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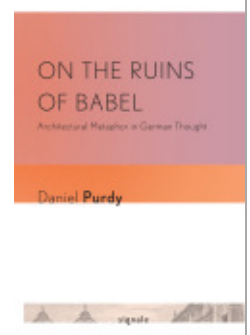
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Gothic Deconstruction: Hegel, Libeskind, and the Avant-Garde

It is a commonplace when discussing Hegel to associate his philosophy with authoritarian government. Henri Lefebvre's comment early in *The Production of Space* is but one example: "According to Hegelianism, historical time gives birth to that space which the state occupies and rules over."¹ Having removed Hegel from serious consideration as a theorist interesting to the avant-garde, Lefebvre, like others, proceeds to engage a variety of Hegelian concerns. However, as valid or heartfelt as such denunciations may be, they also seem to provide a cover for theorists to pursue the details of Hegel's thinking without suffering the consequences of his reputed Prussianism, and its Nazi legacy. Here I wish to examine Hegel's account of architectural history as it relates to two spatial thinkers usually placed at a far remove: Henri Lefebvre and Daniel Libeskind. While Lefebvre might well be situated in the broad reception of Hegel within French theory that follows on Alexandre Kojève's famous lectures on *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, few would posit an affinity between Libeskind's architecture, particularly his Jewish Museum in Berlin, and Hegelian thought. After all, if Hegel is the "philosopher of the state," and that state is directly related to the rise of Hitler and the Holocaust, how likely can it be that a memorial to the Jewish culture in Germany would reiterate Hegel's

1. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 21.

aesthetics of building? Yet, in architecture and urban planning, the European state is often the sponsor of radical design. Berlin's Jewish Museum requires official support in order to convey regret for the Holocaust. If the enterprise were private, as in the case of New York's Jewish Museum, it would send a very different, indeed a quite opposite, message. A Jewish museum in Berlin without government backing would suggest that the German state seeks to avoid addressing German-Jewish history. Given that Hegel presents several scenarios that demonstrate how grand buildings form national identity, my question is, how does subversive architecture operate when it is aligned with official policy, especially if that policy is itself highly self-critical? This is not an ethical question, as is now debated among architects building in China, so much as an investigation of the subversive building's aesthetic, or phenomenological, relation to the individual who enters it.²

As behoves any German philosopher, Hegel commences his discussion of architecture by questioning its status as an autonomous art. Kant had already suggested that buildings may be so determined by practicality that they are not always objects of (positive) aesthetic judgment.³ This concern appears right at the start of Hegel's discussion as well. He limits the overall standing of architecture within his own system by stating that the material and forms of building cannot completely represent the complexity of human thought unfolding over time.⁴ Hegel reiterates Kant's concern that architecture belongs to the technical skills that serve practical ends but that only occasionally manifest artistic expression. In his 1795 essay on *Baukunst* Goethe similarly sets conditions on architecture's claim to art: "If architecture is to earn its name as an art then it must bring out the sensual and harmonious in objects in addition to the necessary and the practical. This sensual-harmonious quality is in the conditions of every distinctive art; only from within these conditions can the artform be judged."⁵ Aloys Hirt, the Berlin professor who had spent years in Italy studying architecture, provided a direct biographical connection between Goethe and Hegel. The *Lectures on Aesthetics* takes up the challenge Hirt presented at the opening of his 1809 *Architecture according to the Principles of the Ancients*: to

2. The German architectural media presents the building boom in China around the Beijing Olympics as the mirror image of Berlin's reconstruction in the 1990s. Massive, avant-garde projects are coupled with a new generation of skyscrapers that show no regard for traditional city order.

3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), §2, pp. 38–39.

4. My analysis of Hegel's *Aesthetics* overlaps with Mark Jarzombek, "The Cunning of Architecture's Reason," *Footprint: Delft School of Design Journal* 1 (Autumn 2007): 31–46. Jarzombek concerns himself primarily with the question of architecture's status as a discipline within philosophical discourse. Critics such as Jarzombek and Mark Wigley struggle against what they perceive as traditional philosophy's denigration of architecture, whereas my concern is to demonstrate just how engaged German thought was with the problems presented by architecture. Half-empty, half-full.

5. J. W. Goethe, "Baukunst" (1795), in *Aesthetische Schriften, 1771–1805*, ed. Friedmar Apel (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), FA 1.18: 367.

formulate a theory of art that would compensate for the historical erasure of builders' intentions by apprehending the ideal implicit in architectonic structures.⁶

This debate over architecture's standing as a free and autonomous art is not just an old warhorse trotted out by antiquarian idealists. For much of the twentieth century it manifested itself as the ideological concern over whether architecture can maintain a critical relation to capitalism. Since the late 1990s, there has emerged a postcritical line of analysis that seeks to move past the oppositions that Marxism and poststructuralism presume. Even as a postcritical aesthetics seeks to dispense with social critique and reform through architecture, Stanford Anderson contextualizes the effort to escape the contradictions fostered by theory with a long view that stretches from 1960s to the present: "Recurrently, anxieties arise around such issues as these: can architecture be other than a mere servant to commercial/capitalist/ideological forces?"⁷ The most recent postcritical forms of architecture would eliminate antagonism between the architect as autonomous artist and the client's economic needs by blocking larger social theoretical concerns to concentrate on the specific components of designing and raising a building. Design innovation and commerce would merge to produce an architecture that does not seek to unsettle or reform its inhabitants, according to theoretical expectations generated outside the immediate work of architecture. Postcritical designers want to stop measuring the discipline according to abstract standards drawn up outside the fluctuating contingencies of their own practice. In a sense, they want to suspend the debate over architecture's autonomy by declaring architecture free from external theory, for they see any comparison between architecture and critical philosophy as a losing game, in which architects are always characterized as not living up to the demands imposed by critical thought.⁸ Yet this new attempt to move beyond critique and autonomy has produced a strong response from architects who value theory's challenge to convention and who find that the postcritical, "cool" aesthetic is without much specific content, indeed is a project that the more patient argue needs further articulation. Thus the question of architecture's autonomy reemerges precisely as we wait to see if has been overcome.⁹

6. "Wir wiederholen... noch einmal, daß wir 'die Baukunst nach den Grundsätzen der Alten' nicht bloss historisch darlegen, sondern daß das Geschichtliche uns nur als Grundlage und Erkenntnisquelle gedient hat, um daraus die architektonischen Grundsätze zu entwickeln. Nach unserer Überzeugung läßt sich bloss aus der Geschichte ein System der Baukunst aufstellen, welches dem Ideal dieser Kunst entspricht." Aloys Hirt, *Die Baukunst nach den Grundsätzen der Alten* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1809), vii.

7. Stanford Anderson, "Quasi-Autonomy in Architecture: The Search for an 'In-Between,'" *Perspecta* 33 (2002): 30.

8. Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," *Perspecta* 33 (2002): 72–77.

9. "May I conclude then by calling for much more careful reflection from us all, before the respective roles of critique, innovation, authenticity, and expanded cultural possibility can be integrated in an 'operative' new theory of praxis for our times?" George Baird, "'Criticality' and Its Discontents," *Harvard Design Magazine* 21 (2004/2005): 6.

In Berlin, attacks on avant-garde architecture began in the 1990s as the public debated how to build in the areas once sealed off by the Berlin Wall. Conservatives, such as Vittorio Lampugnani and Hans Kollhoff, made the aggressive, and ultimately successful, claim, that architects ought not be treated as creative artists free to follow their own stylistic inspirations in the manner of poets and painters; rather, they should be obliged to follow local traditions. Lampugnani stated quite explicitly: "We have to give up the myth of innovation, one of the fateful inheritances from the avant-garde epoch."¹⁰ New construction in Berlin, Lampugnani argued, should be deliberately monotone. The aesthetic value in repetition needed to be "relearned." It had once been the pride of German architecture to build in a uniform style; this "simplicity" needed to be appreciated once again. In effect, designs that disrupted the standard street facade, that called out to the pedestrian, that subverted tradition, were to be banished. Instead of an architecture that challenged through its striking appearance, Lampugnani advocated for "an architecture of simplicity, density, silence, order, convention, and durability."¹¹ The Berlin authorities backed up their point with strict zoning regulations that precluded most forms of experimental design, as a gesture of local resistance to a globalized economy. For traditionalists, innovative architecture was equated with corporate attitudes that placed similar-looking buildings throughout the world without regard for the local environment. The attack on critical architecture invoked popular discontent with high modernist projects in Berlin. By coupling new urbanism with arguments about Berlin's unique street life, the traditionalists placed high modernist works by Gropius in the same camp as Peter Eisenman and Rem Koolhaas. The public debate over the city center produced one unusual twist; Daniel Libeskind lectured Berliners that the freedom to design imaginatively belonged to a local tradition that stretched farther back than the Wilhelminian *Mietshäuser* (tenements) of the late nineteenth century: "The explicit denigration and rejection of architecture as art . . . radically denies the tradition, which begins before Schinkel and Behrens and stretches far beyond Mies."¹²

The conservative reaction against architectural autonomy was motivated in large part by a long-standing resentment against high modernist projects in West Berlin. The debate in the 1990s provides a showcase of how aggressive and deep-seated opinions about public building can become. The debate was intense not only

10. "Wir müssen den Mythos der Innovation, eine der verhängnisvollsten Erbschaften aus der Epoche der Avantgarden, aufgeben." Vittorio Lampugnani, "Die Provokation des Alltäglichen: Für eine neue Konvention des Bauens," in *Einfach schwierig: Eine deutsche Architekturdebatte*, ed. Gert Kähler (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1995), 16.

