

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

#### CHAPTER 3: THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SUBJECT

Stay loyal to the earth, my brothers, with the power of your virtue! May your bestowing love and your knowledge serve towards the meaning of the earth! Thus I beg and entreat you.

Do not let it fly away from the things of earth and beat with its wings against the eternal walls! Alas, there has always been much virtue that has flown away!

Lead, as I do, the flown-away virtue back to earth - yes, back to body and life: that it may give the earth its meaning, a human meaning!

Nietzsche "Of the Bestowing Virtue" in "Thus Spoke Zarathustra"(1969:102)

In the previous chapter much work was done to counteract the temperocentrism of "Being and Time" by way of Whitehead's argument against the simple object. A spatio-temporal object was thematised as the percept of the embodied subject. The deficit in this account can now be introduced. It is not yet clear how the body relates to what it perceives.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

What is required is an account of how a spatio-temporal object produces and is produced by a spatio-temporal *subject*. After the last chapter's theorisation of the work of the object, what is now needed is an examination of the work of the subject.

In order to proceed, we need to understand the problem at hand. The problem is that of *agency*. In the previous chapter, the intimate relation between the subject and a transcendental horizon of time was uncovered. This relation was seen to result inexorably in a subjectivism which the early Heidegger and the early critical Kant could not escape. How then is it possible to think of a subjectivity which does not dominate that which there is to think beyond it? How can immanence be thought in relation to a transcendence which it does not circumscribe or reduce? How do we think about the *work* of a subject that does not work solely within immanence?

In this chapter I will argue that Heidegger's attempts to think beyond the subjectivism of "Being and Time" result in a reconstituted or displaced subjectivity. By examining this failure to think transcendence within immanence, the way ahead will be signalled. Heidegger's failure will be shown to lie in over-valuing what he takes to be forms of transcendence, in particular that of architecture and language. I will argue that in a sense, for the post-turn Heidegger, architecture and language do too much *work*. As

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

such, the work of architecture and the work of language will be seen as mere dissimulations of transcendence. They are displaced forms of subjectivity masquerading as transcendence.

In order to counteract the work of an apparent transcendence which silences the agency of the subject, I will have recourse to a distinction between work and *worklessness*. It is in the terms of this distinction that a middle-voiced agency of the subject can be expounded. That is, by thinking the worklessness of the subject, it will be possible to begin understanding how the subject communicates with a world it neither dominates nor is dominated by.

I shall begin this examination of a middle-voiced subjectivity by reviewing theoretically the role of the architect in relation to the design of space and materials. Examining in theory the role of the architect is of use here because it is impossible to access this role without encountering questions of agency: does the architect merely use space and materials to fulfill the ends of the client, or is the architect used by space and materials? Who acts upon whom? The architect's relation to space therefore can act as an amplified model for receiving different constructions of how the subject acts in relation to the 'exteriorities' of space and materiality.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

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Sylviane Agacinski in her essay "Space and the Work" writes the following,

It follows from these different remarks that the theme of the work is on the side of a thought which seeks to master space, while what, for want of a more satisfactory expression, I have termed the experience of space corresponds to the abandonment by the worker (or the *ouvrier*, the one who opens) of any perspective that strives to transcend the playing of space with itself, or matter with itself, for in that play the opener is already implicated, even undone. This experience of space is also that of worklessness, which is the loss of the essentially expressive aim of the work corresponding to the ambition of subjectivity to impose unity to what it believes to be its own outside, i.e. matter or materials in their spacing. Abandoning this position is in itself a response to thought beginning to take account of those experiences and tests of alterity that submerge the subjectivity which thought it could contain the other, both in the sense of enclosing it and restraining it by compression. (Agacinski, 1990:19)

In Agacinski's terms, the subject 'works' by attempting to dominate what it

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

works with. A subjective 'worklessness', on the other hand, would allow the worked its own patterns of being. The attempt to master space through work therefore enacts a closure and erects a boundary against exteriority. Mastering space involves enforcing a form or idea upon its outside. In other words, through 'work', the transcendence of the worked is reduced within the terms of immanence. On the other hand, worklessness signals the attempt to work with things in the world in such a manner that their difference is maintained or not dominated. The worklessness of the subject involves an attempt to think transcendence within immanence.

In architectural discourse, what is being called 'work' involves effacing any difference beyond the idea, as Agacinski remarks of the traditional conception of the architect:

As the one who 'builds in his head', he is the classic model for all makers, planners and designers driven by the idea of mastering space and time by effacing the gap between the end and the beginning of the work. (Ibid:18)

The end of the work is, in the desire to master space, condensed into its very beginning, for all aspects of the beyond to the idea- materiality, site and perhaps most importantly, time, cannot offer resistance to their inclusion within and appropriation by the idea itself. Materiality beyond the materiality

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

already countenanced within the idea becomes noumenal. The architect never leaves his head.<sup>1</sup>

This model of the role of the architect purely in terms of their relation to the space to be designed can be given a name. The privileging of spatial work over worklessness in architecture is the ground of all *monumentalism*. Monumentalism in architecture has been defined as ‘something stubbornly closed in on itself in accordance with a fixed *arche* and *telos*.’<sup>2</sup> The form or *eidos* is imposed in advance, always prior to the actual building of the building.

It is possible to ask at this juncture, “what would take the place of architectural *work*?” The answer to this question is gestured to in Agacinski’s use of the term worklessness. A ‘workless’ building would allow the difference of time, materiality, and in fact all factors of differential variation to interrupt the initial formalism of the blueprint. A workless architecture would emphasise and affirm the ways in which the extra-conceptual affects the process of building. A workless architecture would also be interested in

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<sup>1</sup>In terms of the history of architecture, the stamping of form upon space, transforming the outside of space in effect into a *tabula rasa*, corresponds to one of the founding tenets of high modernism. Le Corbusier’s work henceforth becomes an interesting subject in terms of the polarity set up between work and worklessness. On the one hand there is a tendency for the ground to be imposed upon space, on the other hand a ‘regional sensitivity’ to local materials and so on engenders a complexity and magic to his buildings perhaps unsurpassed in his wake.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

marginalising (at least for a while) the control and mastery of space and building, in order to be more receptive to process, chance and domains of the unpredictable. An example of a development in this direction is suggested by the possible implementation of virtual reality Computer Aided Design packages which are beginning to map the complex properties of different materials. A design process centred around the exploration of materiality would be a form of workless architecture.

I will suggest the possibility of a workless architecture at this point without developing it with any degree of completion. This project cannot be continued, I would argue without the resources of the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty<sup>3</sup>. For now, let us recognise that with the equation between work and monument we have posed, in architectural terms, the problem of the *apriori* and the transcendental mentioned in the previous chapter: of the imposition of form upon space. An overemphasis on the formal conditions of experience (and building) precludes the possibility of significant *aposteriori* phenomena. The monumentalism of a formalism that

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Casey, "The Fate of Place" p312.

<sup>3</sup>David Farrell Krell's recent book "Architecture: Ecstasies of Space, Time, and the Human Body" attempts to begin such a project. He writes "The sentient body..occupies a space that cannot be reduced to the mausoleum of Cartesian geometry. This is the perdurant insight of a thinker who had not yet had sufficient influence on contemporary thinking about architecture - Maurice Merleau-Ponty."(Krell, 1997:7)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

excludes time and materiality in architecture and experience proscribes the possibility of *events* that would transform both. The monumental work of an overarching architectural *eidos* or architectonic proscribes the surprise of the processual.

The problem of transcendentalism in architecture (as monumentality) and philosophy is therefore quite simply this: it reduces the experience and difference of time and materiality to the status of insignificance. Transcendentalism threatens any form of experience that cannot be ordered in advance. It is the suggestion of this thesis that this reduction thereby closes off rich aposteriori veins of significance and signification. In this way it is possible to begin a critique of transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology can be seen as refusing important aspects of experience. And the monumentalist ideology at work in traditional practises of architecture would equally be held to foreclose important possibilities of building. It is in order to combat this idealist reductivism that Agacinski contrasts a mastery of space with what she calls the *experience* of space. That is, it would seem to be implicit in Agacinski's distinction that she is gesturing towards a non-transcendental phenomenology. Again, the following question must be taken up and answered during the course of the rest of this thesis: how do we think phenomenology beyond the apriori?

