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Architecture as Metaphor: Language, Number, Money

Kojin Karatani, 1995

Architecture as Metaphor

Language, Number, Money



Kojin Karatani

translated by

Sabu Kohso

edited by

Michael Speaks

Second printing, 1997

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by Arata Isozaki vii

Translator's Remarks

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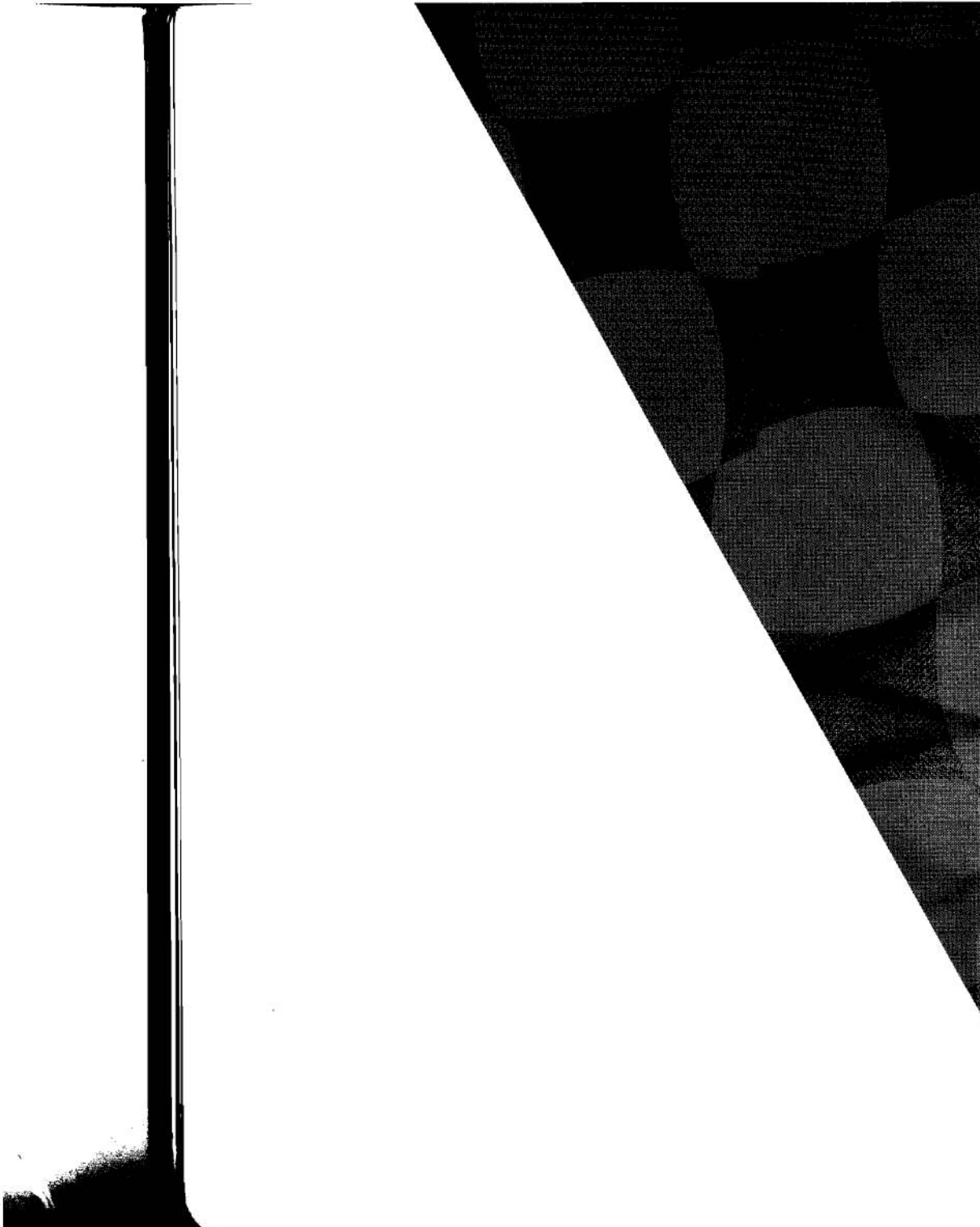
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Kojin Karatani began his career as a literary critic in Japan; both of his works so far translated into English, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* and the present volume, *Architecture as Metaphor*, were originally published in literary journals. Karatani once told me with a wry smile that the first editions of this book were displayed in the science/engineering section of some bookstores and took a while to be relocated into the literature/philosophy section. Even though his official status is "literary critic," he tackles issues from a broad spectrum of domains including philosophy, logic, political economy, cultural anthropology, sociology, and urban studies. I assume that bookshops having trouble categorizing *Architecture as Metaphor* might have placed it according to the title; architecture is often included in the science/engineering (rather than culture) section in Japan.