11. "eine Architektur der Einfachheit, der Dichte, des Schweigens, der Ordnung, der Konvention und der Dauer." Vittorio Lampugnani, "Die Neue Einfachheit: Mutmaßungen über die Architektur des Jahrtausendwende," in *Einfach schwierig*, 26.

12. "Die ausdrückliche Herabsetzung und Ablehnung der Baukunst . . . leugnet radikal die Tradition, die vor Schinkel und Behrens anfängt und weit über Mies hinausgeht." Daniel Libeskind, "Die Banalität der Ordnung," in *Einfach schwierig*, 40.

because of the cold war fears transforming themselves into feelings of relief and triumph, but also because of questions about the role of architecture in shaping consciousness. After decades of ideological concessions to modernism's claim to reform society by redefining the consciousness of the populace through design innovation, conservatives felt a release of pressure with the end of Communism. Suddenly it seemed possible to build deliberately bourgeois offices and apartments. The claim that architecture necessarily reformed society came under strong attack. Architecture was denied the ability to alter consciousness; it was meant rather to affirm a West German professional fantasy of urban living, the desire to live like the grand bourgeoisie of the late nineteenth century, to live like Walter Benjamin's parents, to assume the position of the ruling class before World War I. Bauhaus modernism was blamed as the first design movement that sought to change consciousness: "With this fairy tale about the magical power of architecture to revolutionize the hearts and souls, even more the whole of society, begins the twentieth-century history of overloading architecture with fantasies of salvation and progress."¹³

Traditionalists, such as Fritz Neumeyer, claim that Bauhaus's utopian aspirations were alien to architecture, yet we can find many important earlier theorists who investigate the manner in which buildings alter people. The Renaissance assumption that beautiful architecture mimics the human form had always allowed for its chiasmic reverse. Beautiful buildings produce beautiful people. One clear motivation for princes to redesign their cities was the claim that a virtuous people is raised within ideal buildings. Berlin traditionalists did not recognize that the drive to shape thought through building was already an established tenet of German philosophy; Hegel, most notably, linked autonomy and interpolation as a fundamental feature important to architecture. While Gothic architecture was hardly revolutionary, in Hegel's system it constituted a dramatic progression in the ability of architecture to fill heart and soul with images of salvation. Hegel's account of how design alters consciousness radically departs from the view that architecture serves conventional needs, and in the overheated context of Berlin polemics makes him a surprising advocate for the avant-garde.

Hegel's lectures were given during just one of those innovative phases Libeskind mentions. Berlin architects during the first decades after 1800 sketched fantastical structures on paper, in part because there was no money for building, and in part because, as Schinkel's stylistic experiments showed, public taste swung between classical and Gothic tendencies. Hegel, for one, favored the medieval tradition and argued quite vehemently against the neoclassicism that the post-Wall traditionalists invoked in their critique of the avant-garde. In a move that reveals how far

13. "Mit diesem Märchenglauben an die magischen Kräfte der Architektur, Herz und Seele des Menschen, je die gesamte Gesellschaft zu revolutionieren, beginnt im 20. Jahrhundert die Geschichte der Überfrachtung der Architektur mit Erlösungsphantasien des Fortschritts." Fritz Neumeyer, "Die Architekturkontroverse in Berlin: Rückfall in den kalten Krieg," in *Einfach schwierig*, 67.

removed he was from modernism in general, Hegel reverses the familiar oppositions between beauty and utility, art and engineering, by claiming that functionalism diminishes architecture's character.¹⁴ He argues that a well-designed space can induce critical reflection in subjects, without grounding that reflection on a functional definition of architecture. Hegel broadens the Enlightenment critique so that it includes the problem of how subjectivity, and not just society, is organized. Without advocating the utopian goals of the Enlightenment or Bauhaus modernism, he engages directly with the question of whether architecture shapes, or interpellates, inhabitants, thereby legitimating architecture as a form of *Bildung*, as an art that both represents and molds subjectivity.

Classical Greek and Roman design receives the weakest praise in Hegel's tripartite history of architecture. Rather than crediting Mediterranean antiquity with the perfect organization of spatial beauty, Hegel distinguishes himself from Enlightenment classicists and modernists by arguing that Greek designs turned away from the true nature of architecture. The ancient temple was an overly practical structure, concerned primarily with providing a secure enclosure for the sacred contents housed within. As a succession of functional arrangements of load-bearing elements, the Greco-Roman tradition ignored what Hegel counts as the inherent source of architectural meaning: the sculptural symbolism of a building's shape and mass. Hegel has a flexible understanding of sculpture. Initially the human body serves as the model for sculpture; the Gothic, however, has sculptural qualities that do not refer to the human body mimetically. Just as Kant's inclusion of the arabesque in his *Critique of Judgment* opens his aesthetics to the formal, non-representational qualities of twentieth-century art,¹⁵ Hegel has a broad-enough understanding of sculptural architecture to suggest a connection between the flowing shapes of medieval churches and computer-generated designs of contemporary architecture. In both cases, sculptural design eschews geometrical rigidity. The decorative shapes hanging on the front of buildings are a vestige of the earlier, more expressive phase of architecture that Hegel ascribes to the Orient, by which he means civilizations along the Ganges, Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile rivers. Hegel's Orientalism celebrates archaic architecture for its sculptural symbolism, crediting the East with understanding architecture in its essence.¹⁶ Yet even as Hegel values architecture that existed prior to Greece, he places it within a historical narrative that culminates in northern Europe. Ultimately he presents the Gothic cathedral as the highest form of architecture, because it revives the symbolism of archaic monuments while resolving classicism's engineering concern for load bearing through

14. For a further discussion of how Hegel's concerns differed from those of modernists, see John Whiteman, "On Hegel's Definition of Architecture," *Assemblage* 2 (1987): 9.

15. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §16, 65–66.

16. For a broader discussion of Hegel's attitude toward Egypt, which unfortunately does not consider architecture, see Jeremy Pope, "Ägypten und Aufhebung: G. W. F. Hegel, W. E. B. Du Bois, and the African Orient," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 6.3 (2006): 149–192.

a vaulted enclosure that inspires private religious contemplation within a space wide enough to contain the entire community. As in the case of Goethe's essay on the Gothic cathedral, "On German Architecture," the art historical limitations of Hegel's account are obvious. The value of both texts lies in their account of how architecture constructs subjective meaning.

In my reading of Hegel's architectural schema, I wish to isolate the individual modes of spatial perception, to lift them out of their teleology and treat them as singular possibilities. Without falling into eclecticism, we can read symbolic, classical, and romantic architecture as symptomatic of the housing shifts brought on by industrial modernization. If we read Hegel literally, then we are faced with a philosopher presenting an inadequate history of architecture, for, in his aesthetic lectures, Hegel engages in precisely those content-specific judgments about art that Kant claimed philosophers ought to avoid.¹⁷ If we dislodge Hegel's theoretical insights from their sequential logic, we can find implications of his arguments that help explain the importance of architectural change around 1800 while providing inspiration to critical theory in the present. Such a dismembering of Hegel's system is not unusual. Henri Lefebvre recuperates the moments of architectural perception in Hegel's aesthetics. Indeed, Lefebvre's account of monumental space commences with a résumé of Hegel's claim that architecture is essentially symbolic, representational. With his contrast between buildings and monuments, Lefebvre ascribes the same communal quality to symbolic constructions, a feature that has disappeared only with capitalism: "For millenia, *monumentality* took in all the aspects of *spatiality*. . . Monumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one."¹⁸ Far from associating monumentality with fascism or capitalist modernism, as participants in the Berlin debate so often did, Lefebvre understands it as preindustrial mode of spatiality that includes both the Oriental ruin and the Gothic cathedral, two terms Hegel treats as distinct.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this earlier monumentality has hardly been overcome; indeed, for Lefebvre it might yet reappear: what Hegel saw as the Gothic cathedral's accomplishment, the union of technical innovation with symbolic expression, Lefebvre sees as a future threat in capitalist architecture.²⁰

When understood in the context of the housing shifts that occurred around 1800, Hegel's celebration of romantic, or Gothic, churches says a great deal about the emergence of private space and its accompanying forms of subjectivity in the urban bourgeoisie. During the eighteenth century, German architectural writers

17. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §34, 127–128.

18. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 220.

19. "The balance of forces between monuments and buildings has shifted. Buildings are to monuments as everyday life is to festival, products to works, lived experience to the merely perceived, concrete to stone." Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 223.

20. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 223.

noted that intimately arranged apartments had emerged as the dominant housing arrangement for the middle classes. Hegel's broad philosophical narrative tracing the transition from the open cultic space of the Mediterranean temple to the introspective enclosure of the medieval church needs to be understood in relation to the shift in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century housing, bemoaned by Wilhelm Riehl and diagnosed by Jürgen Habermas, in which the open sociability of the single-room farmhouse was supplanted by the compartmentalization of the urban nuclear family isolated within its personal rooms.²¹ To the extent that we still live in a world of private compartments, Hegel's account of interiority as a form of consciousness and design helps us understand that the project of using architecture to transform the way people thought began well before the utopian aspirations of Bauhaus and was not always as punitive as the panopticon's disciplinary regime.

In an era dominated by functionalist building, Hegel's theories about symbolic and romantic design can help explicate contemporary architecture that diverges from the modernist canon. Through his insistence on architecture's symbolism, Hegel provides a starting point for theorizing designs that do not set functionality as their first priority. At the same time, Hegel's account allows us to reflect on how sculptural buildings alter our perception—of ourselves and the urban environment. His continuing importance as an architectural thinker emerges in Henri Lefebvre's discussion of monumental space, which commences with a reiteration of Hegel's theory of archaic architecture.²² Through much of his lecture on architecture, Hegel holds the symbolic in opposition to the functional. Even in the synthesis that he posits as the Gothic cathedral, the sculptural and communal aspects dominate over the engineering innovations introduced by Gothic builders. Indeed, architectural discourse since the early twentieth century has insisted on preserving this opposition between designs that signal their subordination to technological demands and those that overtly seek to produce aesthetic effects. Hegel certainly understood this conflict; however, he sided quite conspicuously with the symbolic. In order to show just how complicated Hegel's understanding of the symbolic was, I will analyze Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin as sculptural and romantic, a gesture that brings together two thinkers who are usually understood as politically and metaphysically antithetical. The suggestion that the Jewish Museum indulges in a romantic aesthetic has persisted ever since Libeskind's famous exchange with Derrida over the possibility of representing absence, in this case the famous "void" that runs through German-Jewish history as well as through the middle of Libeskind's building. In their conversation, Derrida repeatedly warns that any concrete manifestation of emptiness runs the risk of becoming a particular sign, and not a true void. Andreas Huyssen, in his analysis of Libeskind's place in Berlin architecture of

21. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 45.

22. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 220.

the 1990s, portrays this problem as the risk that the Jewish Museum would become “romantic.”²³ My coupling of Hegel and Libeskind pursues this possibility, even as it tries to expand what it means for a building to be “romantic”: that it can be innovative as well as representative. The accusation leveled against the avant-garde, namely, that it designed buildings to interpolate, applies to Hegel’s celebration of the Gothic as well. Ultimately, both strands of my argument will show Hegel to be a thinker engaged with understanding how architecture constructs subjectivity. Despite all the flaws in his history of architecture, it does demonstrate that philosophical concepts of the private self depend upon spatial reasoning.

Symbolic Architecture and the Master/Slave Dialectic

The first phase of architectural history appears as monuments depicting human and animal bodies, or their parts—everything from phallic columns to giant sculptures of rulers to immortal sphinxes. Initially, these structures lack interior spaces. They are solid masses to be perceived from the outside as human incursions into a natural landscape. Even the Egyptian pyramids or the towers Herodotus describes project outward across a vast arena. Their internal spaces remain hidden to the viewer. The structure appears as a solid artifact, distinct from the simple shelters that housed early humans. By commencing with monuments, Hegel deliberately leaps over the Vitruvian myth about architecture originating with a simple hut. Hegel consciously wants to separate the practical enclosures from structures that represent an idea. Implicit at every stage of his history is the exclusion of practical housing from the art of architecture.

The Tower of Babel myth informs Hegel’s account of symbolic architecture perhaps more than he acknowledges. Archaic structures bring together divergent populations under the authority of a great monarch. The ultimate point of the construction project is the unity formed through labor. The building itself is understood by the peasants as the product of their labor, as an affirmation of their collectivity, more than as the insignia of the monarch’s authority. It becomes a sign of their communal effort, the tangible proof of the nation’s unity through work. Hegel suggests that this monumental expressiveness is not confined to archaic civilization: “With this in view, it may be said that whole nations have been able to express their religion and their deepest needs no otherwise than by building, or at least in the main in some constructional way.”²⁴ The shadow of Babel over Hegel’s argument becomes most evident when he juxtaposes building with speech. The

23. Andreas Huyssen, “The Voids of Berlin,” *Critical Inquiry* 24.1 (1997): 80.

24. G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 636; “Man kann in dieser Hinsicht sagen, daß ganze Nationen sich ihre Religion, ihre tiefste Bedürfnisse nicht anders als bauend oder doch vernehmlich architektonisch auszusprechen gewußt haben” (G. W. F. Hegel, *Ästhetik* [Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1976], 2: 29).

massive tower stands where communication fails. Archaic civilizations communicated through building when speech was impossible. Having once been raised, a building's continued significance depends on its permanence or disappearance. Violent destruction constitutes meanings for buildings after the fact. Some buildings acquire entirely new meanings as ruins, such as Berlin's Gedächtniskirche, which every schoolchild learns is a warning against war, even more so because it was originally raised in celebration of Prussia's ruling dynasty. The destruction of monuments communicates negatively as absence, though, as the example of the World Trade Center demonstrates, violence can create a new identification with a building after its demise that was never there in the first place. The emotional knot that appeared after the Towers' destruction had no relation to any fondness for the buildings while they were standing whole. Furthermore, the inarticulate intensities that loss creates depend on the political conclusions drawn from looking back, as can be seen in the difference between the mourning for the old Penn Station and that for the World Trade Center. In both cases, however, their demise drew together a new collective identity that was dedicated to preventing a repetition of the first shocking loss. The sight of a ruin, whether the famous photo of pieces of Penn Station lying in a landfill, the video of the Towers burning, or a view of the broken church in the middle of the Kurfürstendamm, is supposed to elicit a categorical refusal of the violence that destroyed the building. This "Nie wieder" layers itself over, indeed may even supplant, the original monument.

The long-term survival of buildings layers on additional connotations that almost obscure any original purpose. Long-standing buildings become myths in Barthes's sense, their initial denotation lost to the vague amazement their continued existence produces. The sheer feat of an ancient building's construction and subsequent survival proves architecture's extralinguistic force. The Tower of Babel story is not a warning so much as a demonstration of society temporarily binding its members together. Whereas Kant retells the story in epistemological terms as a warning against overextending knowledge,²⁵ Hegel takes the Babel tale as an indication of architecture's ability to convey meaning outside language. The collective impact of architecture emerges most clearly when buildings are designed as symbols, a practice Hegel historically confines to the Orient—Babylon, India, Egypt. The massive ruins that have survived time and revolutions Hegel describes in terms of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* as filling the viewer with wonder and amazement. In more than one sense the construction of these works makes the nation. The masses of laborers brought together at one site depend upon and constitute a collective identity, while the ruins remind us of their accomplishment. Symbolic buildings stand in for speech by representing collective labor. The work required for construction adheres to the building's meaning, for those who directly labored upon it, for the

25. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 573; Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 759 [A707/B735].

nation that monument later comes to represent, and, much later, for moderns who wonder at the feat. Lefebvre remarks that the archaic monument, still standing after centuries, represents a will to negate death, an urge by the architect to transfigure the body into a space with religious, political, and archeological meaning.²⁶

The archaic monument's transcendence can be traced back to Hegel's famous master/slave dialectic in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here he describes two forms of self-consciousness that stand in relation to, indeed confront, one another. The master exists as a being self-conscious for himself, confident in his own supremacy, whereas the slave is confronted from outside himself by fear and the threat of death. Only through his labor for the master does the slave forestall annihilation. Out of his dread that he may be killed at any moment, the slave acquires a pure negative consciousness that all things are transitory, that nothing lasts or is stable. This new understanding acquires stability through work, which shapes the slave's relationship to the material world. This new engagement with objects is the result of having passed through abject negativity to find a new, detached selfhood through service. While the master perceives the world through his unself-critical desire for objects, the servant "constructs" his relation to them out of nothingness.²⁷ Alexandre Kojève describes the dialectic in terms that apply more directly to the production of artifacts:

In and by Work, Man negates himself as animal.... That is why the working Slave can essentially transform the natural World in which he lives, by creating in it a specifically human technical World. He works according to a "project" which does not necessarily result from his own innate "nature"; he realizes through work something that does not (yet) *exist* in him."²⁸

In the *Aesthetics*, Hegel gives an even more specific architectural and political version of the master/slave dialectic. The purpose of building symbolic monuments was to gather together forcibly a population under the authority of the deified monarch, so that the divergent peoples become a nation at the construction site. Over time, this agenda becomes the standard for deciding in what manner to build. After its completion, the monument becomes the representation for the religious unity of the population: "The aim and content of the work was at the same time the community of those who constructed it."²⁹ As the process of construction becomes

26. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 221.

27. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 111–119.

28. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, assembled by Raymond Queneau, edited by Allan Bloom, and translated by James Nichols (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 228.

29. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 638: "Die Gemeinsamkeit der Konstruktion wird zugleich der Zweck und Inhalt des Werkes selbst" (Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2: 31).

the building's purpose and meaning, the project dissolves the older patriarchal family order that justified the monarch's rule. Once the totality of the population has worked on the building, its religious meaning is no longer confined to the patriarch and his descendants. The product of their activity is the bond objectified in the tower and its continued imitation through the countryside. The many towers in the archaic landscape symbolize the social bond created through their (increasingly ritualized) construction.

Hegel argues that the investment of labor makes the monument a central unifying point for society. Successful monuments require collective actions. The dismantling of the World Trade Center by firefighters and ironworkers was the first public act of recovery from trauma. Similarly, both Germanys celebrated the workers who rebuilt the bombed-out cities. All sides revered the *Trummerfrau*. In the DDR, the rebellion of June 17, 1953, was sparked by a demonstration of construction workers, who were one of the few groups who felt entitled to defy the state apparatus, precisely because they were engaged in the symbolic work of rebuilding the nation.³⁰ Less specialized, preindustrial labor could incorporate more of the able-bodied population, as seen in medieval accounts of entire populations participating in the construction of a city's cathedral.

Hegel's arguments in the *Aesthetics* for the importance of labor in mobilizing political solidarity reemerge in Marxist theory. The massive structures of antiquity become a standard for measuring industrial capitalism's organization of production. Hegel's wonderment at the labor required for symbolic architecture was trumped in the *Manifesto* as Marx and Engels argued that capitalism has superseded the monuments of antiquity. The *Manifesto* reiterates the long-standing historiographical trope of measuring a civilization's success by the scale and subtlety of its ruins. Marx states in the *Manifesto* that the bourgeoisie showed what wonders industrial capitalism could build. He contrasts capitalist building directly with the three phases Hegel mentions: "It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals."³¹ A page later, Marx makes specific mention of capitalism's architectural wonders. What appears in Hegel as a singular reference to human labor, without historical or social specificity, is more sharply differentiated in Marx according to the system of labor production: "The bourgeoisie, during its rule of

30. The mythology surrounding construction workers comes out vividly in Hubertus Knabe's popular history of the uprising; Hubertus Knabe, *17. Juni 1953: Ein deutscher Aufstand* (Munich: Propyläen, 2003), 98: "Dem Berliner Bauarbeiterstreik kommt in der Geschichte des 17. Juni eine Schlüsselstellung zu. Die Bauleute, die die Häuser der Stalinallee und das nahe gelegene Krankenhaus Friedrichshain errichteten, waren die Ersten, die ihren Protest auf die Straße trugen. Ohne ihren Marsch durch die Berliner Innenstadt am 16. Juni wäre es am Folgetag nicht zu den Streiks und Demonstrationen in der ganzen DDR gekommen. Die Berliner Bauarbeiter wurden zum Vorbild der Arbeiterschaft und Initialzündler der Volkserhebung."

31. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), 476.

scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?"³² Despite capitalism's triumph over archaic construction, the two systems share the basic need to mobilize and coordinate vast, ethnically and linguistically diverse populations. In *Capital*, volume 1, Marx argues that the "simple cooperation" that produced archaic monuments and medieval cathedrals constitutes the fundamental form of capitalist production.³³ The key difference is that the laborer works for a wage rather than as an agricultural slave. Marx draws a connection between simple cooperation and modern industrial organization because he is at pains to distinguish factory work from traditional handicraft. He intends to demonstrate that the large-scale organization of labor accomplishes production unimaginable to the isolated craftsmen that nineteenth-century capitalism was driving into obsolescence. Even though industrial markets entail greater complexity than the simple cooperation of an army of peasant laborers, at base, Marx insists, factory work has the same fundamental form. Marx concerns himself only with the economic implications of large-scale labor organization. Religious and political motivations he dismisses in passing as the luxuries of tyrants. Marx is impressed primarily with the production of massive structures, whereas Hegel stresses the importance of collective labor in forming national consciousness.

In the immediate memory of its raising, the archaic monument established a collective identity through the organization of workers. This moment was reinforced not only by the retelling of its construction as a myth in its own right, but also through the structure's ability to convey meaning through its appearance, a quality Hegel describes as a form of nonlinguistic communication. Hegel posits an architectural language without utterances, an ability to produce thoughts in on-lookers without recourse to speech. Architecture should be "an independent symbol of an absolutely essential and universally valid thought, or a language, present for its own sake, even if it be wordless, for apprehension by spiritual beings."³⁴ He distinguishes a building's form from the signs attached to it, giving the specific example of a cross, which certainly can evoke many images in viewers but does so through its references to external discourses. The building should convey a representational meaning distinctly derived through its own architectural form. Hegel

32. *Ibid.*, 477.

33. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Capital*, in *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers: 1996), 35: 338–340.

34. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 636; "ein selbständiges Symbol eines schlechthin wesentlichen, allgemeingültigen Gedankens, eine um ihrer selbst willen vorhandene, wenn auch lautloses Sprache für die Geister" (Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2: 29).

intends these remarks both as a programmatic statement about the true nature of architecture and as an analytic thesis about archaic monuments. Despite Hegel's insistence that *Geist* (spirit) develop, the tone of his later arguments suggests that the oldest symbolic structures capture the essence of the discipline unlike later Greco-Roman classicism, which replaced these organic sculptural shapes with strict geometrical proportions.

His three-part account of architectural history conceptualizes Goethe's belief that architecture's aesthetic value lies in its expressiveness. Hegel revises the eighteenth-century thesis that a building's claim to beauty is best judged by the emotions it invokes in spectators by claiming that the representations that buildings produce are more conceptual than emotional. The symbolic approach advocated in the 1785 *Investigations into the Character of Buildings* hovers between a social historical and an emotional aesthetic reading of buildings' spirit.³⁵ For Hegel, architecture manifests an idea. Unlike Goethe, Hegel is not fixated on the individual artist as genius; rather, he is concerned with the unfolding of Spirit. Like Goethe, he considers buildings to be meaningful art when they mediate ideas. Goethe understands this operation as a relation between the architect and the spectator in which the building stands as the central point of convergence between the viewer's understanding and the artist's intention. Hegel posits a similar movement wherein the building manifests a state of consciousness in material form to an audience. Whereas Goethe wrote about specific buildings as the artistic expression of individual artists, Hegel treated history in terms of stylistic movements that represented an abstract subjectivity. Buildings produce a language without utterances. They are more than a collection of codes; their material presence is supposed to invoke imagination in the viewer: "The production of this architecture should stimulate thoughts by themselves."³⁶

The Sturm-und-Drang notion of genius has not entirely disappeared from Hegel's system; instead it has taken on a transhistorical quality, one not grounded in individual subjects. Yet even within Hegel's long historical understanding of artistic development, architecture, and its status as art, depend on architecture's mediation of an idea—what Hegel calls its symbolic operation as opposed to its

35. "Sie ist nemlich unter allen bildenden Künsten die einzige, die eigentlich auf die Einbildungskraft wirkt. Das Uage berührt sie nur, um die Phantasie in Thätigkeit zu setzen, und jades Gebäude ist ein körperliches Symbol von den Bedürfnissen des Menschen und seinem Zustande. Aber diese Bedürfnisse sind nicht blos Dach und Fach, überhaupt nicht blos physisch. Religion, Sicherheit, Aufklärung, Vergnügen, Einsamkeit, Schwermuth, Ruhe u. lauter Bedürfnisse des fühlenden Menschen liegen in den Grenzen dieser Kunst." *Untersuchungen über den Charakter der Gebäude: Über die Verbindung der Baukunst mit den schönen Künsten und über die Wirkungen, welche durch dieselben hervorgebracht werden sollen* (repr., Nördlingen: Alfons Uhl, 1986), 177. Jens Bisky also reads this passage as ambiguous. Jens Bisky, *Poesie der Baukunst: Architekturästhetik von Winckelmann bis Boisserée* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 2000), 108.

36. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 636; "Die Produktionen dieser Architektur sollen also durch sich selbst zu denken geben, allgemeine Vorstellungen erwecken" (Hegel, *Aesthetik*, 2: 29).

practical function. In separating architecture's technical obligations from its aesthetic value, Hegel inherits from Kant the standard that art cannot serve a purpose external to its own form and material. Hegel's personal judgments on architecture differ significantly from Goethe's changing appreciation of architectural styles. Whereas Goethe's first essay celebrates the Gothic cathedral, only to be superseded by Renaissance fascination with antiquity, Hegel has the least interest in classical antiquity and concludes his architectural history with the Gothic, quoting directly from the Strasbourg position Goethe later abandoned. Hegel describes the spirit of architectural innovation as moving from Mesopotamia and India to Egypt, then to Greece and Rome, and finally on to the medieval Rhineland, whereas Goethe's trajectory moves away from the Rhineland to Rome and then to earlier Greek temples farther south. Much as Hegel admires Goethe's thought, he reverses its direction, historically and geographically.