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

How do we avoid falling into a brute empiricism? What must become of the relation between phenomenology and ontology in order to rethink the subject and object according to a spacing of time and temporisation of space - a spatio-temporal schematism?

The aims of this chapter are twofold. The first contention is that thinking the worklessness of space, space's transcendence over the subject, is one of the chief differences at work between pre-turn and post-turn Heidegger. After the early works, in the thirties Heidegger begins to think the transcendence and alterity of space. As I shall show, this transcendence is however underscored by another transcendence, that of language, in particular the language of the poet. This does not weaken the argument of this chapter. On the contrary, Heidegger's linguistic turn towards recognising the significance of the poetic again his Copernican desire to transcend the subject. I shall argue that the move towards a conception of space beyond the subject becomes present within Heidegger's own thematisations of space, after 'the turn'. Space is no longer produced solely by the spacing of the subject. Heidegger's journey from work to worklessness involves, for example, the move from privileging the *tool*, whose materiality and alterity is always secondary, a ranking ordered

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

implicitly by the episteme of modern technology, to privileging the "strife" relationship between the world of the work and the earth upon which it is grounded. Here alterity and transcendence take centre stage in the withdrawing movement of the earth as it shows itself in the work.

Secondly, after arguing that 'the turning' involves turning away from the transcendental conditioning of the subject towards the subject facing transcendence, I shall argue that Heidegger goes *too far* in thinking transcendence. Going 'too far' towards transcendence always involves a dissimulation: a transcendence 'too far' turns out to be another circumscription of the outside by a form of immanence. Heidegger comes closest to rupturing a relation to phenomenology beyond its abandonment in no longer thinking the conditions of subjectivity at all. Or rather, the subjectivity of Dasein is displaced onto another form of subjectivity, the subjectivity of the work- of the building and of language. I will argue that something like an 'ontological monumentalism' holds sway in his post-turn work, whether this be the vertical power of the Greek temple or the power of language naming itself through the poet. Heidegger's desire to abandon the subject and take his leave of phenomenology turns out to result in another form of work being expounded. In other words, Heidegger's desire for what I am calling 'worklessness' is frustrated.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

I will argue in contrast that worklessness does *not* imply an evisceration of the work of the subject in the face of the transcendence of things and the world. What is required, in the movement towards thinking the transcendence of the world beyond the subject, is a way of accounting for the *exchange* that takes place between the two. The *aporia* of exchange occurs clearly in Heidegger's readings of Rilke, where, as Michel Haar shows, a chiasmus between the subject and the transcending Outside is read against itself in Heidegger as a metaphysical retreat into the invisible interiority of the subject. With Haar, I shall show that there is something much more mutable in Rilke; that the poet evoking the Open becomes the site of an exchange between subject and world. I shall show, in the terminology being developed in this thesis, that Rilke thinks the paradox of 'transcendence within immanence'.

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To argue in full that Heidegger, after "Being and Time", becomes increasingly concerned with thinking transcendence, against a Kantian background, would take much work, for which there is not space here. One would have to look in turn at each of the following as figures of transcendence in the later work: the Greek temple, the forest path, the region, the bridge, Earth, dwelling, the Event of appropriation, the speaking

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

of Language. Instead of looking at each of these, I shall focus on just two, that of the Greek temple and Language.

Much of the discussion in secondary texts around the figure of the Greek temple in “The Origin of the Work of Art” centres around the work of the Earth (die Erde). I shall be more concerned here to discuss the phenomenological import of the temple itself. That is, I want to develop the relation implicit in Heidegger between the built form of the temple and the bodies that look up to it or dwell within it. I will focus the following discussion in this way because I believe the transcendence at work in this figure is first of all phenomenological. As such, it is possible to determine the relations between transcendence and immanence at work in the figure. For instance, I will claim that the transcendence of the building in terms of its effects and affects on the body involves a certain power over the citizens. To begin, let us read the first two lines of the two paragraphs from “Der Ursprung” in question.

A building, a Greek temple, portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley.(Heidegger, 1993:167)

Heidegger gives us the most minimal context here for imagining the

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

circumstances of the temple. We might well want to ask: is that all there is, a temple in the middle of the valley? Or is the temple in the city, or at its outskirts? If so, why does Heidegger neglect to furnish more context here? Why the absence of, or absence of relation *to* the □□□□□? In not furnishing the fullness of the temple's context, Heidegger's thought becomes *apolitical*.<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of the argument here, let us assume that the temple is situated in an urban context. The text continues,

The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct through the open portico. (Ibid)

The assumption of an urban context begins to gather plausibility. Does Heidegger's temple not remind one of that most famous of Greek temples, the Parthenon, sheltering the goddess of the city Athena, high up on the sacred rocky edifice of the Acropolis? In Richard Sennett's book, "Flesh and Stone", a description of an imagined tour through ancient Athens further extends the figure Heidegger is sketching,

Leaving the agora by the Panathenaic Way, however, we would

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<sup>4</sup>This contrasts with another text written in the same year, the "Introduction to Metaphysics", where Heidegger thinks the polis as the historical place (*Geschichtsstätte*). He writes "To this place and scene of history belong the gods, the temples, the priests, the festivals, the games, the poets, the thinkers, the ruler, the council of elders, the assembly of the people, the army and the fleet."(1959:152)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

find the land begin to rise again, the route now ascending from the northwest below the walls of the Akropolis, the street culminating at the great entry house to the Akropolis, the Propylaea. Originally a fortress, by the early classical era the Akropolis hill had become exclusively a religious territory, a sacred preserve above the more diverse life in the agora. Aristotle believed this shift in space also made sense in terms of political changes in the city. In the *Politics*, he wrote, “A citadel [an akropolis] is suitable to oligarchy and one man rule, level ground to democracy.” Aristotle supposed an equal horizontal plane between citizens. Yet the most striking building up on the Akropolis, the Parthenon, declared the glory of the city itself. (Sennett, 1994:37-8)

The temple, although bearing in its position on the citadel the signs of a transcendent rule, of an oligarchy, does not in fact signify in such a way. In sheltering the goddess of the city, the vertical ordering of its height returns itself to the ground, to the ground of all becomings, all projects within the city. The temple never imposes itself as an external ordering upon the city, for the temple is an icon of the city itself. An apparent transcendence, of the temple rising above the horizontal plane, turns out to be the token and

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

symbol of immanence, of a reification of an internal order, in Sennett's imaginative reconstruction. The subject is however no longer Dasein but the building as emblem of the city. Therefore, the architectural, symbolic and perhaps ontologico- historical power of the temple, of the Parthenon, was a unificatory one. Hence Heidegger can write a few lines down,

It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being. The all- governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people. Only from and in this expanse does the nation first return to itself for the fulfillment of its vocation.(Heidegger, 1993:167).<sup>5</sup>

The temple is *the* exemplary monument and work, in the terms of the definition given above. The temple gathers the people below by imposing a fixed grounding principle and goal. The temple is the determinative background for all events that subsequently take place within its purview. The temple is, to borrow a phrase from the following chapter, 'more ancient

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<sup>5</sup>In the German, the 'historical people' is repeated in the following sentence in pronoun form. "Dieses geschichtlichen Volkes" stands, in the English translation, for both 'historical people' and the 'nation'.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

than thought'. But should we follow Heidegger in transferring the terms of a transcendental subjectivity from Dasein to the building? Should we follow him on a path which renders Dasein workless only at the price of installing work beyond the subject, on the rocks above? The suggestion that we should not can be developed in the following way. If we remain with my specification of Heidegger's temple as the Parthenon, this auto-presencing power of the temple to unite and unify the Athenians omits to mention other forces at work in unifying the people. For instance, the discourse of Athenian 'love of city', a love which, expressed erotically as *erastai*, prescribes a unification of desire and place. As Sennett writes,