Introduction: A Map of Crises

In a roundabout way this episode sheds light on Karatani's idiosyncratic stance. He is totally indifferent to the territorialities of today's scholastic subjects, which, though categorized arbitrarily, nevertheless have ended up constructing their own ivory towers and forming immutable and untrespassable boundaries; his writing traverses these boundaries as if they never existed. Unlike many multidisciplinary generalists who travel the horizontal strata, he trans-

gresses categories by using his questioning to dig vertically through each domain while at the same time remaining within it. His procedure is consistent to the point of being violent; it is like a practice of pure radicalism. I cannot help but believe that he has a faith that some sort of original exists deep down. In *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, he attempts to reveal how the modern nation-state called Japan has been constructed as an aesthetic fiction by way of literature; he unearths "Japan" by elaborating conceptual devices such as landscape, interiority, confession, illness, childhood, and composition. Likewise, in *Architecture as Metaphor* he excavates architecture down to the depths where the original resides. This "architecture" of Karatani is irrelevant to the building-as-concrete-edifice that concerns architects and it cannot be located in the science/engineering section, despite the title. However, I believe that because of this very uncategorizability, Karatani's architecture will become an incentive for architects to rethink architecture in an alternative manner and will establish a strong rapport with architects themselves, particularly in today's climate where architectural discourses are confronting serious crises on all fronts. In this introduction I shall attempt to map the crises, and by so doing I hope to map how the role of architecture that Karatani extracts might be further contextualized.

Karatani treats architecture as a metaphor—that is, the will to construct—and as a system where various formalizations take place. In this sense architecture is the name of the mechanism through which the metaphysics that ground Western thought inevitably came into existence. In order to access this concept residing at the bottom he proceeds to critique Platonism and Marxism, to dismantle and tear apart the vulgarized "isms" into their original fragments of events. To per-

form the procedure, enter Gödel and Wittgenstein to play the role of conceptual device for dismemberment. In the end, Plato and Marx are extracted and stripped bare: Plato, who is obsessed with the "will to architecture, . . . attributed as it is to the weak," and Marx, in love with commodities that endlessly repeat their "fatal leap." Here I detect Karatani's deep sympathy for beings who are continuously compelled to engage in desperate communications with the other. This aspect of Karatani seems to me to be related to Gianni Vattimo's "weak thought" and Massimo Cacciari's "negative thought." When the architectural discourse distilled from this connection is introduced into the context of the worldwide crises of architecture, I believe it will begin to play an important role.

It is not so much that architecture is now in crisis, but rather that ever since it came to be named "modern architecture" it has been in constant crisis. My observation has been that crises recur in large waves at hundred-year intervals, and we are now at the beginning of the third wave. The first appeared in the late eighteenth century. Until then, all architectural discourses had revolved around Vitruvius's *Ten Books on Architecture*, and it is not too much to say that the work of the architect was meant to fill the margins of this Vitruvian writing, which assumed the status of a Book. It was believed to offer a foundation for architectural thought in the language of classicism—a role similar to that played by the Bible for religious thought.

The beginning of the crisis was signaled when architects' belief in the Book began to waver. The age of world travel had arrived, and knowledge about the different architectural styles of different civilizations—such as the Orient—had been introduced. As archaeological knowledge expanded, the features of prehistoric archi-

ecture gradually came into view. What shocked the architects of the time most was that the actual architecture of ancient Greece was different from the one described and regarded as the prototype in Vitruvius's Book. It became apparent that the classical world had actually been an enclosed entity and that numerous worlds with different senses of time and space had existed external to it. This also meant that the architectural norm presented by Vitruvius had not really been the one and only universal principle, but only one of many architectures; in this manner classical architectural language was inevitably relativized. To deal with this situation, architects dislodged the Book from the place it had once occupied, leaving a vacant position. Then, by picking up various architectural languages, they constructed a new paradigm of "projects"^v—both design and theory—which were to rewrite the margins of the Book and in effect form a "supplement." This supplement—what might be called "architectural writing"^v—produced as many "one and only" images as there were projects to fill the vacant position; however, no single image became the definitive one. And paradoxically, only upon the fulfillment of such a project could one qualify as an Architect. Later, this vacant position was institutionalized and came to be called Art. In the nineteenth century this institution was guaranteed by the state. Hegel called architecture the mother of all arts; architecture was deemed autonomous and inclusive of all other fields such as music, fine art, and theater performance. On the other hand, this Art that was being constituted with state support virtually formed a meta-concept beyond these divisions and became a superior social institution. Thereafter every single architect's project had to be acknowledged by reference to the concept of art; architecture became "Architecture as Art." The pattern of

practice wherein artists incessantly project their work into the vacant position was newly established in the modern period. In Karatani's speculation, this conceptual movement of art is similar to the movement of capital: it survives only by indefinitely postponing its end/settlement. And all of this is, after all, only an attempt to avoid the large wave by producing and manipulating small ones.