Lefebvre's insistence that space not be read semiotically updates Hegel's assertion that architecture conveys meaning speechlessly:

When codes worked up from literary texts are applied to spaces—to urban space, say—we remain . . . on the purely descriptive level. Any attempt to use such codes as a means of deciphering social space must surely reduce that space itself to the status of a *message*, and the inhabiting of it so the status of a *reading*.³⁷

Both thinkers are elaborating on the long-standing aversion to placing (too many) allegorical figures on a facade because they distract from the building's architectural form. For both thinkers, isolated signs fail to express architecture's distinctness. Lefebvre acknowledges that public spaces are filled with codes, whether they are derived from the Renaissance treatises or modern advertising; however, they merely describe space. Hegel's aversion to linguistic readings of buildings derives from his aesthetics of autonomy, namely, that the meaning of an artwork is inherent in its organic form, and not derived from some discourse outside of its organization of matter. The decorations in the orders of columns may have had a direct relation to the building they were supporting, but Hegel does not entertain such legends. He understands them, as did most moderns, as indications of the building's purpose and status. The eighteenth-century debate over whether columns or walls were the primary means of supporting a building arises from this aversion to "merely" decorative elements. Columns, it was argued, had no real purpose in European architecture, other than as allusions to antiquity. Lefebvre does not prognosticate against these codes so much as against the suggestion that their interpretation suffices to explain urban space. All these discussions are guided by the

37. Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 6.

distinction between a building's surface appearance and the environment it creates. Put simply, these thinkers resist converting three-dimensional volumes into two-dimensional texts. The codes may announce a connection between a building's internal organization and the relations of social power; however, Lefebvre follows Hegel's insistence that form conveys a meaning independent from and at odds with the immediate demands of power. After all, the master/slave dialectic insists that the peasant worker's identification with monuments differs dramatically from the monarch's political intentions.

Temporary Housing: Classicism as Functionalism

Hegel defines architecture through its formal structures, thereby extending the Enlightenment innovation of organizing architectural history according to stylistic periods. Even as he isolates architecture's visible features, he insists that the most sophisticated buildings transcend the pragmatic purposiveness of their basic structure. This transcendence entails a suspension of sensual perception by the building's inhabitants and a concentration by the subject upon itself. Not surprisingly, Hegel claims that the highest form of architecture induces self-reflection. He argues that Gothic cathedrals satisfy the practical needs of communal worship but then transcend utilitarian necessity as objects perfect in themselves, requiring no external purpose to justify themselves or to rationalize their material form.

Eighteenth-century architectural theory in Winckelmann and Laugier had sought to isolate basic forms in historic buildings in order to find a principle that could guide design and judgment of all building types. These theorists followed Vitruvius's myth of the simple, four-posted hut built at the origin of architecture in order to posit a rational function at the core of the discipline. Hegel historicizes this method of deducing a basic structure and purpose to complex buildings, by positing not one original purpose but instead three separate epochs of architecture, each with particular social requirements that led to three distinct architectural forms. By historicizing architecture's purposes as the justification for its forms, Hegel also allows buildings to "transcend" the purpose of their structure, so that they become autonomous, spiritually free, and meaningful without reference to a socially defined need.

In the second phase of Hegel's architectural history the tensions in his model of transcendence appear. Even as he seeks to surmount the classical tradition, Hegel's three-part history of architecture—from the symbolic forms of Babylonian and Egyptian obelisks, towers, and pyramids to the classical Greek temple and then on to the Gothic cathedral—recapitulates in temporal terms Vitruvius's principle that architecture must be solid, useful, and beautiful. The concept of structure around 1800 is so thoroughly enmeshed in classical architectural theory that Hegel's effort at overcoming the ancient (in favor of the medieval) requires that he reaffirm its basic categories. In the end, Hegel (like Goethe) presents an argument that

the Renaissance would have considered absurd—a classicist defense of medieval architecture.

Not every movement of *Geist's* unfolding is met with euphoria. The *Aesthetics'* transition from symbolic to classical architecture has the grim feeling so common to the works of writers who accept modern functionalism as both inevitable and regrettable. The second phase in Hegel's architectural history was embodied most completely by the classical Greek temple, which served as the tectonically balanced enclosure for the cultic worship of gods, thereby introducing a standard that subordinated architecture's formal meaning to sculptures housed within. With the geometrical temple, architecture is reduced to providing a enclosure for other arts, without producing a form that serves its own architectural ends. Even though he treats with resignation architecture's function of sheltering people and things, Hegel deploys the practical reason of enclosure and housing to describe the internal process of reason's self-understanding. The classical temple is too concerned with practical purposes, he claims, to fully express the artist's idea within architecture. The temple or the palace houses the god or great man; thus the building's design is subordinated to a practical need. This functionality lessens the symbolic qualities inherent in architectural form and matter. Yet as he writes about architecture Hegel displays in his jargon the classicist/functionalist presumptions of enclosing a hidden interiority. In his explanation of architecture's aesthetic value, Hegel deploys spatial terms of enclosure to describe spirit. The Greek temple arranges a series of columns to support a roof, thereby creating an interior distinct from the facade. With the emergence of this distinction between inside and outside within architecture, a similar difference is applied to humans. Architecture's new obligation to provide an enclosure to protect a precious artifact within is readily translated to and from the body that houses a soul. The parallel between body and building emerges in Hegel's discussion of classical architecture's unfortunate devotion to functional needs such as shelter and protection. With Greek and Roman designs, the special needs of the interior dominate over architecture's inclination to shape space. Classical principles force builders to think mainly in practical terms, as mathematical engineers rather than plastic artists. Once introduced, the claim that architecture serves practical needs first is not so readily dismissed. Much as Hegel seeks to devalue classicism as merely functional and insufficiently symbolic, this opposition, with all its supporting variations, shapes the very arguments made against it. A close reading of Hegel's text shows that the contrast between function and expression reverses itself within the metaphorical connotations of his jargon. Hegel's account of a building's expressiveness relies on spatial metaphors that, among other connotations, suggest architecture's functional purpose. In other words, he presumes the existence of an enclosure as he explains expression. Communication understood as spatial involves the movement of meaning from an unseen interior to a public exterior, along the same axis as earlier treatises tried to read the spirit of architecture out from the facade. The author of *Investigations* states unequivocally that "the inner space is the

spirit of a building, insofar as we can conceive of such a condition."³⁸ Our approach to this interiority is nevertheless mediated by the facade. In a society where the difference between public and private, street and home, is rigorously enforced, the hidden is valued much more highly than the visible, even as the two are defined in relation to each other.³⁹ *Investigations* warns against the classicist tendency to let the symmetrical arrangement determine the placement of walls within. The interior, writes the author of *Investigations*, should not become transparent from the outside, yet it should be intelligible to the sympathetic observer.⁴⁰ Hegel's preference for expressive architecture, buildings that display their meaning, reenacts the dynamics of classical architecture that Hegel finds so unexpressive. The tension between interior and exterior marks the point in his history of architecture where subjectivity emerges, literally (as a hidden meaning that steps out to present itself) and philosophically (as an effect generated through spatial organization).

Hegel states unambiguously that rightfully architecture ought to be the art of the exterior: "Architecture . . . is the art whose medium is purely external."⁴¹ Symbolic architecture in its earliest stages has no interior; only in its relation to the outside does it bear meaning. The classical temple's exterior, on the other hand, conveys a meaning through its columns, entablature, and decorations that lies elsewhere, inside. The temple's exterior signifies; it refers to the god within. Only in the last stage of his dialectical history, in the romantic or Gothic cathedral, are both deployed. The Gothic church uses the exterior to signify the existence of another meaning elsewhere, but then within the interior it also withdraws from signification to reflect upon its operation. This movement in thought corresponds to one in space. The interior of the Gothic building becomes important in a way that did not exist in the earlier forms, such as the Greek temple. The interior of the Gothic building allows for a multifaceted retreat from the exterior world, the withdrawal of the self into itself, the separation of the Gothic interior from the symbolism of the facade, and the separation of the artwork from the social-political forces that seek to control it. Hegel stresses that the highest form of architecture has a symbolic display and a social purpose, but ultimately it withdraws from both. Gothic architecture performs in its own terms and encourages the individual believer "to pull himself out of reality into himself" (sich aus der Realität in sich zurückzuziehen). The German implies a retreat inside the space that is deeper than just the nave; it is an imaginary space within the subject. The verb form "in sich zurückziehen" refers most obviously to the act of subjective, personal reflection, a withdrawal from the sensory world in order to think. It posits an abstract bodily relation that maps

38. "Der innere Raum ist der Geist des Gebäudes, in so fern wir uns die Bestimmung desselben denken." *Untersuchungen über den Charakter der Gebäude*, 45.

39. *Untersuchungen über den Charakter der Gebäude*, 45.

40. *Ibid.*, 18.

41. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 634; "Die Architektur . . . ist die Kunst am Äußerlichen" (Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2: 27).

sensing and thinking as the difference between an exterior surface and hidden interior. Hegel's language gives thought a space, albeit a hidden one.