This choreography of bodies in love shaped the behaviour appropriate to citizens of Athens. Indeed, in the Funeral Oration, Perikles urged that citizens "should fall in love with" the city, using the erotic term for lovers, *erastai* to express love for the city. Thucydides gave Perikles a phrase to speak here which was common parlance, other Athenians employing the sexual term *erastai* to indicate those who love the city..(Sennett, 1994:50)

In light of the fact that the unification of a people might be achieved by various means beyond the monumental, a question arises as to the primacy

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

of discourses and powers at work in the Athenian citizenry's sense of identity.<sup>6</sup> On what basis does Heidegger hold that it is the temple-work which first gathers the historical people circulating around it, for instance the Athenians beneath the Akropolis? Why donate and ascribe such a power to the architectural? Why lend silence to the prescriptive discourses of the day? Is it perhaps that the rustle of discourse can be hidden by being translated into a monumentalist theory of architecture? That the figure of the temple on the hill, which 'in itself' has no necessary unifying power (beyond a phenomenological ordering of a vertical element interrupting the planes of horizontal space) is being given a power beyond itself? For how can a temple resonate order and unity beyond itself outside of the context of discourse, the prescriptions of the day and so on? If we concur with Heidegger's neo-classical romancing of the stone, those subjected to the ordering force of the temple-work can no longer be considered as subjects. They do not resist the work of the temple with an *active synthesis* of their own.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Of course, the obvious 'Athenians' discounted here are all those not citizens. As Sennett notes, 'certainly throughout the classical era citizens comprised never more than 15 to 20 percent of the total population, or half the adult male population.' (1994:52)

<sup>7</sup> Heidegger is by no means alone in privileging the architectural figure of the temple of Athens. For instance, Le Corbusier writes the following, 'The Parthenon is, by definition, *the* great monument, meeting-place of all possible nuances. It is a true sculpture and not just a building. The number of 'optical corrections' due to its situation on a slope of the Acropolis, and to the intensity of the Attic

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

We are beginning to uncover the way in which the figure of the temple introduces transcendence into the text. In mentioning only the temple, as the paradigm perhaps of classical greek architecture, Heidegger omits to discuss other greek spaces. Why privilege the vertical space of the sacred, over the horizontal spaces at work below and around it? With Sennett, we can continue to explore the space of the polis, and visit the agora,

Those who could participate found in the agora many discrete and distinct activities occurring at once, rather than sheer chaos. There was religious dancing on the open flat ground, in a part of the agora called the orkhestra; banking took place at tables set out in the sun behind which the bankers sat facing their customers. Athenians celebrated religious rites out in the open, and within sacred ground such as a sanctuary called the “Twelve Gods” located just north of the orkhestra. Dining and dealing, gossiping and religious observance took place in the stoas, which in Periklean times lined the west and north sides of the agora..*The evolution of Athenian democracy shaped the surfaces and the volume of the agora, for the movement possible in simultaneous space served participatory democracy well.*[emphasis added here] By

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light, is manifold.’ “The Modulor” p209.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

strolling from group to group, a person could find out what was happening in the city and discuss it. The open space also invited casual participation in legal cases...In the open space of the agora the Athenians did their most serious political business: ostracism, or sending people into exile from the city...Orthos ruled bodily behaviour in the agora. A citizen sought to walk purposefully and as swiftly as he could through the swirl of other bodies; when he stood still, he made eye contact with strangers. Through such movement, posture, and body language, he sought to radiate personal composure.(Ibid:54-55 Emphasis added)

The agora then presented itself as the quintessential open space. It served as the paradigmatic exemplification of Aristotle's statement in the "Politics" that 'a city is composed of different kinds of men; similar people cannot bring a city into existence.'(Aristotle, 1968:310) In mentioning only the temple, Heidegger neglects to discuss the ways in which different bodies negotiate space, be it just the space of the temple or the space of the temple within the context of the urban. As I shall show in the final chapter, the difference between bodies is deeply significant in terms of the availability of the spaces thereby opened up or closed down.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

Within Athens, the agora, as the open space of difference, a place that encompasses both the sacred and the frivolous, the functional and the 'artistic', counterbalances the *erastai* at work in the temple, situated not only in space but also in discourse. As the last quote implies in the emphasised sentence, the Athenian bodies shaped the agora itself. The agora is henceforth a *chiasmic* place. The shaping movement in simultaneous space reduces any overarching symbolic power of the agora to that of the *site* for politics, the clearing for negotiation and transformation of the law and so on. In contrast to the temple-work as Heidegger would have it, the agora never transcended the movements and activities in space of those (the citizens) that used it. Rather, the agora occupies a middle ground, between an ordering spatio-ontological and phenomenological directive, within which bodies are determined (physically, symbolically and so on), and being wholly determined by those bodies and by discourse. And, to extend the argument, the same could be said of the temple itself, situated in discourse as well as in space.

The temple, as figured in the "The Origin of the Work of Art", shows, according to my argument, a privileging of the vertical over the horizontal. In a sense, particularly if we imagine the temple to be placed on a rocky outcrop above the city as in Athens, this accords with an ordering force at

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

work phenomenologically and symbolically in built and urban forms which emphasises the vertical over the horizontal. In this way one could *agree* with Heidegger that the temple's vertical presence effects and affects the bodies of those wandering beneath it, as mentioned above. Heidegger's 'mistake' or exaggeration is that he ontologises this symbolic and phenomenological ordering for the purposes of constructing a monumental historicity. Prior to this ontologisation, one can develop a phenomenology of the vertical and horizontal along the lines of John Lechte in the following passage,

Thus all forms of representation, symbolisation, signification, and homogeneity, all objectification- all transcendent elements, we shall say belong to the vertical axis, the axis of hierarchy and form, by contrast, we shall say that formlessness and flows, space without boundaries, the unrepresentable abjective elements- elements which are often immanent in the hierarchy of the vertical axis- these belong to the horizontal axis. Following Bataille, we can also note that, by comparison with the illumination of the vertical axis, the horizontal axis, as the axis of non-objectification, is also the one of obscurity and night, of fate and death, of silence, anonymity and absence.(Lechte, 1992:83)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

Lechte is here discussing the work of an Australian landscape painter. His text can nonetheless quite readily be generalised. We see in both Heidegger and Sennett moments which accord with the above schema. For instance the emanating light of the vertical is demonstrated by the way Heidegger stresses the temple's self illumination, as if not dependent upon the shining sun, 'The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, first brings to radiance the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night'.(1993:167-8)<sup>8</sup> In contrast, as a differentiated horizontal field, the agora would have been experienced as a relatively obscure place, where all the differences would have made it much harder to see what was going on. The vertical presence of the temple imposes itself phenomenologically and symbolically upon the body through the eye; its ordering takes place through the ocular register. Only thus can the temple establish itself as apart, as transcendent, as a symbolic imperative to the citizens to love their polis. Moreover, the vertical ascendancy of the built work is seen at a distance. Representation, symbolisation and transcendence therefore take place through the ocular affordance of action at a distance. In contrast, the open space of the agora refuses a purely ocular

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<sup>8</sup> A correspondence between verticality and illumination can be found in Vincent Scully's seminal work "The Earth, The Temple and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture", where the Parthenon is described as 'stretching and glowing' p176.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

reading to the bodies of those dwelling, banking, dancing and praying there. The horizontal plane introduces a hapticity, a contact space of proximate relations, denying the ocular power and pleasure of a panoptic survey. In the shadows beneath the temple, the rustle of discourse ebbs and flows with the passage of different bodies.

