

## Introduction

SALVE. These letters, wrought of inlaid wood, lie at the threshold of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's house in Weimar, Germany. A few steps beyond, the often-photographed vista through Goethe's rooms comes into view. Goethe's inscription marks the spot from which the classicizing vision of his home begins to open up, a vision aligning doorways to suggest a symmetry belied by the irregular wood patterns of the floors and the slightly twisting angles of this baroque house's layout. But Goethe's greeting comes a bit late. For one encounters the Roman salutation only after already having passed through the portal from the street, turned to the right, and climbed the long and stately staircase that Goethe himself designed to take up an inordinate amount of space—a use of space indicating wealth and grandeur. After visiting Goethe, Jean Paul remarked: "His house is striking; it is the only one in Weimar in the Italian taste, with such a staircase."<sup>1</sup> Goethe's house impresses even before one can begin to read it; the gesture towards unity and containment through inscription and design is exceeded by the materiality that supports it. The building cannot quite contain the experience of it; the very inscription of initiation points to an edge beyond itself, a falling-off into an uncharted priority or shadow-exterior.

The difficulty of the doorway or the threshold is the difficulty of beginning. The narrator of Kafka's late story "Der Bau" ["The Burrow"] is famously afflicted by this problem. The entrance remains an eyesore throughout the story, for it is a constant reminder of the persistence of a hostile exterior. The narrator begins: "I have completed the construction of my burrow and it seems to be successful."<sup>2</sup> The verb *scheinen* (seems)

immediately sheds doubt on the status of the burrow. The next sentence directs our attention to the problem of the doorway, which turns out to be probably the grossest error of the burrow. At first we encounter a sort of trompe l'oeil: "All that can be seen from outside is a big hole; that, however, really leads nowhere" (325/359). While the narrator concedes that this deception is nothing but the remnant of uncompleted building efforts, the flaws surrounding the doorway point to the inevitable failures of finitude, the impossibility of conceiving and carrying out a totalizing plan, and the painful failure to secure an interior—a failure marked by the fact of a passageway. "At that one point in the dark moss I am mortal" (325, translation emended/360).

The entrance or beginning articulates the rupture between the architectural plan and its physical instantiation; it opens the gap between the synchrony of conception and its diachronous realization. The relation between experience and understanding stumbles over this threshold. For Jacques Derrida architecture punctuates experience not only as space but as spacing. It thus marks out a zone of experience that must always exceed, and thus elude, theoretical mastery: "We appear to ourselves only through an experience of spacing which is already marked by architecture. What happens through architecture both constructs and instructs this us. The latter finds itself engaged by architecture before it becomes the subject of it: master and possessor" (Leach, 324/*Psyché*, 478).

Efforts to theorize architecture and to lay out the architectonic continue to collide with or bring about the experience of the material resistance of the individual building. *Housing Problems* opens up over this threshold to explore what Bernard Tschumi calls a "disjunction," a fundamental paradox of architecture:

A debate at a conceptual architecture conference in London (where the majority of contributors predictably concluded that "all architecture is conceptual") emphasized the strange paradox that seems to haunt architecture: namely, the impossibility of simultaneously questioning the nature of space and, at the same time, making or experiencing a real space. . . . This constant questioning about the nature of architecture only underlined the inevitable split between discourse and the domain of daily experience. . . . Again, *it was impossible to question the nature of space* and at the same time make or experience a real space. The complex opposition between ideal and real space was certainly not ideologically neutral, and the paradox it implied was fundamental. (67–70)

Tschumi points to the excess of building and experience that cannot be subsumed by concepts. "Caught, then, between sensuality and a search for rigor, between a perverse taste for seduction and a quest for the absolute, architecture seemed to be defined by the questions it raised. *Was architecture really made of two terms that were interdependent but mutually exclusive?* Did architecture constitute the reality of subjective experience while this reality got in the way of the overall concept?" (69). Tschumi concludes that this paradox is constitutive of architecture; it sets up a constant dynamic moving between discursive levels.