Hegel's spatialization of thought appears as he defines the first, original need of art: to bring forth a thought from the spirit:

The primary and original need of art is that an idea or thought generated by the spirit shall be produced by man as his own work and presented by him, just as in a language there are ideas which man communicates as such and makes intelligible to others.

Das erste, ursprüngliche Bedürfnis der Kunst ist, daß eine Vorstellung, ein Gedanke aus dem Geiste hervorgebracht, durch den Menschen als sein Werk produziert und von ihm hingestellt werde, wie es in der Sprache Vorstellungen als solche sind, welche der Mensch mitteilt und für andere verständlich macht.⁴²

The verb "hervorbringen" posits an interior to thought and an exterior to communication. Hegel does not mention a space within which the subject produces the work, but he does elaborate, in abstract spatial terms, that the produced work is presented, literally "placed before" ("von ihm hingestellt werde"). This process of placing the work Hegel directly compares to language in which subjective representations (*Vorstellungen*) are communicated so as to make them intelligible to others:

But in a language the means of communication is nothing but a sign and therefore something purely external and arbitrary; whereas art may not avail itself of mere signs but must give to meanings a corresponding sensuous presence. That is to say, on the one hand, the work of art, present to sense, should give lodgement to inner content, while on the other hand it should so present this content as to make us realize that this content itself, as well as its outward shape, is not merely something real in the actual and immediately present world but a product of imagination and its artistic activity.

In der Sprache jedoch ist das Mitteilungsmittel nichts als ein Zeichen und daher eine ganz willkürliche Äußerlichkeit. Die Kunst dagegen darf sich nicht nur bloßer Zeichen bedienen, sie muß im Gegenteil den Bedeutungen eine entsprechende sinnliche Gegenwart geben. Einerseits also soll das sinnlich vorhandene Werk der Kunst einen inneren Gehalt beherbergen, andererseits hat sie diesen Gehalt so darzustellen, daß sich erkennen läßt, sowohl er selbst als seine Gestalt sei nicht nur eine Realität der unmittelbaren Wirklichkeit, sondern ein Produkt der Vorstellung und ihrer geistigen Kunsttätigkeit.⁴³

42. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 635; Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2: 28.

43. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 635; Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2: 28.

Whereas language uses arbitrary signs, art, Hegel argues, must make meaning understood through its material presence. Hegel again posits an interior and an exterior. The work of art secures within itself a content (“einen inneren Gehalt beherbergen”). The English translation neatly uses the old-fashioned “to give lodgement.” The spatial distinction made explicit with the term “inneren Gehalt” (“inner content”) is reiterated and given poetic breadth by the verb “beherbergen,” which implies that the content is granted a secure, yet temporary, refuge within the material.

Hegel’s architectural terms suggest that spirit occupies a place only for a short period of time. The structure that holds *Geist* is by its very nature impermanent. Far from rivaling God, as the Tower of Babel might, Hegel’s architectural philosophical structure provides temporary housing for wanderers. The most common *Herberge* in eighteenth-century rural agricultural society would have been the shepherds’ huts that could be seen across meadows where sheep grazed. Such “Herberge” would have housed a wanderer during a storm. As Goethe notes in “On German Architecture,” a *Herberge* was not meant to be a permanent structure, nor were its inhabitants meant to lodge there forever. Even for the less bucolic connotations, the habitation is temporary. In the original meaning of *Herberge*, lodging was provided for a limited time: an army (*Heer*) could be kept in a castle (*Berge*) in the context of a larger conflict, but not as a permanent refuge. The Enlightenment dictionary writer Johann Christoph Adelung offers the specific example of taking a guest into one’s house, again suggesting a short-term and limited occupation of the place. The Grimm dictionary cites the German translation of Matthew 25:35: “Ich was ein Gast, und ir habent mich beherberget.”

To summarize the architectural metaphors in this key passage in Hegel’s architectural theory: whereas “hervorbringen” and “hinstellen” suggest spatial movement of a general nature—passages that could be localized on the body as well as in a city plaza—the verb “beherbergen” has a specifically architectural meaning. Indeed, it invokes the simple hut that so haunts Enlightenment architectural theory. Both Adelung and Grimm agree that in the common usage of Hegel’s time, *Herberge* referred to a place where wandering craftsmen could pay to spend the night. Hence Goethe’s frequent use of the term in *Wilhelm Meister*: “Beherbergen” is thus at once a rudimentary architectural term that also suggests spatial movement: an arrival and a departure, a moment of occupying a space and a subsequent vacating.

German has many verbs that signify representation, some of which suggest a physical placing of an object before an audience. Language learners are perhaps the first to recognize the metaphor in philosophical jargon. However, drawing high-brow meanings out of German verbs requires more than a foreigner’s literalism. Hegel’s text calls attention to the spatial metaphors by inventing new words to represent “representation.” Older words lose their general meanings as they take on specialized meanings. Grimm notes that in the eighteenth century the general sense

of *vorstellen*, meaning “to represent,” was replaced by the verb *darstellen*.⁴⁴ The broad spatial connotations of *vorstellen* were concentrated on visual representation.⁴⁵ *Vorstellen* thus came to suggest portraying or projecting images on a flat surface. Hegel’s text plays on two spatial connotations in philosophical meaning as architectural distinctions between the facade of a building and its interior. Representations of thought, *Vorstellungen*, are characterized in language that suggests surfaces: a canvas, a page, a facade. Material content, the feature that he claims Kant neglected, Hegel presents as something hidden within interior space. These new spatial thought forms Hegel indicates through the verbs *hervorbringen*, *hinstellen*, and *berherbergen*. In the textual sequence of older and newer philosophical metaphors, thought moves across a succession of space, from internal reflection to external communication. The different forms of thought are themselves characterized as a succession of surfaces and interiors, so that the subject in its most private thoughts has *Vorstellungen* that need to be carried out beyond himself so that others may understand them. The initial representation when understood within the framework of language becomes a private content that needs to be carried forth to the public. In other words, an interior private screen image acquires a spatial quality when contrasted with public discourse, which is itself situated in a space outside the subject. Expression of thought appears to the subject as a surface projection that then needs to be carried outside the interior in order to be placed, thinglike, within the public space, where it again acquires the qualities of a surface projection, a representation within language.

Finally, in yet another manner that reminds us why Enlightenment thinkers were so fascinated with engineers and architecture and their ability to transform ideas into concrete reality, Hegel suggests that the technological process of building explicitly translates the movement of interior representation into material form. The play of surfaces across spaces that characterizes the process whereby thoughts occur to the subject as representations and then are brought out into the exterior world is also implicitly the work of architecture, in which a drawn plan is converted into a material building. This building serves as a surface representation of meaning to others even as it shapes the public space within which meaning is organized. The artwork’s material embodiment of an idea sets the conditions for its communication as an abstraction.

Hegel’s explanation of how architecture expresses meaning relies implicitly on metaphors derived from expression’s antithesis: the functional enclosure of a space.

44. Winfried Menninghaus, “‘Darstellung’: Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstocks Eröffnung eines neuen Paradigmas,” in *Was heißt ‘Darstellen’?* ed. Christiaan L. Hart Nibbrig (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), 205–226.

45. Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 26: 1670: “*vorstellen* [ist] im Gebrauch der Neuzeit vielfach durch *darstellen*, verdrängt worden. . . . Der frühere Gebrauch des Wortes tritt besonders charakteristisch hervor, wenn etwas durch Zeichnung, Malerei, Plastisch u.s.w. *vorgestellt*, d. h. zur darstellung gebracht wird; sehr oft braucht Göthe *vorstellen* in diesem Sinne.”

He sets expression, as in sculptural architecture, in opposition to instrumental engineering. A building should do more than house; it should signify. Even as Hegel explains this opposition, each term is necessary to explain the other. Expression in architecture operates as a movement between a spiritual interior and a public facade. Likewise, the technical effort to construct a safe space, by building a roof and securing a perimeter, presumes the existence of a precious object that requires protection. Without the need to preserve the spiritual, there would be no point to the elaborate engineering of classical buildings. Hegel's complaint against the Greek temple is that the sacred expressive element has been removed from architecture. It has become the sculpture or the relic but not the building itself. The tension between expression and engineering goes far beyond Hegel's judgment of architectural style. Architectural figures permeate his philosophical language. In the passages where he steps back from architectural history, when he writes as the philosopher using abstract language to define art's expressiveness, he cannot rid himself of spatial metaphors, he cannot set a boundary between philosophical and architectural discourse. Nor does he necessarily want to do so, for in the last stage of his architectural history, in his account of the medieval church, he acknowledges their interdependence for a brief moment before reasserting the primacy of expression. Yet this assertion of the spiritual value of Gothic cathedrals always presumes the juxtaposition of classicism's clear division between interior and exterior space.