The concept of Art that supports architects' projects, however, was frail, and the Book of Vitruvius had to be constantly invoked. Furthermore, after the concept of Art became a state institution, it began to be oppressive. It was at this moment that utopia was summoned to inspire a positive prospect for the vacant position. Utopia is literally a place of nowhere; however, ideal images and progressive movements can be projected onto it. In order to induce utopia to ascend to the vacant position, Art, the erstwhile occupant, had to be removed: this marked the advent of the second crisis of architecture in the late nineteenth century. Gottfried Semper, Otto Wagner, and Adolf Loos proposed a new strategy to overcome the crisis—to attack the institution of art with architectural discourses and end the marriage of art and architecture. In their methodological procedure, building is analytically decomposed into four elements that are then reorganized according to "necessity." This process deprives architecture of all excess decoration and reduces it to a skeletal structure, stating above all else that architecture has nothing to do with art and should only be construction. The problematic of "Architecture as Construction" was thus acknowledged as the orientation to overcome the second crisis.

Architects reread this necessity-oriented methodology as the way to construct a utopia. Here, architectural writings as projects were focused on constructing archi-

ecture as utilitarian entities and accelerating the progressive movement toward utopia. There was a logical contradiction inherent in this avant-garde movement: although utopia technically exists nowhere, only projects that presented a concrete image of utopia were approved. Moreover, as soon as a visualized image is presented it becomes socially actual and should no longer, by definition, be called utopia, and yet it is still "utopian" because it is unrealizable inasmuch as it contains socially unbuildable conditions. After the mid-twentieth century, modernism began to encircle the world and the architectural and urban images once projected as utopian began to fill real space. In the 1960s this reached a saturation point; utopia was, ironically, realized. That is to say that the original utopia vanished and the avant-garde movements progressing toward it were inevitably terminated. The cultural revolutions in 1968 marked the date; since then, architects have been left with a "loss of subject" — the disappearance of the grand narrative. This should be deemed a new kind of crisis, the one in which we are living today — the third wave.

My book *The Dissolution of Architecture* (1975) was an attempt to survey these crises; it was planned as I sensed the commencement of this latest one. It scrutinized the syndrome in which, after the disappearance of utopia, architects would lose the *telos* that had provided their subjects, and proposed that the real subject should be "the absence of subject." Thus, while I began to restructure architectural design as a fabric of quotations, I also began to think that the concept of Architecture with a capital A still existed somewhere behind the textuality that allowed the quotation and that it was necessary to locate its binding power. In the West, where the concept of Art with a capital A had already been placed in the central category of cultural domains, Architecture

was encouraged to join. Thus in the West the two—Art and Architecture—were once closely identified, but it subsequently became apparent that Architecture as Construction — the utopian project—had supplanted Architecture as Art. In contrast, in Japan architectural problematics could never have arisen in the same way. A firmly rooted tradition regards art as no more than a decoration of everyday life. The modern belief that a building is constructed as a "project" has never been acknowledged. It is precisely this tendency that allowed the sudden blossoming of the peculiar postmodernism of the 1980s. There was (and still is) a lack of criticality; buildings and cities were composed recklessly only by a textuality without subject. In Japan, from the beginning, Architecture with a capital A never existed.

When Karatani's *Architecture as Metaphor* was published in Japan, I was extremely interested in the fact that this book located the place of Architecture, the presence I felt behind textuality; and then I was struck by the procedures it uses to deconstruct the processes through which architecture is employed as metaphor. I think that *Architecture as Metaphor*, rather than remaining just a title, will begin to function as a double metaphor for architecture today: while it is still burdened with its old metaphorical power, it is now confronting the new crisis and oriented toward an unforeseen problematic formation. In this book, the logical scheme of how Architecture with a capital A can collapse is breathtakingly staged.

The work named "Kojin Karatani" continues to be produced in Japan, on a solitary island, by this figure of singular being, *der Einzige*. The place is always enclosed by its peculiar conditions, which are totally different from those of the West. In Japan, as Karatani himself claims, one has to play a double role to be fully critical;

this situation is not unfamiliar to me, as my work is framed by a double set of constraints as well. We have to engage in the critique of Japan, and also of the world outside. If one cannot fully construct the double-faceted stance, one's work will never escape the confines of the solitary island. In this work of Karatani, one of the key concepts is the intercourse with the exterior space, which, I believe, derives from his decision to engage in a permanent struggle with the enclosure called Japan.

As the twentieth century comes to a close, the whereabouts of the architectural crisis are becoming clearer. That is to say that after the disappearance of utopia, architecture stripped bare is being rediscovered in the place utopia used to be. Now the postutopian critique of architecture is paving the way for the extension of problematics into different dimensions. As for recent works confronting this new phase, I can think of Denis Hollier's *Against Architecture* and Mark Wigley's *Derrida's Haunt: The Architecture of Deconstruction*. The former criticizes Architecture as an anthropomorphic system with reference to Bataille, and the latter dissects the concept of Architecture hiding behind quotidian thinking through the analysis of Derrida. Karatani's *Architecture as Metaphor*, though it descends from a totally different lineage, attempts to directly grasp the core of the same crisis by a tireless retrospection of the origin. After weathering the first two waves that have arrived in hundred-year cycles—first with Architecture as Art and then with Architecture as Construction—it seems to me that *Architecture as Metaphor* points out a way to overcome our present crisis.