On the one hand, architecture and architectonics are rational processes that precede and ground any empirical building. In this schema a house would be a determinate end result of the architectural process, one that now stands apart and is of little interest. *Housing Problems* seeks to redirect interest to this excluded or marginalized house. For this reason the sphere of the "merely empirical" is given a place here. The actual houses of Goethe, Horace Walpole, and Sigmund Freud, mostly now museums, are studied here in a pseudopositivistic manner alongside textual articulations of architectonic problems. This empirical underpinning points to a random origin or ungrounded beginning within the sphere of buildings. On the other hand, the house brought under scrutiny always reveals itself to be another text, another inscribed surface. The effort here to link text and house brings into focus the historical tradition that has established a symmetry between design and instance, interior and exterior, author and house. *Housing Problems* takes as its point of departure Goethe's efforts to establish such a synthesis through the concept of *Bildung*: education, formation, edification. This tradition, marked by the effort to harmonize house and man, continues to shape literary research and is one of the unexamined fantasies of historicism. At the same time the interest here in architecture holds open the tension between the generalizing figures of architectonics and the singular quality of housing features. These continue to mark theoretical thinking even as they dissolve and withdraw. This movement of architecture is the focus of the final chapter, on Martin Heidegger's "house of Being" and George Oppen.

Architecture articulates both the plan of design and its realization, intimately related yet not reducible to a single entity, organized through spatialization and difference as well as through the legislative and controlling tendencies of the *arkhè*. Architecture can be understood as the art of beginning, of origination and foundation (*arkhè*, beginning or origin,

+ *tektōn*, master builder; related to *techné*, art or technique, both derived from *tiktōn*, to generate or create), and thus as the model of the law-giving and prescriptive function per se.<sup>3</sup> As the possibility of transference or translation between sketch—*Grundriss*, design, plan—and building, architecture is determined as a teleological and law-giving art.<sup>4</sup> This more general sense of architecture, or architectonic, contrasts with the specific art of architecture to which the word usually refers. The architectural plan produces a building that stands beyond it, solidified, stony, empirical. Architecture is therefore not only the originary art or art of origination; it is also a *constructum*: something already made and handed down, what it historically has been.<sup>5</sup> It also produces the specific material structures that resist absorption into a unified plan and give rise to a sphere of experience that protrudes beyond the margins of the page. This book explores this relationship of disjunction between architectonic design and architectural instance, between the subject as master-designer and the experience of material walls, between the theory of architecture and the facticity of houses.

Combining the general sense of architectonic as an inaugural art and the limited sense of architecture as building, architecture installs a vertical hierarchy that insures the elevation of the idea or the concept and the subservience of material, the precedence of form and structure over ornament, detail, or part. Western philosophical discourse is deeply imbricated with architecture in that both fields are engaged in processes of establishment, setting up, institutionalization, edification, structuring, and construction. The opacity of architecture and its elements makes possible the erection of theoretical and systematic thinking, the laying of foundations, and the defining of the border between inside and outside. In this sense, building is constitutive of thought, for it supports the very laying out of exposition.<sup>6</sup> René Descartes, for example, frequently invokes architectural images to establish this epistemological structure. In the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes compares his search for a firm foundation to an architectural project. Mathematics occupies pride of place as a solid foundation:

Above all I enjoyed mathematics . . . [but] . . . I was astonished that on such firm and solid foundations nothing more exalted had been built, while on the other hand I compared the moral writings of the ancient pagans to the most proud and magnificent palaces built on nothing but sand and mud. . . . As

for the other sciences, in so far as they borrow their principles from philosophy, I considered that nothing solid could have been built on such shifting foundations. (31–32/37–38)

Discourse itself is understood as an architectural structure with a foundation and an overlay. Sciences and humanities are unreliable because they do not have a solid foundation; they are also conglomerate structures that connect parts horizontally rather than investigating and restructuring the foundation in a vertical direction. For Descartes the installation of the foundation-superstructure model also implies the privileging of a single subject as origin and author. A building based on a unified and synchronous design is superior to buildings joined together through history:

There is less perfection in works composed of several separate pieces and made by different masters, than in those at which only one person has worked. So it is that one sees that buildings undertaken and completed by a single architect are usually more beautiful and better ordered than those that several architects have tried to put into shape, making use of old walls which were built for other purposes. So it is that these old cities which, originally only villages, have become, through the passage of time, great towns, are usually so badly proportioned in comparison with those orderly towns which an engineer designs at will on some plain that, although the buildings, taken separately, often display as much art as those of the planned towns or even more, nevertheless, seeing how they are places, with a big one here, a small one there, and how they cause the streets to bend and to be at different levels, one has the impression that they are more the product of chance than that of a human will operating according to reason. (35/41–42)

Rational construction based on a single conception is deemed more solid and beautiful than aggregation through time and space. Architecture is thus allied primarily with the unified blueprint or design, which ought to be applied uniformly, creating a one-to-one correspondence between rational design and material execution.

