, energies, experiments, rather than with ordinances, rules, function, or form. We must ask, following this understanding of the place of the excessive as transgression, how to engender an architectural "bestial monstrosity," a radically antifunctional architecture, an architecture that is anti-authoritarian and antibureaucratic. An architecture that refuses to function in and be part of, as Deleuze names them, "societies of control." This is perhaps a more powerful provocation today than when Bataille first raised it. It may bring about a "politics of the impossible," the only kind of politics, as Lingis recognized, worth struggling for. For Bataille, what is "more" or "excessive" is that which has no function, purpose, or other use than the expenditure of resources and energy, is that which undermines, transgresses, and countermands the logic of functionality. The ornament, the detail, the redundant, and the unnecessary: these may prove provisional elements of any architectures of excess (instead of the Bastille, Winchester House?).

2. Spatialized Femininity

If Bataille is perhaps the best representation of the excremental pole of the beam of excess, then it could be argued that the other pole, its counterbalance, is the feminine or femininity. The excremental and the excessive cannot simply be identified with the repressed or unconscious elements of oneself and one's collective identifications (indeed, it is only a certain concept of a pure and clean

masculinity that renders the anal, rather than the feminine, as its other). Its most crucial condition is its otherness, its outsideness to the systems that it exceeds and outstrips. Whereas cultural excess is, on the one hand, represented (in Bataille) in the animal, the bestial, the bodily, and especially in bodily waste, it is also represented (in the work of Irigaray and other feminist theorists) by that which is othered, rendered as a kind of human representation of this waste, Woman and femininity. Bataille himself makes clear the associations and connections between the excremental, the fluid, and femininity.[8] But it is not clear that we can accept or share in Bataille's vision, derived as it is from psychoanalysis, of femininity as wound, blood, loss, and castration. Instead, we may see the place of femininity as that which the architectural cannot contain within its own drives to orderliness and systematicity, its own specifically architectural excesses. For this concept, Irigaray's work may prove immensely suggestive, even if, like Bataille, Lingis, Deleuze, and others, she actually has written very little that is directed specifically to the question of architecture. Architectural practitioners must undertake this labor for themselves—a specifically architectural understanding of excess, of more, of that which exceeds the architectural.

Irigaray's work, like that of the others, is directed more to philosophical concepts of space, place, and dwelling than to architectural, social, or communitarian projects. Nevertheless, like Bataille's, her philosophical positions regarding the excessive, innumerable, and unmappable territories that make the very notion of territory, possession, and self-containment possible remind us clearly that any notion of order, system, community, knowledge, and control—especially those involved in the architectural project (from conception through to planning, building, and inhabitation)—entails a notion of excess, expenditure,

and loss that can be closely associated with those elements of femininity and of woman that serve to distinguish women as irreducible to and not exhausted in the masculine and the patriarchal. Irigaray's consistent claim is that the question of difference—which is lived most vividly and irreducibly, though not only, in sexual difference—requires a rethinking of the relations between space and time: "In order to make it possible to think through, and live, this difference, we must reconsider the whole problematic of *space* and *time*."[9]

Such a reconsideration would involve at least three major factors: (1) a reconceptualization of space and time as oppositional forms (one the mode of simultaneity, the other the mode of succession); (2) a reconceptualization of the ways in which the space/time opposition has been historically and conceptually associated with the opposition between femininity and masculinity, that is, the ways in which femininity is spatialized, rendered substance or medium to the interiority and duration attributed to the (masculinized) subject of duration;[10] and (3) a reconceptualization of the modes of inhabitation that each has and makes on the other, a concept that Irigaray defines as the interval, the envelope, the passage in between, but which we could also describe as the excess or remainder, the "more" left over between them. The interval, undecidably spatial and temporal, insinuates a temporal delay in all spatial presence, and a spatial extension of all temporal intensity; it is the site of their difference and their interchange, the movement or passage from one existence to another. The inscription of a different kind of space may provide the possibility of exchange between and across difference, space, or spaces, may become a mode of accommodation and inhabitation rather than a commonness that communities divide and share. Irigaray claims that until the feminine can be attributed an interiority of its

own, a subjectivity, and thus a duration, while it continues to provide the resources for masculinized subjectivity and time by providing them with space, it has no space of its own and no time of its own. It is not that Irigaray is seeking a space/place or time for women alone. Quite the contrary, she is seeking modes of conceptualizing and representing space—preconditions to occupying and using it differently—that are more in accordance with the kinds of space, and time, repressed or unrepresented in the conventional structure of opposition between them.