Arata Isozaki

On the English Edition of *Architecture as Metaphor*

Architecture as Metaphor is Karatani's most resolute attempt to confront the metaphysical mechanism that has tacitly normalized the intellectual practices of the West ever since Plato's time. By an exhaustive analysis of the ways in which architecture as metaphor pervades our thinking in various domains—philosophy, literature, city planning, linguistics, cultural anthropology, political economy, psychoanalysis, and mathematics—this book means to undermine the overcharged and even perverse constraining power of the figure of "architecture as metaphor."

There are five major essays that follow the same line of pursuit: "Marx: The Center of His Possibilities" (1974); "Introspection and Retrospection" (1980); "Architecture as Metaphor" (1981); "Language, Number, Money" (1983); and "Researches" (1985–present); all were later published in collections of essays of the same title, except for "Language, Number, Money," which was included in *Introspection and Retrospection* (1985), and "Researches," which was published in two parts (*Researches I* [1986] and *II* [1989]).

In his essay published as a postscript to *Introspection and Retrospection*, Akira Asada spoke of the three central essays in this series in terms of "A Document of Wars" or, more particularly, "a

Translator's Remarks

document of battles lost." According to Asada, this work is an attempt to "escape the enclosed sphere of metaphysics, . . . but not by relying on a specific rhetoric within a restricted domain, like, for instance, the strategy of Derrida." Instead it is executed "in a more general field which opens itself up by penetrating through every discipline." Asada continues:

[It would be] unlikely if such a reckless, direct confrontation with the largest and strongest enemy would win an immediate success; on the contrary, the march is full of obstacles—no sooner does it seem to progress than a moment of stagnation arrives. The same approach is repeated time and again with only slight strategical shifts in nuance; as soon as a new escape route is discovered, it has to be abandoned. Repeating these countless flights, the author tirelessly restarts his assault from ever-changing positions, and it is this incredible endurance that gives the book an almost tragic shine.

Indeed, Karatani's decade-long struggle cannot be adequately described in terms of the autonomous performance of text as such, but more as relentless waves of battle that record their own strategic displacements and weave themselves into a production. Karatani himself has spoken about the nature of his approach during this period:

I deliberately attempted to entrap myself "within." In this process, I strictly forbade myself to assume either of two attitudes: on one hand, I determined not to presuppose exteriority as something that exists substantively, because exteriority, once grasped as such, is already internal. . . . At the same time I decided not to deal with this issue "poetically," because it is the last possible recourse—a common and indulgent trick. I tried to speak as rigorously as I could in order to block every possible way of sneaking out of formalization.

This double-bind caused me a great deal of difficulty; however, I voluntarily chose this severely restricted and minimalist path in order to give the coup de grâce to ambiguous and inconsistent discourses once and for all. Consequently, at least I can now acknowledge to myself that I have done everything possible by methods that were initiated by "introspection." *Language, Number, Money* was supposed to encompass all my attempts of the previous decade, but the crisis this produced was so serious—it struck me so severely, both mentally and physically—that I had to give it up.

Indicated as it is in the subtitle for the present book, something radical of "Language, Number, Money" is inscribed herein. Indeed, the book absorbs some aspects of all the aforementioned essays: parts one and two correspond to the works previous to "Researches," and part three embodies some aspects of *Researches I*.

By Karatani's own admission, "Researches" marked a decisive turn. It functions as a fundamental critique of his previous work. Nevertheless, it should not be seen as something conclusive, because in a sense it is a reexamination of the views that were already presented, albeit rather more intuitively, in the first work of the group, *Mam: The Center of His Possibilities*. In this sense, notions of "development" or "synthesis" might not elucidate the actual intertextual movements that occur.

Finally, in a number of ways, this edition is a totally new book that has its own peculiar integrity, independent of any of the above, and it is unique in that it bridges the work prior to and including "Researches."

Karatani's Critique

Ever since he published his first work in 1969 at the age of 27, Karatani has operated in a domain that can provisionally be called "criticism." In Japan he is known as a

literary critic, and with the publication in English of *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Duke University Press, 1993), he has been officially introduced as a scholar of literature in the American context. However, as one might notice in his approach in *Origins*, "literature" (*bungaku*) for Karatani amounts to the critique of the philosophical problematics that reside at the core of discursive events; his role in Japan's contemporary intellectual scene in fact extends beyond the literary circle. He calls himself a critic—but not in the sense of one who judges the value of oeuvres in a specific genre; it is more as an independent critical mind that engages "transcendentally" in the mechanisms of discursive historicity, penetrating a multitude of domains. Karatani's approach corresponds to Paul de Man's "language-centered" assessment of philosophy in its concentrated formalization, yet he also persists in the will to expand the critique of formalization to the larger power field (*discours*) to detect the omnipresent nexus of architecture as a metaphor.