Immanuel Kant displays a similar predilection for the architectonic design. In the penultimate section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant presents the term “architectonic” as follows: “By an architectonic I understand the art of systems.”<sup>7</sup> Architectonic unity, he explains, is characterized by rational necessity and is distinguished from technical unity, or those general structures that are produced through aggregation or

empirical accumulation. This accumulation belongs to the sphere of the history of reason; history can be gathered up and reshaped, refigured and re-presented in a necessary and systematic form:

It is unfortunate that only after we have spent much time rhapsodically collecting all sorts of stray bits of knowledge as building materials [*Bauzeug*], at the suggestion of an idea lying hidden in our minds, and after we have, indeed, over a long period assembled the materials in a merely technical manner, does it first become possible for us to discern the idea in a clearer light, and to devise a whole architectonically in accordance with the ends of reason. (655/2:697)

This architectonic projection or design does away with the haphazard quality of the *Bauzeug*, or construction materials. The recasting of knowledge according to a single idea picks up historical material; Kant remarks that much knowledge has already been amassed and thus makes possible “an architectonic of all human knowledge, which . . . in view of the great amount of material that has been collected, or which can be picked up from the ruins of old collapsed buildings [should not be difficult]” (655/2:698). Architectonics, then, marks a fold between induction and deduction, between the technical or rhapsodic gathering of the historical, and its recasting as a necessary system of relations. One might say the word “architectonic” is the transcendental correlate to the field of architecture; it enfolds and presents the rules of the buildings, ruins, and materials that architecture deploys. Architecture provides the constitutive elements of the articulation of architectonics; at the same time, it is put aside as extraneous matter that is merely empirical.<sup>8</sup>

This extraneous matter reemerges as the marginalized house. We can find it in Descartes, for example, if we consider the circumstances of his realizations about foundations and building in the passage quoted above. At the beginning of the second section of the *Discourse on Method*, we find that Descartes has withdrawn from his military activity because of the weather. Delayed by contingency, he relates:

I was, at that time, in Germany, whither the wars, which have not yet finished there, had called me, and as I was returning from the coronation of the Emperor to join the army, the onset of winter held me up in quarters in which, finding no company to distract me, and having, fortunately, no cares or passions to disturb me, I spent the whole day shut up in a room heated

by an enclosed stove, where I had complete leisure to meditate on my own thoughts. (35/41)

The cozily heated room provides shelter from the violence of history and allows a temporary dissociation from empirical surroundings that takes the form of Descartes' thoughts. This room is not accounted for by Descartes' musings on building; we take it to be a random dwelling decked out empirically, in all the roughness and unevenness of the unplanned city. In the *Meditations*, Descartes classes this type of experience with those things that can be obliterated by doubt: "for example, that I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a dressing-gown, with this paper in my hands" (96/69). The conditions of writing are denied through writing, the comforts of the room demolished by what the room allows Descartes to think. The disjunction between Descartes' architectural metaphors in the exposition of his method and the details of the setting of these meditations enacts the paradox Tschumi speaks of. It points also to the room, the house, the domestic interior, as a denied condition for theoretical thinking.

Let's go back for a moment to Tschumi's emphatic question: *Was architecture really made of two terms that were interdependent but mutually exclusive?* In Hegel's *Aesthetics* we find that this relationship obtains between architecture as the first symbolic art on the one hand and the "calling" of architecture to fulfill itself in the purposiveness of building shelters—in fact, the house "as a fundamental type"—on the other. Architectonic order and housing are mutually exclusive. This relationship comes out in the difficult relationship between the definitions of architecture as the first symbolic art and the story of its progress to the building of shelters as its true concept. Because art is defined in general as the mutual interpenetration of idea and *Gestaltung* (shape or formation), of interior and exterior, independent architecture as the first art ought to meet this same criterion. As the first symbolic art, however, architecture is defined as the predominance of a material exteriority insufficiently penetrated by spirit—as an exterior subsisting on its own, giving vague intimations of interiority or meaning, but remaining predominantly as unworked exteriority. Housing therefore cannot be an art, because it subordinates the exteriority of building to the function of shelter and surrounding for an interior that is the center of meaning. The building as house has its purpose (*Zweck*) outside itself in the interior it shelters and

is no longer art. Original architecture, in contrast, cannot yet be marked by that difference; instead, it would resemble sculpture. Hegel writes:

But should there be absent at the beginning the difference between (a) the aim, explicitly present in man or the temple-image, of seeking an enclosure and (b) the building as the fulfillment of this aim, then we will have to look around for buildings which stand there independently in themselves, as it were like works of sculpture, and which carry their meaning in themselves and not in some external aim and need.<sup>9</sup>

The intrusion of purposiveness (*Zweckmäßigkeit*) into architecture implies a differentiation between means and ends following the organization of interior and exterior. As the means of building are subordinated to the purpose of shelter, the exterior of the house is seen as fully distinct from the interior spirit it shelters.