The Enclosed Space of Spirit

At first glance, the difference between Libeskind's Jewish Museum and the neoclassical Prussian style of the official *Mitte* corresponds to Hegel's distinction between the Gothic cathedral and the ancient temple. The Gothic cathedral, for Hegel, is built to foster interior contemplation. While it has a practical purpose, that end is superseded by the form of the overall building, which shows a diversity of isolated moments that are nevertheless united into a whole. The practical purpose of a church—to house a congregation—is fulfilled and then superseded by the Gothic structure's vast height and profuse decoration. Similarly, the practical concerns of the museum to house an exhibition are exceeded by Libeskind's design. Surrounded by postwar apartment complexes, and attached to a rococo palace that survived the war, Libeskind's building stands out as a jarring subversion of traditional Berlin architecture.⁴⁶ Just as post-Renaissance architects frequently described the medieval piles in the center of town as misshaped monstrosities from a barbarous age, Libeskind's museum presents broken lines as markings representing another barbarism. In both cases the building's lack of continuity with the surrounding structures

46. For a history of the museum's relation to Berlin architecture, see James E. Young, "Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin: The Uncanny Arts of Memorial Architecture," *Jewish Social Studies* 6.2 (2000): 1–23.

hails the viewer, forcing him to interpret these radical departures from geometrical convention. Deconstruction, seen in the long view of classical aesthetics, presents an updated version of what Vasari describes as the *maniera tedesca*.⁴⁷

In the theoretical conclusion to *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes states that architecture shares myth's "imperative, buttonholing character."⁴⁸ A building's style, when it stands out from its surroundings, has an intentional force that summons the passerby to receive its expansive and often ambiguous connotations. The building interpolates the pedestrian; it demands that he acknowledge the message implied by its exterior appearance. Barthes stresses that this call assumes a neutral tone, as if the building's appearance were simply there, as a self-evident statement that speaks to one and all, in a general, unself-conscious manner: "Here I stand, I am just being me." To explain architectural interpolation, he cites a house in Paris designed in the manner of a Basque chalet, a familiar look in the Pyrenees, but outlandish in the city of Paris. The building's ability to hail the passerby depends on its dissonant appearance in relation to the rest of the street. This phenomenon is well established in urban literature. The narrator of E. T. A. Hoffmann's romantic, uncanny tale "Das öde Haus" recounts how a creepy old house along Berlin's fashionable Unter den Linden literally called out to him with the voice and image of a beautiful woman. The run-down, neglected building stood in sharp contrast to the new, luxurious palaces that had been built around it. The decrepit facade suggested a mystery hidden inside that the narrator tries to discover through spying and intrusion.

European architectural history contains several obvious instances of stylistic juxtapositions that have unnerved pedestrians. The many post-Renaissance denunciations of the Gothic reiterate the sense that medieval churches stick out against the classicism of later building. Had he wished to connect his reading with architectural debates in the early 1960s, Barthes might have replaced the Basque example with a modern glass-and-steel office building. By choosing a design from the Southwest, he alludes idiosyncratically to his own provincial origins but more importantly addresses the operation of signification, while avoiding the political debates over whether cities ought to maintain a single coherent style. The post-Wall Berlin controversy arose precisely because the Senate sought to prevent constructions that jarred with the officially designated historical style. The government took its position against what it saw as the alignment of modernist and contemporary design with media spectacle. The claim was that star architects would impose their

47. Vasari is a source for the Italian Renaissance's disdain for Gothic medieval architecture. He warns his contemporaries: "There are works of another sort that are called German, which differ greatly in ornament and proportion from the antique and the modern [Renaissance]. Today they are not employed by distinguished architects but are avoided by them as monstrous and barbarous, since they ignore every familiar idea of order, which one can rather call confusion and disorder." Quoted in Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 290.

48. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 124.

signature styles on the cityscape, advertising themselves through buildings that dramatically broke with the continuity of neighboring buildings' designs. Having understood Barthes's point, the Berlin authorities perceived architectural interpolation as an operation of buildings interested primarily in marketing their makers. The discussion was couched by the authorities as a local government resisting global marketing; others perceived it as the invocation of a mythic Berlin style to ward off the architectural avant-garde. Ironically, Hegel, the Berlin philosopher par excellence, had argued against the nineteenth-century neoclassicism upheld by the building authorities. Although Barthes's discussion of interpolation took the perspective of the *flâneur*, Althusser's later structuralist version of hailing shares with Barthes the Marxist concern over how the populace readily accepts, indeed enjoys, the medial representations that justify capitalism and state authority, or, as Barthes wrote in his 1970 preface, that "account *in detail* for the mystification which transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature."⁴⁹ Libeskind's museum received official approval before the Wall came down. As a museum to commemorate Jews in Germany, it was granted permission to break with convention, to call out its own unique difference as a reflection of the ostracism and execution of Jews within Germany. If the Gothic's disruption of classical harmony constituted the *maniera tedesca*, Libeskind's museum with its self-differentiation from the Berlin norm has become the representation of German history in the twentieth century.

The similarities between the two modes of building are not confined to the street view but apply to the spaces beyond the facade. Hegel refers to "the wholly enclosed house" (das ganz geschlossene Haus) as the basic form within which the Christian spirit draws itself into the believer's interior. He consciously moves between two senses of "interior": the inside of a building and the most private thoughts of an individual, his soul. The building gathers together a community of believers (*Versammlung*) so that they may gather their thoughts and concentrate themselves on their innermost nature (*innere Sammlung*). Hegel quite consciously plays on the variations of gathering people or thoughts. He moves from the architectural to the phenomenological. Even as the Christian community and the individual believer pull themselves away from the outside world, they also transcend the empirical world's finitude. Building and thought parallel each other as prayers address divine eternity while the architecture rises upward seemingly in defiance of tectonic laws. The height of Gothic vaults follows the contours of the believers' heavenward concentration. Prayer conditions the building's character: "But the worship of the Christian heart is at the same time an elevation above the finite so that this elevation now determines the character of the house of God."⁵⁰ In referring to the character

49. Ibid., 9.

50. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 685; "Die Andacht des christlichen Herzens aber ist ebenso sehr zugleich eine Erhebung über das Endliche, so daß nun diese Erhebung den Charakter des Gotteshauses bestimmt" (Hegel, *Asthetik*, 2: 72).

of the building, Hegel is adapting earlier architectural theory, which asserted that every building had a character, determined either by its rank within the columnar orders or, in the more affective version, by the sensible impression it formed upon the viewer.⁵¹ Whereas in Enlightenment theory a building might have worn its character on its facade as a sign of its interior purpose, for Hegel, character does not concern just the semiotic communication. Instead he links character with the formation of the subject's identity. More than a judgment of taste, character manifested the subject's existential condition. Gothic architecture likewise moves beyond the classical concerns to house and represent an owner or a deity, by engaging with the infinite through its soaring vaults and elevated lighting.

The cathedral sets a wall between the sequestered believer and the social world; economy is precisely what Hegel claims the cathedral seeks to exclude. It forgets the natural world and its distractions by closing the subject off from the outside. The columns, which created a liminal transition between the Greek temple's sacred interior and the city, are transplanted into the church's interior, where they isolate the various corners of the church without eliminating a sense of vast oneness.⁵² Hegel affirms the charge that Gothic design descends from the shapes in the northern European forest. The cathedral's rows of columns recreate the isolation of the forest, the *Waldeinsamkeit* of German romanticism, the sense of being isolated while surrounded by an abundance. Yet even as he posits the analogy to nature, he insists that the space of reflection is a manufactured world, set in opposition to nature. While clearly reiterating the opposition between architecture and nature that first marked the difference between the obelisk and the surrounding desert, Hegel sets the constructedness of space in a cautious relation with the subjectivity it holds. He does not give causal priority to Gothic architecture or Christian piety. Does Christian consciousness design the cathedral, or does the church move the believer to prayer? The cathedral, he notes carefully, exists through and for the subject's inner constructed world, as opposed to nature, which in this context exists simply as given. Ultimately, Hegel allows that pious interiority is constructed as much as the inside of a church. Sacred architecture interpolates while it represents. Hegel posits a double movement that does not answer the question, does the building reflect or construct subjectivity? Instead he posits a reciprocal reinforcement wherein subjects and buildings bring about each other. The medieval believer was created as much as he helped create the cathedral.