If sexual difference requires a reordering of space and time, then what must be reordered? Irigaray suggests that the surreptitious association of femininity with spatiality has had two discernible if unarticulated effects. First, woman is rendered the enigmatic ground, substance, or material undifferentiation, the place of origin of both subjectivity and objectivity, that is, of masculinity and the objects in which it finds itself reflected. Femininity becomes the space, or better, *the matrix*, of male self-unfolding. Second, the feminine becomes elaborated as darkness and abyss, as void and chaos, as that which is both fundamentally spatial and as that which deranges or unhinges the smooth mapping and representation of space, a space that is too self-proximate, too self-enclosed to provide the neutrality, the coordinates, of self-distancing, to produce and sustain a homogeneous, abstract space. The feminine becomes a matrix that defies coordinates, that defies the systematic functioning of matrices that propose to order and organize the field.

Irigaray argues that the very constitution of the field of space-time—with space as the field of external and extended positions and connections, and time as the field of internal and subjective positions and connections—is already set up in such a way that space is defined as smooth, continuous, homogeneous, passive, and neutral, as that

which has no folds, no complexity, no interior or intensity of its own. It is already set up such that it morphologically reproduces the passive attributes of femininity. Irigaray maintains that woman has represented place for man, and more than that, the kind of place she has provided is a specific one: she functions as container, as envelope, as that which surrounds and marks the limit of man's identity. This is a paradoxical relation: woman comes to provide the place in which and through which man can situate himself as subject, which means that she represents a place that has no place, that has no place of its own but functions only as place for another.[11]

> The maternal-feminine remains the *place separated from "its" own place*, deprived of "its" place. She is or ceaselessly becomes the place of the other who cannot separate himself from it. With her knowing or willing it, she is then threatened because of what she lacks: a "proper" place. She would have to re-envelop herself with herself, and do so at least twice: as a woman and as a mother. Which would presuppose a change in the whole economy of space-time.[12]

Irigaray discusses a perverse exchange at the origin of space, and thus, as the archaic precondition of architecture itself: in exchange for the abstract space of scientific and technological manipulation that man extracts from the maternal-feminine body from which he comes, he gives woman a container or envelope that he has taken from her to form his own identity, and to ensure that she continues to look after and sustain it. The container: the home, clothes, jewels, things he constructs for her, or at least for the image of her, that allow him to continue his spatial appropriations with no sense of obligation, debt, or otherness. The exchange: she gives him a world; he confines her in his:

Again and again, taking from the feminine the tissue or texture of spatiality. In exchange—but it isn't a real one—he buys her a house, even shuts her up in it, places limits, unwittingly situates her. He contains or envelops her with walls while enveloping himself and his things with her flesh. The nature of these envelopes is not the same: on the one hand, invisibly alive, but with barely perceivable limits; on the other, visibly limiting or sheltering, but at the risk of being prison-like or murderous if the threshold is not left open.[13]

The maternal-feminine (indeed, the feminine as wrapped up in the very space, commonly described as "confinement," of the maternal, and so a space that is always doubled up on itself, self-enfolded in itself) becomes the invisible, spaceless ground of space and visibility, the "mute substratum" that opens up the world as that which can be measured, contained, and conquered. In Irigaray's conception, the attribution of a more or less porous membrane to the feminine, the refusal to grant it its own interior, means that the space of the inside becomes the ground or terrain for the exploitation of the exterior: "Don't we always put ourselves inside out for this architecture?"[14] she asks, which is why it is so hard to find one's place there: space itself is erected on that very place covered over by construction and thus rendered impossible for habitation!

Lost in your labyrinth, you look for me without even realizing that this maze is built from my flesh. You have put me inside out and you look for me in retroversion where you can't find me. You are lost in me, far from me. You have forgotten that I also have an interior . . .[15]

The conceptual turning inside-out of the maternal-feminine, as if it had no interiority and thus no time of its own, facilitated the cultural universe that replaces it and enables that universe to expand and present itself as space, as spatiality, as that which is to be inhabited, colonized, made of use, invested with value—as that which can be calculated, measured, rendered mappable through coordinates, made into a matrix, the space of temporal planning. But this maneuver is not without its own ironic costs: in taking the world, nature, the bodies of others, as the ground or material of speculation (in both its economic and conceptual senses), man as explorer, scientist, or architect has lost the resources of his own specificity (those limited resources provided by his own corporeality), as well as those which nurtured and grounded him.