In the introduction to this book, Arata Isozaki mentions Karatani's idiosyncratic tendency to traverse various academic genres: "He transgresses categories by using his questioning to dig vertically through each domain while at the same time remaining within it." The fragmentary nature of this book is attributable to this approach: each chapter deals with a different disciplinary framework, yet separately and together they are all devised to detect the mechanism of the metaphor. Karatani's voice refuses to be directed toward and consumed by a circle of specialists. In his practice the identity of the intended reader is itself questioned and radically dislodged as he attempts to undo the entrapping mechanisms of the normative coding that fosters an enclosed communality where voices tend to be absorbed

into the homogeneous black hole. This distantiating of his voice might not have come about so deliberately if it had been totally detached from the geopolitical conditions emphatically witnessed in Japan, yet it is clear that his work cannot be illuminated merely by scrutinizing its "Japan-ness" either.

Rather than constructing an alternative "community" model for a better future as such, Karatani's tactic is to concentrate on the critical practices that attempt to reveal what one might call a bare eventuality in the "social" problematics, which—though repressed within the inversive nature of discourse—can never be dissolved or sublated. Rather, it is this very eventuality, which is omitted from the foundation of knowledge, that forms the most ubiquitous condition of our communication; it is something that we live with (though without being aware of) and hence cannot touch upon; it is an absolute exteriority that nevertheless binds our mode of existence (from within). Karatani's work unfolds—though only for an instant as sharp and intense as a lightning strike—the possibility of a consciousness of this impossible mechanism that constantly swerves away from ideational and structural encoding.

Karatani approaches the aporia in the entangled rapport between the eventuality and the becoming of our discourses in a number of ways. His analytical procedure somewhat approximates the Nietzschean genealogy that reveals the perversity inherent in causality, but the idiosyncrasy of Karatani's "genealogy" lies in its trajectory along the phenomenological critique of *Inexistenz*. Inasmuch as any cognitive process actually begins with (and proceeds along with) our consciousness, regardless of whether in the end the consciousness discovers itself as an effect or an agent for something else, the analysis has no other choice than to be **primari-**

ly "introspective." Karatani's methodology of "genealogical retrospection" thus persists in providing a way of introspection in a Husserlian manner rather than directly approaching its objects, for example "discourses" or "archives."

Karatani has discussed the intricate reciprocity between introspective and retrospective drives in the actual critical practices of Nietzsche and Husserl. These passages are taken from the author's foreword to *Introduction and Introduction* (1980):

In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche stresses the danger of the consciousness directly questioning consciousness and cautions us rather to question "the body and physiology as the starting point." Yet the purport of his method is not to explicate the becoming of consciousness by means of the external fact of consciousness, for such an external and objective fact is not the cause, but rather something that is discovered as an effect of consciousness itself; in other words, this notion of external and objective fact has already been netted by "consciousness." Instead of directly questioning consciousness, Nietzsche's "questioning the body" amounts to nothing more than a tactic of continually making a detour around the "danger" of "direct questioning of the subject about subject," yet at the same time it does just that. Indeed, what is of crucial importance here is not what Nietzsche illuminated with his question but rather the way he questions, or the nature of the problematic that makes this manner of questioning inevitable. His retrospective queries might be called philology or genealogy, though they are far from philology or genealogy as commonly understood. In Nietzsche, retrospection is never done along the external factuality—biological, physical, historical; it can be done only within introspection and, at the same time, as a rejection of introspection.

Husserlian phenomenology is the most sophisticated and extreme form of "consciousness directly questioning consciousness"; nevertheless it is not exempted from the "danger" that Nietzsche points out, because Husserl's introspective retrospection that persisted up to the advent of body could never be extricated from its teleological framework. The retrospection in Nietzsche is, on the one hand, a phenomenological retrospection, and, on the other, exists as something that reverses each teleological posture inherent in the retrospection, one by one. Nietzsche's proposition of "questioning the body" must be seen as such. The word "questioning" implies that it is an introspective/reductive query; simultaneously, though, it must be noted that what is "questioned" is not the "consciousness" but the "body." "Body" in this context is not that which is yielded as an end result of the phenomenological reduction, but, conversely, that which rejects the introspective evidence within the reduction. Therefore, the phrase "questioning the body" is a metaphor. It is simultaneously both a phenomenological retrospection and the disorganization of the teleological conformity that enables such retrospection.

What is more, Karatani's reading of Marx has a great deal to do with this analytical procedure:

Marx's so-called "dialectics" in *Capital* does in a peculiar way describe what retrospectively reveals the inversion—fabrication of necessity out of contingency—entailed in Hegelian categorizations; it detects this mechanism, case by case, one by one, whenever a becoming of a category occurs. In other words, following the line of Hegelian thought. In other words, the dynamics of *Capital* that it constructs; problematic in the mode of Hegel and the same time deconstructs them, since there is indeed no possibility of executing a "critique" of Hegel.