The first form of architecture—as an independent and free-standing art—is the building of towers that have as their function only the gathering of the people who build them, as in the construction of the Babylonian Tower (2:638/14:276–77).

This gathering is not purposive because it does not work with a dichotomy between inside and outside. The tower is itself the bond that it creates. At the same time such structures are ambivalently connected with symbolic meanings that go beyond them. The tower of Belus, for example, which Hegel hesitantly suggests may be connected to the tower in the Bible, stands symbolically in seven levels, massive and solid, probably following the pattern of the seven planets and spheres of the heavens (14:278).

Hegel's description of independent architecture is rather confused. While he states that the architectural function is the gathering of peoples, this function is basically dropped and does not make its way into the aesthetics of architecture. The artistic quality of independent architectonic features seems instead to have to do with geometrical relations obtaining between solid masses. This latter quality is developed in the exposition of architectural works "waver[ing] between Architecture and Sculpture" (2:640/14:279). Although these may use sculptural forms—obelisks, sphinxes, etc.—Hegel argues that these are used in an independently architectural way. The purely architectonic has to do with positioning in space, especially of massive objects. The Memnon statues, according to Hegel, actually function more architecturally—or to be more precise,



architecturally—than sculpturally because they are not focused on the distinction between inside and outside that properly belongs to sculpture:

These were two colossal human figures, seated, in their grandiose and massive character more inorganic and architectural than sculptural; after all, Memnon columns occur in rows and, since they have their worth only in such a regular order and size, descend from the aim of sculpture altogether to that of architecture. (2:643/14:282)<sup>10</sup>

Despite the architectonic claims of the *Aesthetics*, which should find a symmetrical triad in each art form (symbolic, classical, romantic) and thus in each particular art, it seems impossible to find a simple beginning for the first art; it can only be described through a comparison with sculpture, a later art form, and seems to have no identity of its own.<sup>11</sup>

The architectonic is allied with the mathematical eurythmy that must remain somewhat mysterious. Free-standing, that is, nonfunctional, architecture can include architectural elements such as doors, gates, and walls, as long as these are not there to enclose a space and make a house. Following Strabo, Hegel describes this phenomenon:

Then follows a huge ceremonial entrance . . . narrower above than below, with pylons, and pillars of prodigious size . . . some of them standing free and independently, others grouped in walls or as magnificent jambs; these being likewise broader at the base than above, rise in a slant, freely, and independently to the height of fifty or sixty feet; they are unconnected with transverse walls and carry no beams and so do not form a house. (2:644–45/14:284)

The resistance to the right angle and the straight line prevent symbolic architecture from falling into the fundamental architectural type of the house—that is, they preserve an architecture that is no architecture.

Architecture progresses to fulfill its calling as a building that cannot properly be considered an independent art:

For its vocation lies precisely in fashioning external nature as an enclosure shaped into beauty by art out of the resources of the spirit itself, and fashioning it for the spirit already explicitly present, for man, or for the divine images which he has framed and set up as objects. Its meaning this enclosure does not carry in itself but finds in something else, in man and his needs and aims in family life, the state, or religion, etc., and therefore the independence of the buildings is sacrificed. (2:633/14:270)

For Hegel art cannot be structured by this kind of functionality in which the *Gestaltung* has its meaning outside of itself. Building, epitomized by the sheltering function of the house, has already surpassed art. Thus the middle of architecture, the house, is an empty point that is no longer art but rather a surrounding for the sculpture, the human figure, as classical art, which has now moved into the center. Such architecture is no longer art and also not yet art; the architectural will progress into the Romantic form, which ought to unify the two previous forms and reinstall the independent and free excess over the function of shelter characteristic of the Gothic cathedral. The house is thus both the essence and the absence of architecture. In Hegel we might say that the relation between the architectonic and housing is one of disjunction.