Readers will have noted, beyond its mention in the passage from Lechte above, the presence of Bataille in the ensuing development of the distinction between the horizontal and the vertical. Before passing on, it is appropriate here to make a short comment on Bataille's relation to built form. Bataille's explicit views on architecture are in a sense a generalisation of Heidegger's (at least during the thirties). In his short piece entitled "Architecture", he argues that *all* building involves monumentality, and all monuments impose power. He writes, "Thus the great monuments are raised up like dikes, opposing the logic of mastery and authority to every troubled element...[Monuments are] the true masters of the entire earth, grouping in their shadow the servile masses....it is under the form of cathedrals and palaces that the Church or State address and impose silence on the masses."<sup>9</sup> As Anthony Vidler writes, "for Bataille, it was the presence

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<sup>9</sup> The translation from the *Oeuvres Complètes* was taken from Anthony Vidler's "The Architectural Uncanny".

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

of architectural composition itself, underlying all the traditional arts, that signaled authority..”<sup>10</sup> This view of Bataille’s may seem to some to be overly pessimistic, if not a little paranoid. In response to his claims, I would suggest initially that the spatial figures Bataille has in mind are works of a transcendental kind. It must be left open how Bataille would respond to the notion and creation of a *workless* architecture, an architecture of the event.<sup>11</sup>

This difference between the vertical axis of ordering, clarity, panoptic pleasure and representation and the horizontal axis of obscurity, of an ocular aporetics, an invisibility, is narrativised in a short text of Michel de Certeau’s, where he describes a trip up a skyscraper in New York City,

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city’s grasp. One’s body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself

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<sup>10</sup> Anthony Vidler “The Architectural Uncanny” p136.

<sup>11</sup>Bernard Tschumi’s term for what I am calling a “workless architecture” explicitly opposes the monumental. Tschumi calls for and designs “eventmental” architecture. See Tschumi’s “Manhattan Transcripts”.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

any identity of authors or spectators...His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was “possessed” into a text that lies before one’s eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more..Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth, crowds that, though visible from on high, are themselves unable to see down below?(de Certeau, 1984:92)

The horizontal axis, of the streets of Manhattan, of the space of the agora, of all those obscure planes that reside below and across the auto-illumination of the vertical, resists the ocular survey of power and knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Below the solar eye of the temple, I contend that Heidegger neglected to tell a story of that which it cannot transcend, the invisible spect-actors within the city. Not only all those not privileged to absorb and repeat the discourse of erastai, the metics, the strangers, the non-citizens,

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<sup>12</sup>Paul Auster, in “The New York Trilogy” plays with the relationship between the horizontal axis of obscurity and a vertical axis of clarity. It is only by switching to a plan view of the pursued’s mysterious routes through Manhattan that the pursuer discovers how the former has been “writing” the

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

the slaves, but also those citizens moving outside of the unifying discourse of Athena enclosed and sheltered on high- the bankers with their eyes fixed firmly on the client and their backs to the temple, the dancers and merrymakers shaded by the stoas and so on. The temple discourse, rather than the temple-work [Das Tempel-werk], is that which attempts, in each enunciation of its prescriptive, to transcend and order the lives of those who dwell in the city. Each attempt is met with forms of resistance, invisibility. The horizontal.

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I shall now put forward an analogous argument in relation to Heidegger's thinking of language, looking especially again at "The Origins of the Work of Art" and at "..Poetically Man Dwells..". That is, I shall argue that Heidegger over-emphasises the *transcendence* of language in relation to its users. Language therefore becomes the source of wordly immanence. For Heidegger, language marks the productive limits (peras) of the world. Like the Greek temple discussed above, language installs a vertical ordering over the speech acts of those that make poetry of it, such that an active poetic reworking of the name by the poet is denied, just as an active synthesis or

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city.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

spacing by the embodied subject in the polis is denied. As I have just suggested, the transcendence of the subject, from Dasein's work towards the worklessness of space, which in "The Origin" essay slips into a form of monumentalism and returns to being a *work*, can be thought more openly in terms of a non-vertical play between the subject and the spaces of the external world. For instance, in the example being used the classical sites of function and multi-functionality of the city-state. In an analogous manner, the worklessness of language, which no one, least of all Heidegger, would deny, leads one away from conceiving of language according to a rationalised functionalism, language as the neutral conduit of data transmission. Language cannot be mastered, cannot therefore be thought of as the object of a transcendental category. Heidegger's error is again to exaggerate the claims of this insight; as I shall show, using and critiquing Michel Haar, this exaggeration undermines difference within language, and at the same time undermines the expression of difference within language on the part of its users.

Poetry, in particular the work of the 'greats' of modern Germany- Hölderlin, Trakl, George, Rilke, begins, with "The Basic Problems of

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

Phenomenology”<sup>13</sup>, to occupy Heidegger’s texts as a question for thinking. Heidegger spends much time attempting to place poetry [*dichtung*] and thinking in relation to each other. To investigate and discuss all the textual sites for this juncture would be a lengthy task, well beyond the scope of this section and the movement of its argument. What I will discuss however is the ontological power Heidegger ascribes to ‘great’ poetry, and try to explain the primordially of its work in the two texts mentioned above. This will lead in to my argument about Heidegger’s conception of poetry involving transcendence.

The claim of the ‘argument’ of “...Poetically Man Dwells...”, is that it is only through poetry that we can dwell. It is *essential* that in order to dwell, one dwells poetically. This relation between dwelling and the poetic is not a side issue for Heidegger, for by this stage in his thinking he holds that *dasein* is primordially a placial being, ‘..we are to think of what is called man’s existence by way of the nature of dwelling.’(Heidegger, 1971:215) Here we note the spatial resistance to a temporal grounding of *Dasein*. *Dasein*’s being-towards-death, the limit of its ecstatic temporal character, does not uproot the human from the places in which it dwells, as it does in “Being

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<sup>13</sup>Poetry begins, in this text, to disrupt the structure of ontic differences, between the *zuhanden* and *vorhanden* of “Being and Time”, with the extract from Rilke’s “The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge” and his description of the standing wall of a demolished house.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

and Time”.<sup>14</sup> And it is through the language of poetry that this resistance to the displacement of time takes place.

Heidegger’s first premise is that the possible poetics of dwelling opened by Hölderlin is issued in by thinking language differently. He characterises the prevailing conception as follows, ‘there rages round the earth an unbridled yet clever talking, writing and broadcasting of spoken words.’(Ibid) The words that circle the earth’s communications systems with ever increasing speed and quantity in the time of the planetary dominance of modern technology do not allow language itself to *say* anything. In Heidegger’s view, as man speaks, language recedes into silence. Language, far from being listened to by its speakers, is used solely as a medium of expression. Poetry becomes a redundant, unjustifiable distortion of the telos of an ideal communication within an ideal language. Language is modelled on morse code; it is equivalent to a series of blips and bleaps that convey information. Its materiality and resonance, its play, become aspects of fantasy for the idle.

This idea that language is to be valued insofar as it conveys information takes us far from the essence of what language says, for Heidegger. Just as the shrinkage of time and space in general in modernity gives the modern

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<sup>14</sup>As Heidegger writes later on in the text, “Only man dies- and indeed continually, so long as he stays on this earth, so long as he dwells.”(1971:222)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

subject the illusion that through the apparatus of modern technology one can be *nearer* to the world's worlding<sup>15</sup>, so too the structure of the ideal of perfect communication gives the modern subject the illusion that the epoch of planetary information transfer entails that we live in the time of the zenith of the power of the word. <sup>16</sup>At bottom, the modern conception of language is that it can be reduced to a transparent communicating medium. This conception Heidegger refuses, absolutely,

Man acts as though he were the shaper and master of language,  
while in fact language remains the master of man.(Ibid)

Heidegger thus begins to enact in the text his classic post- turn manouever: of reversing the accepted relation of the transcendental or ontological centrality and dominance of the subject in relation to that which it uses or occupies. He continues,

For strictly, it is language that speaks. Man first speaks when,  
and only when, he responds to language by listening to its  
appeal. Among all the appeals that we human beings, on our

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<sup>15</sup>In “The Thing”, Heidegger writes, “Yet the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance.”(1971:165)