What is at stake here is the “this” in “this I” and not the consciousness, I. Therefore, instead of saying that “this I” has been omitted from the philosophical discourse, one could put it in another way; that “this thing” has been omitted from the philosophical discourse. For instance, when I say “this dog,” it does not indicate a particular one among the genus *Canis* (in general). The “this-ness of this dog named Taro has nothing to do with its features and characteristics. It is simply “this dog.”

I will call the “this-ness of “this I” or “this dog” *singularity*, to distinguish it from *particularity*. *Singularity*, as explained later, does not mean that a thing is only one. Singularity, as opposed to particularity—that is, an individuality seen from a position of generality—is an individuality no longer able to belong to the realm of generality. We must distinguish (1) “I am” from (2) “this I am”: the “I” in (1) is one (a particular) of the I’s in general, pertinent to any one of the I’s, but the “I” in (2) is *singular*, irreplaceable by any other I. Of course, it does not mean in the least that “this I” is too special to be replaced. Therefore, “this I” or “this dog,” even without any special characteristics, is still *singular*.

There is no doubt that Karatani persists in the existentialist problematization of singularity in the vein of Max Stirner and Søren Kierkegaard; at the same time, however, his course of pursuit is distanced from their “introspection” by means of the inversion. First, his discussion takes a cue from “singularity” in the mathematical sense—the point that cannot be differentiated; in Leibnizian monadology/differentiation, when an individual expresses generality, singularity implies “this individuality” in the individual as disconnected from generality; in other words, this point (monad) is singular, rather than particular. “This” as singularity is not a simple demonstrative, but actually indicates “none-other-than-this”—meaning that “it happens to be this way,

In Karatani’s epistemology, Marx’s engagement in the field of Hegelian construction corresponds to the way Nietzsche’s “genealogy” can be applied to Husserlian introspection: both Nietzsche and Marx are seen as critiques—Marx to Hegelian phenomenology and Nietzsche to Husserlian phenomenology. Thus Karatani’s genealogy can be seen as Marxian as well as Nietzschean. The formalization (introspection) and its critique, if seen from the macro level, are actually links in a chain of events between his sequential approaches, as we have seen in the relationship of his works pre- and post-“Researches.” This English edition of *Architecture as Metaphor* thus shares the structure that “formalization” precedes (parts one and two), and meta-critique follows (part three).

On Karatani’s Singularity

One of the terms that stands out in part three is *tanzokusei*—“singularity.” *Researches II* (1989) opens with an essay entitled “Singularity and Particularity,” in which Karatani begins his demonstration with a personal recollection:

Ever since I started reading philosophy in my teens, I always have felt that “this I” was missing in what I read. Regardless of the way it is presented—subject, existence, human being, and the like—philosophical discourses invariably deal with the “I” in general terms. The “I” is nothing other than something attributable to the millions of persons to which “this I” does not belong. Therein lies the reason for my never being able to familiarize myself with philosophy, and why I always felt alienated from it.

However, my concern was not about “me” and it does not imply that “this I” is special. I am not special. I know how common I am and yet “this I” feels “am not anyone else.”

though it could have been other ways." At this point, the theory of modality (possible worlds) must be introduced, for it is in such a context that Karatani treats singularity as the problematic of proper names, somewhat as Saul Kripke does. He stresses that the singularity that is distinct from particularity is inseparable from the proper name.

What must be noted, however, is the complexity of the procedure he uses to deal with the singularity problem: on the one hand, he shifts the existentialist discussion of singularity to the **problematic** of the proper name; on the other, he further attempts to reintroduce the existentialist **problematic** into the discussion of proper name. It is clearly by way of this maneuver that his term "social" appears with its twofold connotation that must be understood as distinct from Kripke's notion of precedence of community. Karatani's "sociality" apparently subsumes the Kierkegaardian "leap." Or, it is Karatani who reads the **Marxian** "social" with a nuance that exposes its uncontrollable eventuality.

Therefore, even though he was inspired by these ideas of singularity and also by those of Gilles Deleuze, his position diverges from those of Western philosophers in its unique materialism that grasps singularity as an eventuality of the proper name that can never be internalized within any monistic concept. Instead of positing it in a realm totally separate and opposite from the "social"—rather than including it in the idealist common essence or the existentialist subject—he stresses that it is this singularity that reveals "sociality." As discussed in the book, classical economics finds the "common essence" (objectified labor-time) within every commodity/individual, and therefore each individual is treated as the **particularized** general; it follows that the "crisis" inherent in exchange is ignored, or rather, the

exchange as an event is itself omitted. In actuality, however, two different commodities are deemed to share a "common essence" simply as a result of the event of exchange (equation) that has factually occurred; classical economics confuses the effect with the cause inversely. It is in response to this point that Karatani interjects "**Marxian** genealogy." To paraphrase Karatani, what Marx called "social" is the exchange/communication as a "fatal leap (*salto mortale*)" that cannot presuppose communality, and this sociality is inseparable from the fact that each commodity or individual is in essence a singular existence that is by no means ascribable to generality.