The problematic quality of the beginning of architecture, and the difficulty about the structure of a properly independent architecture understood as architectonic, points to the more general difficulty of beginning or grounding the Hegelian exposition.<sup>12</sup>

The art of building in fact underlies the exposition of Hegel's *Aesthetics* itself, emerging to contain the very Idea of the beautiful. The figure of the Pantheon emerges as Hegel describes the self-articulating unity of art: "Now, therefore, what the particular arts realize in individual works of art is, according to the Concept of art, only the universal forms of the self-unfolding Idea of beauty. It is as the external actualization of this Idea that the wide Pantheon of art is rising. Its architect and builder is the self-comprehending spirit of beauty" (1:90/13:124). The difficulty in defining and describing the architectural strikes at the very possibility of the theoretical exposition. As a symbolic art, architecture must exceed mere spatial organization and suggest some kind of indeterminate meaning. The trouble is that the structure of meaning itself is allied not with architectonics, which must evade or defer meaning, but with housing, thus with a form already past that of art: "That is to say, on the one hand, the work of art, present to sense, should *give lodgement* [*beherbergen*] to an inner content" (2:635/14:272, my emphasis). Independent and free-standing architecture is thus called upon to signify without signifying, to house without sheltering. Tschumi's notion of disjunction suggests a gap between architectural design and empirical building or, as he writes, between "discourse and the domain of daily experience," or "*the nature of space* and . . . a real space" (69). With respect to Hegel we can conclude that it is impossible to theorize and expose the structures of containment in the same gesture

that thematizes containment. Hegel's *Aesthetics* houses architecture but only by evading its own gesture of sheltering and containing.

Architecture loses its ground in Hegel's *Aesthetics* just as it is called in to ground its theoretical frame. This is possible because housing is conceived of as an opposition between an interior and an exterior. To avoid this binarism into which Hegel's writing draws us, we might turn to Heidegger's claim for the essential interrelatedness in his essay "Bauen Wohnen Denken," "Building Dwelling Thinking," in which building, dwelling, and thinking are simply different aspects of the same. Heidegger's interpretation of building here combines the two aspects of architectonic and function that Hegel separates in the itinerary of architecture. Rejecting the separation of means and end (*Mittel* and *Zweck*), Heidegger proposes a view of building as both a gathering (*Versammlung*) and a sheltering or protecting that is a fundamental trait (*Grundzug*) of building and not a means to an end organized as interior and exterior.

Heidegger argues that the bridge considered as a thing<sup>13</sup> does not simply connect two river banks that are already there; instead "the banks emerge as banks only in the crossing over of the bridge [*im Übergang der Brücke*]. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge" (*PLT 152/VuA 146*.) The bridge gathers together (*sammelt* and *versammelt*) not only the people who build it, as for Hegel, but much more, it gathers together the entire landscape that is its surroundings. The bridge is a "place," an *Ort*, that gathers together what Heidegger calls the four or the fourfold, *das Geviert*. "As such a thing, it allows a space into which earth and heaven, divinities and mortals are admitted" (*PLT 155/VuA 147*).

This gathering of the fourfold, mysterious as it is, allows the bridge to be crossed without separating means and end, without bringing in *Zweckmäßigkeit*. The crossing of the bridge crosses from the two banks to the broadest possible notion of crossing over:

Now in a high arch, now in a low, the bridge vaults over glen and stream—whether mortals keep in mind this vaulting of the bridge's course or forget that they, always themselves on their way to the last bridge, are actually striving to surmount all that is common and unsound in them in order to bring themselves before the haleness of the divinities. The bridge *gathers*, as a passage that crosses, before the divinities. (*PLT 153/VuA 147*)

The possibility that the bridge is “merely a bridge” (*bloß eine Brücke*) is derivative of this gathering sense of the bridge’s crossing over. From the perspective of this alternative, we might still ask what happens to “the mere bridge.” In the same essay, Heidegger brings up the specific empirical example of the bridge over the Neckar at Heidelberg. The thinking of the expanded crossing, of the bridge, itself bridges the distance between here and there or between signifier and referent:

If all of us now think, from where we are right here, of the old bridge in Heidelberg, this thinking toward that location is not a mere experience inside the persons present here; rather it belongs to the nature of our thinking *of* that bridge that *in itself* thinking gets through, persists through, the distance to that location. From this spot right here, we are there at the bridge—we are by no means at some representational content in our consciousness. From right here we may even be much nearer to that bridge and to what it makes room for than someone who uses it daily as an indifferent river crossing. (*PLT 156–157/VuA 151*)