<sup>16</sup>Perhaps Heidegger and Adorno draw no closer than this. In the “Dialectic of Enlightenment”, we find the following passage, “the more purely and transparently words communicate what is intended, the more impenetrable they become. The demythologization of language, taken as an element of the whole process of enlightenment, is a relapse into magic.” p164

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

part, may help to be voiced, language is the *highest* [emphasis added] and everywhere the first. Language beckons us, at first and then again at the end toward a thing's nature..the responding in which man authentically listens to the appeal of language is that which speaks in the element of poetry.(Ibid:216)

Let us note, without commenting for the moment, the work of the vertical in this passage. Now, in order to advance quickly into the heart of the text, let us ask this question: how does poetry speak the appeal of language? For Heidegger, poetry speaks language in the form of being a *measuring*. This measuring does not accord with the conventions of usage of the word however, it is a '*high* and special kind of measuring.'(Ibid:221-emphasis added). Heidegger insists that poetic measuring therefore cannot be a science. Poetry is a 'strange measure'(Ibid:223), 'certainly not a palpable stick or rod but in truth simpler to handle than they, provided our hands do not abruptly grasp but are guided by gestures befitting the measure here to be taken.'(Ibid).<sup>17</sup> Measure conventionally orders the movement from the known to the unknown<sup>18</sup>. In contrast, in Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin,

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<sup>17</sup>We shall be reminded of this distinction between grasping and befitting gestures shortly.

<sup>18</sup> "The Song of the Earth" p224

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

measure refuses to assimilate the measured into the order of the known, or to make equivalences. This refusal is confusingly referred to by Heidegger as 'the Same'. Measuring as the befitting gesture towards the Same refuses assimilation or equivalence; it measures the measured as *difference*. The Same measures 'the belonging together of what differs, through a gathering by way of the difference'(Ibid:218).

But what does poetry measure? Poetry measures the between of the heaven and earth, the *dimension* of the place of dwelling. For Heidegger, great poets are esteemed as mediating between gods and men. Such voices allow the gifts of the sacred to be expressed within the enigma of a speech that is not simply human all too human. One could say therefore that poets occupy the interspace formerly reserved for angels. Poetry is thus an unfolding singing of the ground of human existence; a ground that is less a foundation than an *interplay* between the sky and earth. Poets mediate between the sphere of immanence (what is known) and the transcendent, without collapsing each into the other. Thenceforth, as the 'measuring' of poetry refuses equivalence, both sky and earth manifest themselves as withdrawal or self-concealing. The sky and earth reveal themselves as the Unknown. The poet's measure taking allows Dasein to place his dwelling between the earth and sky. For instance, not poaching on either, the poet allows architects to

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

remain between. Therefore the words of the poet lay the way for all building upon the ground of existence. Before ontic building and construction of material structures, there must be, for a non-metaphysical existence beyond the current episteme, a primordial poetic building. Only by placing his dwelling *between* earth and sky, between immanence and transcendence, will *dasein* be able to build. 'Authentic building occurs so far as there are poets, such poets as take the measure for architecture.'(Ibid:227)

In spite of the rich enfolding of dwelling within poetry in the text, a curious insufficiency haunts "...Poetically Man Dwells..." The worklessness of poetic measure taking bears the mark of a hesitancy, a lack of determination. It bears the lack of a relation to *naming*. This lacuna can be expressed in the form of the following question: how do we mark the boundaries of the poet's *work* in terms of the unmasterable worklessness of language? For instance, in discussing the interspace between gods and mortals, a region Heidegger at times refers to as the 'dimension', he writes, 'We leave the nature of the dimension without a name.'(Ibid:220) But how can 'measure', taken in Heidegger's sense, avoid a relation to naming, if this measure-taking is a matter of the call of the poets? Is there not an implicit appeal to poetic naming in the following?:

But the poet calls all the brightness of the sights of the sky and

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

every sound of its courses and breezes into the singing word and there makes them shine and ring. The poet calls, in the sights of the sky, that which in its very self-disclosure causes the appearance of that which conceals itself, and indeed *as* that which conceals itself.(Ibid:225)

In other words, can we understand the poetic agency involved in this passage outside of what poets do with language? It is to other texts that we must look in order to clarify the poetic force of naming in Heidegger's conception of poetry. In "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger refers to the earth of language in terms of its naming power:

The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to grow, tones to sing, the word to say. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the brightening and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word.(Heidegger, 1993:171)

The earth of materiality has its corollary in language, that of *die Nennkraft des Wortes* (Heidegger, 1992:42). As Haar notes, this corollary must in a sense be

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

in fact more primordial than all other modes of ‘earth’, for all the others depend upon a prior naming of their appearance.<sup>19</sup> Naming in poetry discloses fundamentally the entity as an entity. Measuring the dimensional interplay between sky and earth henceforth depends upon their prior fundamental disclosure. Language, through naming, institutes things in their being. As Heidegger says, “Poetry is naming, which is the founder of being and of the essence of all things.”(Heidegger, 1951:148) Poetic naming is therefore the ground of the emergence of things in the world, ‘..language alone brings beings as beings into the open [die Offene] for the first time.’(Heidegger, 1993:198) ‘Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance.(Ibid).The thing does not exist prior to its being named, as if a Platonic primacy could be ascribed to the “signified”. Poetry has ontological significance in that through its naming power things are *gathered together* and *condensed* into the truth of being.<sup>20</sup> Against Heidegger, I hold that the emergence and appearance of the thing in language and being does not shine forth however with an equivalent self-illumination of the vertical, as with Heidegger’s rhapsody on the temple. Each time the work of the name institutes an entity in the emergence of its

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<sup>19</sup>Op.cit. p113.

<sup>20</sup>As Haar notes, “*Dichten* means, etymologically, “to condense”, “to thicken”, “to gather together..”(1984:98)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

being, the thing is called to appear in its self-concealing, *as* self-concealing. Poetry, in naming things in their emergence into the *world*, brings with it at the same time the withdrawal that is the earth, the primordial elementality that resists the lighting movement of the world. But poetry only does this through the work of poets. Thus the poet naming the sky allows the sky to appear as the foreign element, as that which resists being appropriated through the name as that which can be known.

However, it is important not to overstate the metaphysical prestige of being a poet. This power of the name does not constitute a *work*, in Agacinski's sense. It is not through the *kraft* of the poet that the name acquires its ontological significance. Naming, or taking measure in poetry does not then refer to the poet's subjective appropriation of the world according to an individuality of expression, according to his or her own *genius*.<sup>21</sup> The calling of the poet is first of all a *listening* to language. In this respect there is much of value in Heidegger's text. Heidegger thinks of this aural sensitivity in his work on Hölderlin as a listening to a primordial speech, an *Ursprache* (Heidegger, 1951:43). In other words, Heidegger privileges the work of the poet without recapitulating upon the poet's 'genius'. Prior to the

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<sup>21</sup>As Heidegger writes in "The Origin of the Work of Art", 'Modern subjectivism, to be sure, immediately misinterprets creation, taking it as the sovereign subject's performance of genius.' (1993:200)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

poem of the poet, language gathers itself in a primordial ordinary poem, the *Urdichtung* of language. Poetry itself, beyond that of which it names, carries with it its own earth, its own domain of silence and withdrawal. For Heidegger, the expression of the poetic word carries with it its own inexpressibility, what he calls language's "saying" and the appeal to listen to it.

This Heideggerian account of poeticising, of conceiving the activity of poetry thought in terms of a listening, raises a problem. This problem can be articulated in the following way: how do we actually account for the work of the poet? What does the poet actually *do*, in listening to language? As Haar asks,

Once again Heidegger says nothing about the "poetic art" or the artistic activity itself, seeming to forget that the poet necessarily *works* with language at the same time as "listening" to it. Following Heidegger, must one believe the poet is a *medium* who writes "under the influence," as though taking dictation from the sacred? (Haar, 1984:116)

Naming as taking measure, as letting the elements and things be in their emergence as the appearing of that which conceals itself, implies, for Heidegger, that the ground of that which names cannot be the subject in an

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

absolute sense. The poet no longer works, and yet is not workless. Heidegger subjects the relation of dominance between the subject and transcendence to an absolute reversal, as was shown above. Dasein is mastered by language, and not the other way round. If anything, the ground of naming is the sacred and secret primordial poem of language gathering itself, in a silent waiting for the poet. The naming of the interplay of sky and earth cannot be a naming *of and by the poet*, for then what is named would be measured according to a subjective appropriation, of poetic genius. In Heidegger's view the poet transcends the risk of grasping objectality only by returning that which is named to its earthly source within language. As Haar writes, '[naming] does not come about through a purely human labor but follows from a power of language.'(Ibid).