Bataille is right to suggest that monumental and memorial architectures are the architectures of totalitarianism, the architecture of societies of control, of phallic consumption; his work clearly anticipates Irigaray's understanding of architectural and other constructions functioning as a restricted, phallic economy that overcodes and territorializes the more general economy of sexual difference and exchange, an economy of containment that envelops an economy of expenditure, or, in Derridean terms, an economy of gift. Following the logic established by Aristotelian physics, place is reduced to container, to the envelope of being; one being becomes the receptacle of another, the building or housing for another (in a sense, being becomes *fetalized*, and place, *maternalized*).[16] It is this logic that makes *place* a concept that is always already *architectural* in that it is conceived as container, limit, locus, and foundation. But this origin, and the historical fidelity of philosophical and architectural discourses to it, marks Western conceptions of place, space, and measurement with the irremovable traces of that whose being becomes backgrounded as neutral space to be taken up, given form and matter, by objects, identities, substances. Irigaray

asserts that the characteristics and attributes of the maternal-feminine in Western culture—passive, neutral, fluid, formless, lacking, empty or void; a receptacle requiring filling, containment, measure—are precisely those also attributed to space, not because woman in any way resembles space, but rather because the treatment of the maternal-feminine is the condition for and template of the ways in which space is conceptualized and contained:

> A certain representation of feminine jouissance corresponds to this water flowing without a container. A doubling, sought after by man, of a female *placedness*. She is assigned to be place without occupying a place. Through her, place would be set up for man's use but not hers. Her jouissance is meant to "resemble" the flow of whatever is in the place that she is when she contains, contains herself.[17]

3. Monstrous Architecture

The concept of excess, or more, enables the question of the superabundant—that which is excluded or contained because of its superabundance—to be raised as a political, as much as an economic and an aesthetic, concept. This excess, that which the sovereign, clean, proper, functional, and self-identical subject has expelled from itself, provides the conditions of all that both constitutes and undermines system, order, exchange, and production. What preconditions and overflows that thin membrane separating the outcast from the community, the container from the contained, the inside from the outside, is the embeddedness of the improper in the proper, the restricted within the general economy, the masculine within the feminine body, architecture within the body of space itself.

What, then, might provide a remedy for this constriction of space into manipulable object/neutral medium,

which aligns itself with the erasure of the maternal-feminine and/or the excremental? Are there any architectural implications to be drawn from Irigaray's and Bataille's reflections on the role of those who constitute a noncommunity, a community of those who do not belong to a community? Is it possible to actively strive to produce an architecture of excess, in which the "more" is not cast off but made central, in which expenditure is sought out, in which instability, fluidity, the return of space to the bodies whose morphologies it upholds and conforms, in which the monstrous and the extrafunctional, consumption as much as production, act as powerful forces? Is this the same as or linked to the question of the feminine of architecture?

Here I will make some broad suggestions, possibly wild—even excessive—speculations:

1. If space and Aristotelian place emerge from the surreptitious neutralization and rendering passive of the maternal-feminine, then the solution to this unacknowledgeable debt is not the creation of women's spaces (or queer spaces, or the spaces of subordinated or excluded identities)—these create mere social islands within a sea of the same—but rather the exploration (scientific, artistic, architectural, and cultural) of space in different terms. When space is seen as grounded in a spatial complexity, a necessarily doubled-up and self-enfolded space providing the ground for the smooth, flat space of everyday existence, space is being defined primarily by its modes of occupation, by what occurs within it, by the mobility and growth of the objects deposited there. This notion of space as passive receptacle or nest requires either to be doubled over again—so that the nest is itself further nested without being displaced from spatial location altogether—or, more provocatively and with considerably more difficulty, space itself needs to be reconsidered in

terms of multiplicity, heterogeneity, activity, and force. Space is not simply an ether, a medium through which other forces, like gravity, produce their effects: it is inscribed by and in its turn inscribes those objects and activities placed within it.