According to this passage, “we here” are able to overcome spatial and temporal limitations and make our way to the essence of the bridge. Thinking itself functions like the bridge Heidegger describes, crossing from here to there, from this to that. Being in space is first of all a relatedness that undoes any simple binarism between presence and absence: “I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it” (*PLT 157/VuA 152*). But Heidegger introduces a hierarchy here: *nur so*, only thus; that is, the relatedness of place, *Ort*, makes possible or underlies the abstract relationship of space. In the same way, the bridge-thought sketches a ghost image of the unknowing feet treading the bridge day in and day out. The text produces an excluded and disparaged excess, here, in the tactile relationship to the bridge, generally connected to the merely functional aspect of architecture.<sup>14</sup> Derrida points to the way in which the theoretical orientation of the term “architectonic” tends to overlook the resistance exerted by the specific art of architecture:

On the one hand, this general architectonics *effaces* or *exceeds* the sharp specificity of architecture; it is valid for other arts and regions of experience as well. On the other hand, architecture forms its most powerful metonymy; it gives it its most solid *consistency*, objective substance. By consistency, I do not mean only logical coherence, which implicates all dimensions of human experience

in the same network: there is no work of architecture without interpretation, or even economic, religious, political, aesthetic or philosophical decree. But by consistency I also mean duration, hardness, the monumental, mineral or ligneous subsistence, the hyletics of tradition. Hence the *résistance*: the resistance of materials. (Leach, 328/*Psyché*, 482)

Architecture's specificity is aligned with the materiality of both history and experience.

*Housing Problems* maintains the tension between the architectonic and the architectural and thus maintains a link between the theorization of architecture on the one hand and the usual sense of architecture on the other—*das Gewohnte*, or habitual. The habit of the literal is housed in the house, our usual dwelling, the unaccountable spaces and rooms through which even the most philosophical bodies pass. The juxtapositioning of the theoretical and the trivial is central to *Housing Problems*. The problem first posed itself to me—perhaps by chance—in Weimar, where the architectural structures of libraries and archives are barely distinguishable from those of tourist sites and domestic displays. The movement of scholarly research through archival spaces raises questions about the distinction between the necessary and the contingent, the scientific and the random.

According to the schema laid out above, a house would be a determinate end result of the architectural process, one that now stands apart. Not only a building with a problematic and perhaps disjunctive relationship to the art of architecture, the house also involves the specifics of bourgeois life.<sup>15</sup> As an unmoving relic, the house installs the inside/outside binary, the main terms of its “economy,” the law of the house. The house thus conjoins the general solidifying feature of architecture as well as the function of containment.<sup>16</sup> The close relation between housing as a space of containment and preservation, and photography, marked especially by the word “camera,” is also a theme of this book. The house and, even more forcefully, the room function by way of a quadrangle, the four walls that stake out and secure an interior. Yet the quadrangle is never secure; like the house it is haunted, it reverses itself, it opens outward. The frame of the quadrant opens up onto an endless and undefined field, a field of rubble where no identity is stable. In the house or room we take refuge and deny the unraveling at our edges. *Housing Problems* undertakes to mobilize the house into the gerund “housing” to open up this denial. More specific than architecture, it still engages architectural problems. The term “housing” continues to pose the question of the relation between architecture

and building, or between thinking and the empirical. The facticity of the house points to a limit of thinking, an undercurrent of the untheorized and excluded materiality that is a condition of possibility of architecture, or writing. The desire and necessity to contain and control, “to house,” continues to form us, despite the urge to erode its stability.<sup>17</sup>

The house-museum presents the reified moment in the problem of housing. The authorial house-museum, which came into vogue in Europe and the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, presents a late form of the house as fetish. The famous Goethe House in Weimar, for example, was one of the first to become a museum in the 1860s, thus continuing the tradition of visitation that Goethe himself had invited. The fetish quality of the house-museum comes to an extreme limit at the desk; paper and pen seem to suggest an opening to understanding, a direct link to the genesis of the literary masterpiece. From here it is a small step to both the fetish formations that Freud discusses in his essay on that topic and to the duplicates and multiplications of self-images meant to ward off death that he outlines in the essay “The Uncanny.” In both cases the prostheses of the subject that stand in for it function to deny death or absence at the same time that they commemorate and thus underscore it. The idea that the house stands in for a self and tells its secret story, holding on to its owner as origin and spirit, is a myth.