Heidegger does not, and cannot, according to the reversals that dominate his thinking after the turn, engage with the possibility of the poet's encounter with alterity, with naming as measure taking, outside of a return to the transcendence of language's silent primordial poem. Heidegger cannot think the middle-voiced agency of a worklessness in the present. The poet cannot listen and work with the transcendence of language beyond a return to the *Urdichtung* of language.

Notwithstanding his critical voice, Haar's weaving of Heidegger's thinking

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

with his own (a weaving that is often troublingly seamless) makes it possible to highlight the ‘transcendent’ nature of Heidegger’s post-turn conception of poetry. This transcendence is *bad* in the sense that it precludes the differences at work in language and the difference of the poet. Haar writes,

Poetic speech is not recomposed, reinvigorated, recreated language but language rediscovered in its initial simplicity.(Haar, 1984:117)

Here, Haar pointedly shows Heidegger’s thinking of poetry (and his own) in the light of its own conservative agenda. The poet, in naming and letting sing the things of the world in their emergence, must, through resorting to the transcendence of language, go back to its ‘initial simplicity’. Here we have the first denial of difference, the denial of the difference that poets make to language through their own difference.<sup>22</sup>Language in the poem cannot be about a encroaching inhabitation of the foreign, a minoritisation of language<sup>23</sup>, for what form of initial simplicity would that be? The transcendence of the silent poem speaks itself as an originary purity. Hence

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<sup>22</sup>This denial would presumably erase the possibility, for instance in the English language, of evaluating post-colonial literature and poetry.

<sup>23</sup>Here I refer to Deleuze and Guattari’s “A THOUSAND PLATEAUS” and the plateau called “November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics”, where the relation between the major and minoritisation (of language and in general) is unfolded. They write for instance, ‘Minor languages do not exist in themselves: they exist only in relation to a major language and are also investments of that language for the purpose of making it minor.’ (1988:105)

### Chapter 3: *The Architecture of the Subject*

a universality:

Every poem sings the accord- always the same, always changing- which at each moment traverses being-in-the-world in its entirety, modulating the difference between things and world, between earth and world.(Heidegger, 1984:114)

Despite the reference to the accord which is both the same and changing, the Heideggerian conception of the poem nonetheless inscribes the historical within itself as the entirety of being-in-the-world. There is no *other* world apart from the one which *suspends* all the other possible significances of the naming power of the word: the world *epoch* (= suspension) inaugurated by the 'great' poet. Thus the second denial of difference, the difference that other poets make to the world, shattering the possibility of a universal *In-der-Welt-sein*. This denial is therefore the denial of poetry thought of as a poetic  $\square\square\square\square\square\square$ , as a naming power always in conflict with itself across difference. Thus Haar can go on to write, in accord with Heidegger,

That things occur in the world, in the one true world, and saying a thing are strictly contemporaneous.(Haar, 1984:117)

This double denial, of the difference that poets can make, recomposing, reinvigorating, recreating, subverting, bastardising and above all *reworking* language, and of the difference of worlds opened up outside of the canon of

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

the 'greats', is at bottom a denial of the presence of conflict in naming the present. The transcendence of language opened up by Heidegger and Haar precisely avoids this conflict by universalising the power of naming through the transcendence of the subject. Thus what is 'strictly contemporaneous' in Haar's sense involves, somewhat paradoxically, an absolute denial of the presence of conflict in the present.

Measuring and naming for Heidegger ultimately reside beyond the subject and the work of the poet in the appropriating reserve of language. This transcendent location of the name fundamentally denies the differences within language and the world, as I have argued. The ground of language, through its relation to *Urdichtung*, turns out to be language itself. The transcendence of the subject, beyond the poet's *work*, leads to the assertion of the primacy of the work of language. On these terms, the transcendence of language (with 'of' here referring to language's property of being transcendent) reveals itself as another form of immanence. Any reference to the difference embodied in the speaker or poet must always be subsumed under a pious relation to the work of language itself.

The following question thus presents itself to Heidegger and Haar's conception of the poetic work of language: how can the name name, beyond subjective appropriation working according to a mastery of

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

language, beyond genius, in such a way that the work and difference of the subject is not discounted? The problem with both Heidegger and Haar's thinking concerning the work of poetry is that it is based on an oppositional logic of mastery and subservience. Within the terms of this logic, language must either be mastered by Dasein or master it. But it is possible to question the logic that leads to such a diremptive framework. We begin to ask again after the possibility of *transcendence within immanence*.

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This possibility may be read as an opening within the book "The Plural Event" by Andrew Benjamin. Benjamin wants to think the name beyond representation, beyond that is the name naming without reserve. The name would therefore be conceived beyond signification capture of the signified. This will allow him to open up a different way of thinking judgment, or rather of opening up judgment to the difference of the object. The paradigmatic thinker of representational naming for Benjamin is Rene Descartes. Benjamin quotes Descartes in the "Discourse on Method":

..there being only one truth of each thing, whoever finds it knows as much about it as can be known about it.(Benjamin, 1985:590)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

For Descartes, the object can be exhaustively ‘captured’ epistemologically through its representation as an idea. Consequently, judgment of that idea would involve its repetition as the same. Descartes thus claims that the *ding-an-sich* is available as an object of knowledge. Benjamin writes,

The ‘thing’ *qua* object must be - exist - such that it can be represented as itself and where the representation represents it in its entirety. (Ibid:56-56)

Within the terms of Descartes’ nomological ontology, naming the name thus fixes the object in its being. Naming becomes the designated site of the ontological, wherein the becoming of the object itself is refused. Representation (de)limits being.

Despite the epistemological totalisation of the object located in ‘Descartes’s Thing’, Benjamin uncovers with the French philosopher the opening to a different form of naming. This comes about because of the importance of *forgetting* and *destruction* in Descartes. Precisely because Descartes hopes to found the representation of the idea on its presence in absolute transparency to the subject, a founding that must actively forget the *given* as the gift of history, a reworking of the implicit destruction of the historical is made available. In other words, Descartes’ forgetting and destruction of the given’s historical character is used by Benjamin as the basis for the opening

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

to transformation of the given. How the given is given by history is open to be challenged precisely by forgetting that the given is historical. As Benjamin points out,

The significance [of the Cartesian beginning] lies in part in the fact that showing the latter allows for the redemption of the inherent potential of inauguration and destruction via their rearticulation or rethinking within repetition.(Ibid:58)

Using Descartes' notion of forgetting in this way, Benjamin, opens up a new way of forgetting, that of the object presenting itself as complex, non-totalisable, an 'anoriginal heterogeneity'(1993:59). The name's given, the gift of an ontologico-historical designation, is suspended in the present of reworking. Each time the naming of the object takes place, a rupture of the ascription of essence imposes itself. This rupture of forgetting opens the object up to the temporality of difference. Henceforth, Benjamin's "anoriginal naming" renders the conflation of naming and being impossible,

And yet the impossibility does not hinder the fact that the name names and in naming designates a specific moment which in never being able to be commensurate with the named allows, nonetheless, for the name's repetition beyond itself.(Ibid:184)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

The object's inadequation, disrupting the possibility of representation, leads to a rethinking of ontology itself. Benjamin's ontology of the name therefore opens up the being of becoming, or the becoming of being. Each naming names the object's *event*. A difference thus occurs each time the object is named differently, a difference of naming with the force of a necessity, given the necessary difference of each present of naming. The act and sedimentation of a prior naming (what Benjamin calls the 'pragma') is suspended and opened up to the expropriation of what is to come. The difference thus announced is that of the *ontological difference*. The name whose designation and signification is always in question through each act of naming itself is the site of a 'plural event'.