Like temples, museums have the avowed intention of altering visitors' states of mind. Those who come are presumably willing to receive the building's communication, for they already share in the discourse that brought about its construction in the first place. Libeskind's memorializing museum invokes reflection even as it represents history. It is at once the product of theory and a machine intended

51. Jens Bisky, *Poesie der Baukunst*, 5.

52. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 688.

to generate sophisticated musings in those who walk in and around. Like the cathedral, Libeskind's museum mobilizes the perceptual differences between interior and exterior space in order to induce contemplation. Both buildings offer those who enter specific pathways to guide their contemplation, between chapels, between exhibits. Hegel does not consider the cross shape of most cathedrals important to their ability to transform consciousness; likewise, the jagged line seen from above the Jewish Museum, a shape likened to a ruptured Star of David, does not directly alter the individual visitor's experience of the space. That the aerial profile of the Jewish Museum addresses an ideal viewer from above, much in the manner of a medieval church, is not to be excluded. Libeskind's initial statements about the museum, including his reference to angels, allude to Wim Wenders' *Himmel über Berlin*, yet, as in the film's switch from soaring camera to inner monologue voice-overs, Libeskind emphasized the disjuncture between the drawn view of the museum and the inhabited place: "When this building seemed simply a theory, people described it as a zig-zag or a blitz, surely an image only seen by an angel. Today, as you walk through the building, the walls, exhibition spaces, and the building's organization generate an understanding of the scale of disrupted tradition—and the trace of the unborn."⁵³

My comparison with Libeskind's museum commences with Hegel's insistence that the cathedral is not concerned with mere purposiveness and is not just an enclosure to house some sacred object. Certainly this same accusation has been leveled against Libeskind: namely, that the Jewish Museum is fascinating for its own sake but makes an inferior space for displaying exhibits. It has too many angular walls that make it difficult to hang exhibits. If, as Hegel states, the tapered arch defines the Gothic, Libeskind's museum turns these shapes on their side to produce a prow or spur, which squeezes walls together into dead ends. For Hegel, the intention behind the dark subdivisions of the Gothic cathedral's interior was the isolation of the individual from the outside. The cathedral's many sharp points help constitute "a place of dread which invites meditation," a description that applies to the Jewish Museum just as easily.⁵⁴ Both structures deliberately work against geometry. Hegel argues that the Gothic style emphasizes the interior experience of the building over the external appearance, whereas the facade is the most emphasized feature of classical buildings. Gothic churches, he claims, do not have uniform interiors. If the classical incorporates uniform geometrical shapes, the Gothic presents differentiated patterns. The height, width, and breadth of Gothic cathedrals varies considerably, whereas classical buildings have uniform proportions that have been codified since the Renaissance. Here Hegel returns to the trope of the northern forest. Gothic forms are like patterns in a forest: they may follow recognizable forms, but these shapes proliferate in an almost uncountable array of variations.

53. Daniel Libeskind, "Between the Lines," in *The Space of Encounter* (New York: Universe, 2000), 25–26.

54. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, 688.

Classical architecture has many subdivisions, yet these are variations on canons with a very precise terminology, which, unlike the Gothic, allows city officials to set strict building codes, as was done in Berlin *Mitte*. The Gothic stands as the jarring exception to classicist uniformity, much as Libeskind's museum disturbs the smooth continuity of Berlin codes. Amid the Kreuzberg apartments that surround the Jewish Museum (many of them IBA projects), even the rococo palace of the original Jewish Museum stands as a historical discontinuity. As the sole historical building in this corner of Kreuzberg, the rococo palace reminds the pedestrian that the entire neighborhood had been flattened during the Second World War. Added to this familiar Berlin disjuncture is Libeskind's purposively askew facade.⁵⁵

Libeskind and Hegel share an aversion to geometrical shapes because they consider them tectonic forms that do little to foster contemplation. The abstract, empty space produced by regular interior forms would not be appropriate to the movement from the earthly to the infinite that Hegel posits.⁵⁶ He specifically excludes the geometry of functionalism from the religious space of the cathedral. The need for enclosure addresses a necessary but not sufficient requirement of the cathedral. Because removing the believer from the outside world is so important to establishing piety, Gothic architecture, unlike earlier forms, is designed from the inside out, thereby reversing the ancient investment in establishing a stark exterior. In contrast to Goethe's concentration on the Gothic cathedral's facade to the exclusion of the interior, Hegel argues, the interior makes itself visible on the exterior. The meaning of the most sacred corners of the church shimmers through the walls.

The Jewish Museum shows even less respect for the independence of the facade. The massive walls rising along angular lines and interspersed with jagged windows suggest a design turned inward without any concern to address the public through a polite introduction along familiar rhetorical lines. The shapes force one to question the building's purpose; they do not provide a label. As Hegel notes, all expressive architecture produces reflection just by its very sight: "The productions of this architecture should stimulate thought by themselves."⁵⁷ Libeskind's museum proceeds from the interior to the outside in a manner akin to high modernist principles—the difference, though, is that Libeskind then seeks to wall off the outside from the inside, and instead of an outside that radiates from the inside we have a wall upon which the inside is drawn again; the lines running on the building's exterior are ultimately signs, ornaments that reinforce the building's alienation from the street even as they intrigue the pedestrian.

Medieval historians often note that cathedrals housed many worldly activities; however, by the late eighteenth century they were no longer the center of social life.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, 636; "Die Produktionen dieser Architektur sollen also durch sich selbst zu denken geben, allgemeine Vorstellungen erwecken" (Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 2: 29).

They often stood emptied out, by the Reformation, the Revolution, or the relocation of trade fairs, so that by the time Goethe and the romantics walked through them, cathedrals seemed to represent the absence of commerce—a particularly important feature within an aesthetics of artistic autonomy. For Hegel the point of the cathedral is precisely its spatial remove from the marketplace: the noise of commercial exchange can be heard by the believer as he sequesters himself in prayer, but the walls assure him that he is now untouched by business. Hegel also writes about the simple and vague sound of the bells in the bell towers, which penetrates into the building, inviting meditation. Libeskind's Tower of Oblivion similarly isolates the visitor within a soaring cement volume through which street noises can be heard. The individual hears Berlin yet is surrounded by thick walls and closed in by the heavy swing of a steel door so that he may ponder Germany's past. Aural input that penetrates walls only reinforces the sense of spatial isolation. Sounds remind you of a nearby elsewhere. Around 1800 the cathedral was no longer a forum in which diverse events took place simultaneously; it became a refuge from sociability, a retreat that isolated the individual. Therein lay the curious similarity between the abandoned cathedrals and the private rooms of the bourgeois apartment that emerged midcentury. These spaces of introspection individualize thought as a solitary rather than a communal activity. Each visitor is absorbed into his own thoughts, like a reader alone with his book. This isolation seems to empower the subject, yet the apparent free range of thought he experiences is made possible by an architecture that holds distraction at bay, that isolates the individual within a chamber that at once addresses him personally and opens out to suggest that he is being spoken to from across vast distances.

To return to the Hegelian connotations of architecture: the antimumentality of the Jewish Museum has become a focal point for official Berlin's self-recognition as the site of Jewish culture and its destruction. Libeskind's void and its surrounding walls have become a concrete expression of the new, self-conscious Germany. It would be an all-too-easy dialectical move to declare the museum a failure, given its enormous success in drawing visitors and stimulating critical discourse. The post-Wall, post-Holocaust collective identity formed around the museum implies a message opposite to that of the new World Trade Center or the Gedächtniskirche. More than refusing the reoccurrence of violence, the museum redefines the terms in which loss can be recuperated. The warning and threat of "Nie wieder" in all *Mahnmale* can be supplemented with the hope of reconciliation built on the acknowledgment of permanent loss. Libeskind's museum serves as the preservation, holding fast, and never forgetting of a negation, a symbolic architecture that shapes a collective consciousness by inducing dread and contemplation—for Germans a confession without the easy guarantee of salvation.

In Hegel's account of architectural expression, the void that bifurcates the museum at its core becomes translated into a *Vorstellung*, a representation, which then moves or is carried, through translation or some other metaphorical transference,

to the building's exterior. This act of transforming an utterly hidden, unarticulated interiority renders it into a concrete form, a move that Derrida seeks to foreclose, and that Libeskind finds necessary. There is no question that this interiority is split, fragmented, and empty at its core. These markings are then borne out again on the facade, which stands as a massive screen onto which the interior projects itself. The analogies to Lacanian psychoanalysis have produced rich, complex criticism, yet Libeskind would never claim that the void in his museum is the result of signification.⁵⁸ The void must be seen as regrettable, as signifying what should never have taken place, a horror that could and should have been avoided. Regardless of the parallels between Libeskind's writing and deconstruction, the void in the Jewish Museum is not an epistemological limit. To contemplate the void is to ponder its absence, what would have happened had the Holocaust not happened. The void is perhaps a warning, a rupture never to be forgotten. Once the museum asserts an imperative and a memory, it takes on an interpolative function. Already in his very careful and polite conversation with Derrida, Libeskind describes the museum as "imprinting" the viewer.⁵⁹ In recent years, Libeskind has remarked that architects differ from philosophers in that they wish to build affirmative structures. The museum couples the declarative intention of an institutional building with the critical redefinition that avant-garde juxtapositions provoke, suggesting thereby a path through the impasse between autonomy and conformity that has stymied architectural criticism.

58. Mark C. Taylor, "Point of No Return," in *radix-matrix*, by Daniel Libeskind (Munich: Prestel, 1997), 128–135.

59. "I do not know to what extent the building is emblematical, an exemplary structure. I think, if anything, it will act on the participants in the building, and it does call for some putting together of one's 'being in a museum.' It impresses upon the participants the notion that you cannot avoid the apocalypse, impresses upon them the impossibility of saying, 'I have already been there, already seen it.'" Daniel Libeskind, "Discussion with Jacques Derrida," in *radix-matrix*, 113.