“*Bildung* and Buildings in Classical Weimar,” the first section of chapter 1, “Goethe’s Architectonic,” presents a reading of Goethe’s writings about the Strasbourg Cathedral in terms of the concept of *Bildung*, a broad humanistic concept that includes education, formation, cultivation, and development that Goethe himself helped to develop. *Bildung* can be understood as the process by which a subject externalizes and realizes itself through its material productions and surroundings. This model presents a kind of utopia in which exterior signs would be perfectly transparent expressions of an interior self. In terms of Goethe’s two texts on German architecture, separated by more than fifty years, I show how the maturation process is supposed to absorb and bring under control the architectural and rhetorical exuberance exhibited in his first essay of 1772. Similarly, certain houses and rooms in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*) open the space in which the narrative is gathered together, identities are revealed and lessons learned. Through analysis of the grandfather’s art collection, its loss and subsequent reappearance in the uncle’s castle, I show how ordered display serves to appropriate space and express

the unified identity of its owner. At the same time a bare housing continues to exceed the space of presentation appropriated by the narrative of *Bildung*, pointing to the persistent materiality of time and space beyond logical unification. Finally, I suggest that the description of the uncle's house and collections in fact duplicates the display of Goethe's own house in Weimar and recent touristic and historical descriptions of it. The capacity of the *Goethehaus* to stabilize and represent subjectivity, I argue, relies on the logic of *Bildung*. According to the same model, visitors to authors' homes can believe they are reabsorbing the authentic trace or the genuine exterior left by a life in the past. The absorption of these traces encourages visitors to internalize images of identity and national culture. This model of culture enables the cult of personality and place that surely contributed to Hitler's favoring of the city of Weimar, a stronghold of support for the Nazis and the place of the founding of the Hitler Youth. The location of Buchenwald eight kilometers outside the town testifies to the brutal failure of the logic of totalization.

I argue in this book that the experience of place is actually an opportunity to connect texts, images, recollections, and representations in a way that produces the sense we attribute to them. Taking Goethe and his home in Weimar as my point of departure, I show how depictions of house and home in his writings cooperate with material remains—from rock collections and garments to buildings and graves—to create what we think of as “historical reality.” What we perceive as an extension of “presence” is a dense layering of texts that rhetorically produce certain effects of authenticity and connectedness.

Chapters 2 and 3 continue to develop the problematic relation among history, architecture, and narrative in a reading of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Poe's stories “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Oval Portrait,” and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. I argue that the prominent role of architecture in Gothic and uncanny literature can be understood in terms of a semiotic collapse between sign and referent characteristic of these genres. Building itself becomes language, and a language not controlled by a referential function. In *Otranto*, Alphonso, the disarticulated subject of ownership—literally the dismembered body parts of a ghostly giant—is scattered throughout the castle. Hallways and doors lead us through our reading and likewise withhold understanding to produce narrative tension. Architectural features function in the same way as the stuttering speech of the servants and the mute gestures of the visiting

knights: irritating delays that in communicating delay communication. The eventual collapse of the castle and the restoration of the proper lineage reverse the semiotic reversal that the narrative has presented. Finally, the novel reinstalls the vertical hierarchy of ground and predicate, or subject-owner and property, that the Gothic seems to overturn. The preservation of order that seems to be subverted can also be seen in the realist effect not only of the narrative but also of the architectural experiments of Horace Walpole and his contemporaries known as Gothic revival: the construction of pseudo-Gothic buildings, *folies*, trompe-l'oeil facades, and towers connected to nothing. The readings of Poe's stories and Austen's novel show how the repetition of the Gothic exceeds the Gothic itself. In "The Fall of the House of Usher" the house collapses as a Gothic romance is read aloud. The duplication between signifier and referent, rather than leading to restoration as in Walpole, induces instead an excessive double that results in collapse. In Austen, of course, the effect is parodic.

Chapter 4 shows how Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (*Elective Affinities*), in contrast, tries over and over to follow a hermeneutic of the letter and the spirit similar to that of *The Castle of Otranto*, yet fails to build a unifying structure that would reveal the coherence of parts or progress towards resolution. The disappointment of the architectural can be read in the many stops and starts of building projects, restorations, and remodeling throughout the text. The "foundation stone" (*Grundstein*), of course, reveals its own fallibility, foreseeing its own demise even as it is supposed to extend the present into an indeterminately successful future. Likewise, in the scene of the laying of the foundation stone, Edward's reading of the preservation of the glass with the intertwining E and O remains an arbitrary interpretation, a projection whose ground is fictional and fragile. Interestingly, *Wahlverwandtschaften*, a work of high literature, subverts the architectural ordering of meaning much more than *Otranto*, part of a more popular tradition working through mechanics and claptrap, and drawing on obvious conventions.