Karatani extracts the eventuality of a number of forms in various discursive contexts in order to shed light on this blank—the non-knowledge—in our social practices/speculations; it can never be coherently described, but only expressed ultimately in the form of a risk, a bet, or a leap; otherwise, it will only be fictively constructed *ex post facto*. Karatani's stance toward "this" is projected, most crucially, as a critique of metaphysics. He calls this position "philosophy of speculation," if not speculative philosophy.

In part three, terms such as "community," "society," and "intercrossing space (*Verkehrsraum*)" stand out. These concepts are inseparable from the aforementioned "sociality": as opposed to a communal space where common rules for exchange are shared, in the social space "in between" communities no common rules can be presupposed in principle. What is more, as Karatani stresses, in our ordinary situations it is fundamental rather than anomalous to form the "secular tragedy." Therefore, in the manner of the "genealogical retrospection" or "**Marxian** genealogy," Karatani reverses the order of the sociological method, which generally starts from the community model and then discusses the

relation with the exterior afterward. He goes on to say that individual communities are just like islands that float on the ocean of intercrossing space. The paragraph that follows tells how the social, intercrossing space can be hypothetically extracted; it is quoted from *Researches II*.

Our hypothesis would first suppose an "intercrossing space" that completely lacks the division of interior and exterior, and then consider that communities formed their "interiors" as if each of them folded themselves inwardly here and there on the otherwise indivisible space. This space has existed since the pre-community stage and persists to this day; at present, mediated by money, it forms a network of global relations that are incessantly organized, disorganized, and reorganized. This "intercrossing space" is a transnational movement that individual communities (nation-states) can by no means partition; even though every single community is totally dependent on the space, it never gives up its obsessive attempt to segregate itself in order to sustain the identity of its own "interiority."

Soon after this passage, the author stresses a way to define the "community" so that it can be amplified to include any space that produces and sustains "interiority" and "exteriority." Indeed, this mechanism can be observed in a number of senses in various entities from the nation-state to the individual.

A Few Issues Concerning the Translation

The translation of Japanese contemporary theory into English inexorably involves some complications due to the peculiar position of Japanese vis-à-vis Western languages. When, for instance, the German noun that Marx used — *Naturwüchsigkeit* — is translated into English, it is most often as "spontaneous." In German, however, *Spontaneität* also exists — Rosa Luxemburg

used it to oppose Leninist centralism. It must be noted that Marx deliberately applied *Naturwüchsigkeit* to avoid the deistic (predetermined harmonious) nuances *Spontaneität* implies. On the other hand, *Natumiichsigkeit* is sometimes translated as "naturally grown" or "grown naturally"; neither sustains the noun form as in the German original. This does not seem to be caused so much by a projection of the translators' intention as by a predetermination of the structure of the English language. In contrast, the Japanese translation of the term — *shizen-seicho-sei* — sustains the form of a noun, which more closely corresponds to the German original both literally and structurally. Despite the closer kinship between English and German, Japanese and German share the aspect that a neologism can be produced rather freely by compounding morphemes. In the context of Karatani's reading of Marx, this conceptualization of *Natumiichsigkeit* as one word is crucial; therefore I kept the German term except in the first appearance where "grown-by-nature-ness" is used.

For Karatani's reading of Marx, the first edition of *Capital* is indispensable. The author pays utmost attention to an expression found only in this particular version that implies the same sort of paradox as the one that accompanies the necessary collapse of Russellian logical typing. It could be said that it was Karatani, together with the economist Katsuhito Iwai, who discovered this correspondence between Marxian and mathematical problematics. This reading of Marx had an enormous impact on the Japanese intellectual scene in the early 1980s. The existence of the English translation of this particular version of *Capital* was pointed out to me by Mr. Iwai (it is found in *Values: Studies by Marx*, edited by A. Dragstead, New Park Publications, London, 1976); in any event, it seems that there have not been

discussions exclusively on this particular *lecture* of Marx in the American context.

The transcoding of concepts/translation of texts— as exemplified in *Naturwüchsigkeit*, for instance— whether directed from Europe to Japan or to the United States, has different impacts and results according to each context. Now, in the course of the translation of a book such as this, not only the book itself but also these different metamorphoses of European concepts—the subconscious of the book—have begun to crash over the Pacific Ocean, as if closing the cycle that started in Europe and then split toward the East and West.