The conflict to appropriate the name is unending and yet the name is always appropriated and therefore inevitably taken over. What this necessity entails is that the difference between the name as taken over and the unending conflict over the name needs to be articulated in terms of two fundamentally different modes of being. In other words what is involved here is ontological difference. (Ibid:185)

For Benjamin, the presence of the object is a moment where what the name names becomes a matter of *conflict*. The name is *reworked* in the present of

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

naming; far from returning to Haar's 'initial simplicity', language becomes the site of □□□□□□□□, an *anoriginal complexity*.

Despite this all too brief survey of 'conflict naming' in "The Plural Event", it should be clear that Benjamin has offered a clear alternative to the Haarian and Heideggerian thinking of the name as outlined in my readings of "...Poetically Man Dwells..." and "The Origin of the Work of Art". The name allows both for the *work* of the writer or thinker or artist at the same time as allowing for the *transcendence* of the name's traditional gift itself. The name does not allude exhaustively to the vertical ordering of language, at the same time, the reworked creative act is no longer thought of as a possible act of *genius* emanating from the nocturnal angst of the poet. The name does not refer to the site of a singular essence. The essence becomes *plural*.

But this gesture against what we can call the 'bad transcendence of the originary' raises a question: does the 'conflict name' open up difference *within the present*, such that the present is complex not only in the sense of it being the site of a reworking, but also in the sense of the occlusions of alterity being at work in the space of the present itself? Is the present differential in terms of the order of co-existence, such that co-existence itself becomes differentiated? Is an 'anoriginal complexity' of the 'event - object' made available outside of the disruption of a historical tradition,

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

such that the aporias installed against totalisation are worked through the difference of the other? Does the other's voice interpellate the present naming here in the present, opening up different modes of being-in-the-world for dasein? Does the plural event announce the shattering of the one 'true world' beyond the plurality of a differential historicity? Or is the pluralisation of essence merely its complexification through the reworkings and ruptures of each present within a tradition? Can Benjamin account for the possibility of impossible worlds conflicting in their naming, such that the difference of the conflict lies beyond an intra-traditional spacing of the present?<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>A path beyond mere intra-traditional conflict naming is explicit in Derek Walcott's poem "Names". The poem describes and affirms a consciousness opposed to the naming power of the colonisers. Below is an extract which exemplifies both the description and the affirmation:

Their memory turned acid  
but the names held;  
Valencia glows  
with the lanterns of oranges,  
Mayaro's  
charred candelabra of cocoa.  
Being men, they could not live  
except they first presumed  
the right of every thing to be a noun.  
The African acquiesced,  
repeated, and changed them.

Listen my children, say:  
*moubain*: the hogplum,  
*cerise*: the wild cherry,  
*baie-la*: the bay,  
with the fresh green voices  
they were once themselves  
in the way the wind bends  
our natural inflections.. (Collected Poems p307)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

Whether or not Benjamin's construal of the plural event can accommodate such contestation in the simultaneous space of the present, I will argue now that it is possible to locate alterity in the naming space of the present not only as an opening but as an *actuality* in Descartes. In the Third Meditation, the idea of the infinite, which Descartes must introduce in order to establish a relation to God, indicates that the finite understanding can 'touch' the infinite or contemplate it. Here we come across, in explanation in one of his letters, the distinction between *touching* (the befitting gesture) and *grasping* mentioned above,

..just as we can touch a mountain but not put our arms around it. To grasp something is to embrace it in one's thought; to know something, it suffices to touch it with one's thought.(Descartes, 1986:32)<sup>25</sup>

One may thus touch the infinite without fully comprehending it. Descartes' argument in favour of touching the infinite is in fact stronger still. He argues that 'my perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself.'(Ibid:31) That is, all forms of

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<sup>25</sup>Here we can see Cezanne's workless working of Mont St.Victoire for all those years as the avowal of the impossibility of grasping, even if might say along with Merleau-Ponty that Cezanne, rather than touching the mountain with his *understanding*, touched it through the reversibilities of the flesh of the world. This transcendence of the understanding will be discussed in the next chapter.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

immanence are constituted on the basis of a transcendence they do not circumscribe or reduce.

It does not matter that I do not grasp the infinite, or that there are countless additional attributes of God which I cannot in any way grasp, and perhaps cannot even reach in my thought: for it is in the nature of the infinite not to be grasped by a finite being like myself. It is enough the I understand the infinite..'(Ibid:32)

In Levinas's words, 'The idea of the infinite consists in grasping the ungraspable while nevertheless guaranteeing its status as ungraspable.'<sup>26</sup> In resisting assimilation into the Same, into Ego or Representation, the alterity of the infinite imposes itself upon me as an interruption of my finitude. One does not so much encounter the infinite as much as be encountered by it.<sup>27</sup> The inadequation of the idea of God reverses the intentional structure of perception. Here we have another form of naming opening itself within Descartes' text, a naming that comes very close to the Heideggerian notion of 'measuring'. The difference would be that Descartes does not renounce,

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<sup>26</sup> "Transcendence and Height" (1996:19)

<sup>27</sup> I note in passing that here again, as in the first chapter, we return to a phenomenology of finitude that can replace the subjectivistic Being-towards-Death of the early Heidegger.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

as does Heidegger, the immanence of the subject that names, albeit that the former announces subjectivity in a subdued form of subjectivity: Descartes speaks of the ‘darkened intellect.’(Descartes:36) As Levinas says, ‘Descartes thought that by myself I could account for the sky and the sun despite all their magnificence.’(Levinas, 1996:15) He refers at this point to the very end of the Third Meditation, where Descartes pauses to contemplate God in the form of the ‘immense light’.

As Levinas will exploit in many of his texts, this opening to the inadequation of the infinite in Descartes, in Levinas’ words the transcendence of the face, allows for a naming of the other which is not simply a naming of *historical* difference. Although the other naming introduces itself necessarily in the form of a *difference in time*, this time may nonetheless be ‘co-existential’, in the sense that the present is the site of other namings outside of ‘the tradition’. Henceforth, the ‘time of the other’ may yet be the present, as the site of the conflict naming of that which is contested across difference. This plural event of the world’s worlding would therefore become open to the minoritisation of language, and, in the English language, a ‘post-colonial’ literature and poetry could be acknowledged as vitally significant. Allowing a specific language to become infinite therefore amounts to allowing it to become different to itself, uncanny, subverted and heterogenously stretched.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

I have drawn together as two instances of transcendence key figures in Heidegger's post-turn work which order the world by a sort of phenomenologico-ontological imposition. Heidegger himself makes the analogy in "The Origin",

The temple, in its standing there, first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves...The same holds for the linguistic work..it transforms the people's saying so that now every living word fights the battle, puts up for decision what is holy and unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flighty, what master and what slave. (Heidegger, 1993:168-9)

In both cases I have suggested different ways of looking at the same phenomena, ways which counter Heidegger's post-turn proclivity to think beyond subjectivism. This tendency leads, as I have maintained, a displacement of the subject, from Dasein and onto built space and language. The transcendence of Dasein therefore leads to the institution of immanence at a different level. In opposition to this manouver, I have argued that we can return to the *work* of the subject, that of the haptic resistance of the body beneath the architectural work in the temple figure,

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

and that of conflict naming in the case of the poetic work. This work, in being through and through a non-voluntaristic working with the exterior (of spacing, of language) is, to add to Agacinski's terms, a 'subjective worklessness'. Another name for this is transcendence within immanence.

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That Heidegger after his *Kehre* could not think what I term transcendence within immanence is perhaps most evident in his reading of Rilke. To finish this chapter, I will look briefly at how Heidegger reads Rilke as falling back into a metaphysics of privileging the transcendent subject. I agree with Haar that this reading ignores the evident interplay between the subject and object in Rilke. By concurring with Haar, and developing the defence of a 'non-metaphysical' Rilke by naming it as transcendence within immanence, I prepare the way for the arguments to come in the following chapter.