2. Transformations in concepts of space are fundamentally linked to transformations in the concept of time. While they are considered a singular unified framework—a space-time field—and while they are understood in terms of binary oppositions, each providing what the other lacks, they remain intertwined as active and passive counterparts (in some discourses, particularly in the natural sciences, time is rendered the passive counterpart of an active space; in other discourses, particularly in the humanities, time in the form of history is the active force that ranges over passive geographical and social spaces, effecting transformation), and they inadvertently reproduce the structural relations between masculine and feminine. Space and time have their own active and passive modalities, their modes of intensity and of extension: they must be considered neither complements nor opposites but specificities, each with its own multiple modalities.

3. Architectural discourse and practice must not forget its (prehistoric or archaeological) connections to the impulse to shelter and covering first provided by nothing but the mother's body. The very concept of dwelling is irresolvably bound up with the first dwelling, itself a space enclosed within another space, and its materials—wood, metal, concrete, glass—are residues or aftereffects of the placental and bodily membranes. Rather than return to more primitive materials or openly avow these primitive maternal connections, establishing a parallel between the placental universe and the social space in which housing provides shelter (a parallel, much beloved in political philosophy, that inevitably leads to the cultural and social

space taking over the placental and natural space), architects may well find something else of value in this maternal origin: something of immense expenditure, an economy of pure gift, of excessive generosity, which, even if it cannot be repaid, architects could perhaps produce elsewhere, in design and construction.

4. This idea of gift is fundamentally linked to the notion of the monstrous and the excessive (those which are given "too much"), which defies the functionalism, the minimalism, the drive to economy and simplicity in much of contemporary architecture. I don't want to elevate the idea of ornament for ornament's sake, or the idea of a merely decorative architecture, or any particular element within current or past architectural practice as somehow an inherently feminine or feminist practice; I simply want to argue that the gift of architecture is always in excess of function, practicality, mere housing or shelter. It is also always about the celebration of an above-subsistence sociality, a cultural excess that needs elevation, not diminution. (Indeed, the very idea of functionality is itself another product of the cultural luxury of reflection that surpasses need.)

5. To produce an architecture in which "women can live" (to use Irigaray's formulation) is to produce *both* a domestic and a civic architecture as envelope, which permits the passage from one space and position to another, rather than the containment of objects and functions in which each thing finds its rightful place. Building would not function as finished object but rather as spatial process, open to whatever use it may be put to in an indeterminate future, not as a container of solids but as a facilitator of flows: "volume without contour," as Irigaray describes it in *Speculum*.

6. And finally, an architecture of excess must aim not to satisfy present needs but to produce future desires, not

simply to cater to pragmatic consumption but to achieve that future consummation that transforms all present intentions and purposes. Architecture is not simply the colonization or territorialization of space, though it has commonly functioned in this way, as Bataille intuited; it is also, at its best, the anticipation and welcoming of a future in which the present can no longer recognize itself. In this sense, architecture may provide some of the necessary conditions for experiments in future living, experiments in which those excluded, marginalized, and rendered outside or placeless will also find themselves.

Philosophy should be an effort to go beyond the human state.

Henri Bergson,
The Creative Mind:
An Introduction to Metaphysics

Ten The Thing

Things

The thing goes by many names. Indeed the very label, "the thing," is only a recent incarnation of a series of terms which have an illustrious philosophical history: the object, matter, substance, the world, noumena, reality, appearance, and so on. In the period of the Enlightenment, from Descartes to Kant, the thing became that against which we measured ourselves and our limits, the mirror of what we are not. While rare, anomalous readings of the thing emerge in post-Kantian philosophy, it is primarily associated with inert materiality. Much more recently, since the cold war, it has been associated, through this alienation from the subject, with an animated and potentially malevolent materiality, a biological materiality that is or may be the result of our unknowing (usually atomic or nuclear) intervention into nature, the revenge of the blob, of protoplasm, of radiated existence, which imperils man. Nevertheless, through these various permutations, the thing remains identified with immanence, with what we are capable of overcoming, albeit with the input of a technological supersession of the body and its reemergence in virtual form.[1] But instead of outlining *this* history, paying homage to the great thinkers of the thing, and particularly to the scientists who devoted their intellectual labors to unraveling its properties and deciphering the laws regulating its relations (the thing has