Chapter 5 begins with a consideration of Freud's house in London, now a museum that commemorates both the founding of psychoanalysis and, less overtly, the Holocaust. This chapter seeks to understand the interrelation between the space of the house, Freud's notion of psychic topology (primarily in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and the essay on the uncanny), and the process of analysis. Derrida's *Archive Fever*, first given as a lecture at the Freud House, points to the role of the house in the establish-



ment of memory and archives but does not say much about the actual house. Another entry to this story is gained through the American poet H.D.'s *Tribute to Freud*, one of the only texts that describes the residential situation and details of the house as part of her analytic experience with Freud in the 1920s. In this text personal memoir and literary allusions work together to create a textual network that stands in the place of an empirical place. H.D. gathers together her analytic experience through a reading of "Mignon's Song," Goethe's famous poem taken from *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, that is centered around the image of a sheltering house. The place of this song leads into a reading of Gérard de Nerval's "Delfica," a poem fashioned after it, and the collapse of authorial identity it implies.

I compare Freud's abandoned home at Berggasse 19, Vienna, with the more fully furnished museum in London. Just as Freud's conception of the subject cannot be assured through an externalized presence but rather is originally articulated as a displaced mark, trace, or repeated recollection, in the same way, his housing brings to our attention the problems of instability and absence. The couch itself becomes the disappearing center of Freud's spaces. These homes can never communicate the reassuring groundedness lent to Goethe's residence in Weimar. The apartment in the Berggasse was emptied when the Freuds were compelled to flee Nazi-annexed Austria. It now contains little beyond an exhibit of a collection of photographs of the apartment taken by Edmund Engelman a few days before Freud's departure in 1938. Clearly Freud's students considered this documentation of place to be absolutely crucial to the future of psychoanalysis. This desire to fix a spatial origin suggests that Freud's thinking was necessarily linked to its surroundings—that furnishings and housing stand as silent records of the origin of thought. Interestingly, this drive is explicitly connected to photography, a medium that undermines the stability it strives to document. This chapter thus also includes a reflection on the medium of photography, the way in which it is thought to preserve a slice of the past, and its apparently indexical function. In contrast, Freud's home in London, the Freud Museum that contains most of Freud's personal possessions, his collection of antiquities and art pieces, and his original couch, reminds one constantly of its surrogate character.

Chapter 6 approaches the problem of the house in several texts by Martin Heidegger. The chapter traces alterations in the function of architectural elements and figures, which sometimes open up and sometimes

restabilize the status of identity. The chapter begins with a study of *In-sein* in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*), which here is to be understood in terms other than those of spatial containment. *In-sein*, Being-in, instead characterizes the exposure of *Da-sein*, Being-there, in its finitude. Rooms, furniture, and domestic settings play an important role in Heidegger's exposition of *In-sein*. These install an ontic element in the exposition of the ontological trait of *In-sein* which, like Descartes' *poêle*, cannot be gotten rid of. In fact architectural surroundings make possible an orientation in space without taking recourse to an abstract and measurable empty geometrical space. But generally, housing becomes *unheimlich*, uncanny or unhomey, in concealing *Da-sein's* fundamental *Un-zuhause sein*, its not-being-at-home. A discussion of the "Letter on Humanism" traces out a double tendency of the essay. On the one hand, *in* continues to mark a hovering, unstable relationship between *Da-sein* and *Sein*. On the other hand, the language of "the house of Being" appropriates the architectural to allow Being to present itself. The house thus comes to stand as a hinge or joint between the ontic and the ontological. The chapter continues to consider the oscillation between stability and destabilization connected with housing and building in "Building Dwelling Thinking" and *Identity and Difference* ("Bauen Wohnen Denken" and *Identität und Differenz*). It concludes with a reading of "the event," *das Ereignis*, as it appears in *Identity and Difference*, and the reading of this text by American poet George Oppen. Through a coreading of Oppen and Heidegger, based on Oppen's citation of Heidegger and a fascinating diary entry about his relation to Heidegger, the text concludes with an opening up of the notion of building and a dual reading of subjectivity as stretched between *Dichten* und *Denken*, poetry and thinking, or Oppen and Heidegger.

*Housing Problems* interprets material practices of historical restoration and presentation together with fictional, autobiographical, and philosophical texts. While recent critical debates have pitted history and language against each other, this project takes them to be originally connected. The book includes work by photographer Suzanne Doppelt. Her nonrepresentational photographs work along with the text to critique the desire for containment and stability inherent in the theme of the house. This book takes up more general questions of the relation between literature and history in a way that is tangible to anyone who has pointed out the house of a person of renown. Literature informs this very pointing and the ways in which we presume that these houses form and cultivate us.