For a full and nuanced argumentation against Heidegger's reading I would recommend going to Haar's text. For brevity's sake here I will refer to just a few lines of Rilke:

*One* space extends through all beings: the inner space of the world. The birds fly through us...(Haar, 1984:126)

The basis of Heidegger's misreading for Haar is that wherever and

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

whenever Rilke refers to ‘the Open’, the ‘One space’ as above, the ‘Heart’, ‘pure perception’ and so on, Heidegger takes the poet to be subjecting a rhapsodisation of nature to an aggrandising domination by the subject.<sup>28</sup>Rilke’s poetry therefore becomes a sort of solipsistic pantheism, if that can be imagined. An appeal to modes of the natural is made, as far as Heidegger is concerned, only in order that Rilke can express his own displaced egologism. For Haar, the fault in this reading lies in the fact that it undervalues the *exteriority* at work in each of the terms. The subject opens onto and englobes a world which, by the very force of its ekstatic transcendence to the subject, disrupts an economy of pure interiority. As Haar writes,

It seems that in the Rilkean heart the antinomy between exterior and interior is not unilaterally entrenched, as

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<sup>28</sup>One of the key argumentative passages against Rilke in Heidegger’s corpus is to be found in his text “PARMENIDES”, in the eighth section, ‘The Significance of dis-closure.’ For instance, he writes,

Man comports himself everywhere to objects, ie., to what stands over and against him. This implies man himself is the “subject,” the being that, positing itself on itself, disposes of its objects and in that way secures them for itself. Rilke always thinks of man in the modern metaphysical sense. That current metaphysical conception of man is the presupposition for Rilke’s poetic attempt to interpret the essence of man in the sense of modern biological metaphysics. Man is the living being that, by way of representation, fastens upon objects and thus looks upon what is objective, and, in looking, orders objects, and in this ordering posits back upon himself the ordered as something mastered, as his possession.(1992;156) We may contrast this passage with what Rilke himself says, at the end of his short prose-piece “Concerning Landscape”. He writes, of the development of landscape art, “It tells us, that he [man] is placed amongst things like a thing, infinitely alone, and that all which is common to them both has withdrawn from things and men into the common depth, where the roots of all growth drink.” (1967:5)

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

Heidegger supposed, by the folding back on absolute interiority; rather, it is confronted and resolved by a new possibility for the I and the world to exchange their roles. Rilke does not celebrate the absorption of the world into the subject but the relativisation, indeed the inversion, of interiority...Far from the I being what absorbs the world, the world itself is endowed with interiority.(Ibid:125)

Haar invites the reader to witness the interpenetration of 'subjective' and 'objective' modes of being in the following lines from "The Spanish Trilogy",

Why must a man stand there like a shepherd,  
so exposed to the excess of influence,  
so much a part of this space full of events

.....

So he arises at night and the cry  
outside of the bird is already in his existence  
and he is emboldened because he has taken  
all the heavens into his face....

and the shadows of clouds

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

traversing him as would thoughts that space  
would think for him, slowly.

The outside, nature's exteriority, according to Haar's reading, no longer stands outside the subject as a 'pure exteriority'. The force of this 'no longer' would be the mark of a move beyond the metaphysics of subjectivity. The external world becomes part of the subject's 'affectivity of being.' Here in this phrase I am employing a double genitive: on the one hand exteriority manifests itself as an affect upon the subject's subjective being, on the other hand the interiority of the subject imposes itself upon 'being' as an affectivity. As Haar writes, 'Rilke recognises in the "inside" the characteristics of the "outside", and in the "outside" the powers of an "inside".'(Haar, 1984:126) Far from Rilke attempting to access the supreme interiority of all poetic experience of nature, as Heidegger's reading suggests, the poet is seen as engaging with the possibility that prior to subjective mastery or the capture into objective being, an experience of the world can be opened up whereby both 'subject' and 'object' poles can interchange with one another, at different moments inscribing each within the other. There is not simply a 'one-way movement' from objective being into the subjective. Rather, Rilke probes a moment prior to the cleft, a moment which opens on to an inversion of one into the other. In other words, Rilke's 'Heart'

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

expresses a chiasmic ontology, where Being is differentiated according to a fundamental ambiguity over what is inside and what outside.

Moving beyond Haar's reading, I contend that the reversibility at work in Rilke's poetry occupies all the levels of being. Beyond challenging the inevitability of a metaphysical dualism (precisely against Heidegger's reading), Rilke challenges a fixed conception of a disjunctive relation between space and time. For instance, in his poem "To Music", the obviously temporal nature of music in fact articulates our experience of space itself. The poem opens with

Music: breathing of statues. Perhaps:  
silence of paintings. You language where all language  
ends. You time  
standing vertically on the motion of mortal hearts. (Rilke,  
1982:147)

The temporal art of music announces itself in this elegaic poem as at the same time extra-temporal. Music articulates the space of experience and the experience of space. The deepest "within" of our experience is therefore always already ekstatic, and with the experience of music, the spatio-temporality of this ekstasis is emphasised.

..O you the transformation

### Chapter 3: *The Architecture of the Subject*

of feelings into what?—: into audible landscape.

You stranger: music. You heart space *in* us,

which, rising above us, forces its way out,-

[..]

when the innermost point in us stands

outside, as the most practiced distance, as the other

side of the air:

pure,

boundless,

no longer habitable.

I have shown, in this short end section, that Rilke, as the poet of reversibility, allows the fixed oppositions between subject and object, space and time, to fold into each other. But we may well ask: across what *medium* does this dual movement take place? What *third kind* interposes itself within ontology, in the manner of the □□□□ of the *Timaeus*?<sup>29</sup>

In this thesis, I will suggest that the site of this bridge between subjective

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

and objective being is *the body*. As was shown through Whitehead in the previous chapter, the spatio-temporality of the subject works through an ontology that is thoroughly somatocentric. We experience the flight of the birds not just as an ocular spectacle, but *through the body*. But what can this mean? Haar writes of ‘a fit of passion, of an ekstatic outburst, of “sympathy,” of a fluttering of wings that quivers though and beyond us in a space that gathers and envelops us.’(Haar, 1984:126) The body is no longer of subjective or objective being. How do we think this third level of being, how do we *place* the body? Should we think of the body as a place itself? Not space, not objectality, but the site prior to subjectivity and objectivity? But then, as “To Music” suggests, an ineradicable temporality, a temporisation of the *within*, inserts itself at the heart of our embodied experience. How do we think this time-space of embodiment?

Beyond the exegesis of the poetical that Haar provides, what is required is a thinking that matches it, a *denken* to correspond with this *dichtung*. For Rilke writes as a poet, and with this in mind it would be simply wrong to take issue with or concord with his thinking in purely philosophical terms. Rilke’s language cannot itself be mastered by reducing it within the terms of a philosophical argument. Rilke’s poetry ought not to be thought of as

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<sup>29</sup>See Plato’s “Timaeus” 49a.

### *Chapter 3: The Architecture of the Subject*

metaphysics by other means, for to reduce it thus would be to destroy its specificity within the German language. It is only by looking at the work of a thinker (whether wittingly or unwittingly) in sympathy with Rilke that we can think the basis of the body as the locus of reversibilities between subject and world. Only then can this inversion be thought phenomenologically. Once more, only then can the reversibility of space into time and time into space achieve conceptual coherence. Can this path lead to a thinking that incorporates phenomenological difference within the present? Transcendence within immanence as a phenomenology of the event, of the difference of the event? I turn towards the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Although Merleau-Ponty never (to my knowledge) wrote about or even cited Rilke in his work, the two are first of all entwined through a shared obsession: the work of Cezanne. A text has yet to be written on the philosophical background to this obsession: the phenomenological ontology expressed through the mountains and everyday objects of the French painter's oeuvre.