As a response to the long history of exportation of intellectual products from Europe and America to Japan, the new lines of intercourse yet to be developed and challenged—especially in the realm of theoretical works—are those from Japan, and more widely from the Far East. In contrast, the situation between Europe and America, spanning the Atlantic Ocean, has been slightly different: mutual intellectual exchanges have already been active among English-language, German, and French philosophies. John Rajchman described the exchange that occurred during the 1980s over the Atlantic Ocean in terms of a "translation without a master," where, unlike in the conventional situation of translation, we can no longer assume a basis provided by a voice of a master on either side (translating or translated) that regulates the canonical measure to judge the final destination of what is translated. He describes its characteristics:

This lack of mastery, this freedom might be contrasted with, and used to analyze, two other situations or images of translation: that of *fidelity*, where the other is the master and the

problem is one of identification with his words; and that of charity, where one can't help being oneself the master, and the problem is the altruistic one of knowing what should be, or should have been, good or true for the other. For it is the freedom of translation that allows us to discern the obsessional side of fidelity (no other set of words can ever be adequate to that of the master) and the autistic side of charity (nothing in the words of the other can alter the basic representations one used to identify oneself). Conversely, translation without a master would be the art of breaking with those with whom one nevertheless identifies, while exposing oneself to the singularities of those one nevertheless tries to understand.

The "translation without a master"ⁿ—this radically new condition of exchange—is reminiscent of the "asymmetric relation" inherent in the "teaching-learning" and "selling-buying" relations that Karatani detects in our basic social conditions, in the sense that no common basis can be presupposed and no neutral/transcendent position in between can substantively exist; it is where the *salto mortale* must absolutely be confronted. And yet, at the same time, to face such a situation as it is, consciously and strategically, might amount to the "freedom" that John Rajchman defines.

In a number of senses, this translation itself has been an illustration of the aporia that Karatani challenges in this book. Strangely enough, it is "self-referential" in that the pivotal problematics within communication that weave some, if not all, aspects of the book have been substantially involved in the process of translation: it is a *salto mortale* for the translator, who—in a transgression of the canon of translation—translated from his mother tongue (Japanese) to an "other" tongue (English), and at the same time it is an unpredictable exchange within the intercrossing space—beyond the

border of communities—in which no outcome can be predicted.

Karatani has spoken of the notion of "infinity" that was achieved paradoxically at the moment that the worldview was closed:

Descartes conceived of universal spaces that are divided into interior and exterior. This space is an infinite extension, but for Descartes this infinity is a notion derived from the negation of the finite. In contrast, Spinoza grasped the infinite positively. He looked upon the world itself as the infinite, meaning actually that the world is closed, that there is nothing beyond this world (= God = nature), and that even the transcendental God is no more than an imaginary product from within this world.

And, by connecting Spinoza to non-Euclidean geometry, where the Euclidean plane is metamorphosed into a sphere, and to Giordano Bruno, who relativized the notion of the globe vis-a-vis other planets, Karatani makes us think of this act of closing the world in different discursive realms—and it makes me think especially of the possibility of the transcoding/translation around the full globe that is yet to be seen; between the Far East and America in particular. To be sure, this closing does not mean that the world will be unified into a homogeneous system; on the contrary, it will reveal more heterogeneity and more confrontations between the differences. Therefore it is necessary to share "the map of crises" not in a pessimistic sense but in a critical one. In terms both of its content and situation, namely as an event in a full sense, *Architecture as Metaphor* marks the advent of the "translation without a master" over the Pacific Ocean.

Sabu Kohso

Since 1970, many things have been claimed in the name of deconstruction. In the following chapters I examine the problematic of deconstruction from the standpoint of construction, that is, from the standpoint of architecture. It is now clear that many post-sixties architects worked parallel to, and in some cases even precursory to and therefore independent of, the various deconstructions being developed in philosophy and literary criticism. Postmodernism, understood as an idea or concept that includes deconstruction and the other discourses of **Introduction to the English Edition** poststructuralism, might be said to have originated precisely in architecture. It is also clear that structure, likewise understood as a concept, is architectural; indeed, architectural metaphors have been widely used in the various discourses of structuralism and poststructuralism.

In his attempt to define the philosopher, Plato employed the architect as a metaphor. For Plato, architecture meant, more than anything else, an active position that enables one to resist or withstand all "becomings" by reconstructing them as "makings": "By its original meaning [*Ipoiesis*] means simply creation, and creation, as you know, can take very various forms. Any action which is the cause of a thing emerging from non-existence into existence might be called [*Ipoiesis*], and

all the processes in all the crafts are kinds of [*poiesis*], and all those who are engaged in them [creators]." Plato likened philosophers who took such a position to architects. Yet like other Athenians of his time, Plato despised the manual labor involved in building. Unlike the substantial materiality of architecture, which belongs to the realm of what we might call "semi-becoming," Platonic architecture is metaphorical. Plato's use of the metaphor of architecture, like that of Descartes, Kant, and Hegel who followed him, should thus be understood as the will to construct an edifice of knowledge on a solid foundation.

Plato consistently embraced geometry as a norm, but because he overlooked the algebraic systems that had been developed in Babylonia, his contribution to mathematics amounted to little in a practical sense. Instead, Plato recast both algebra and geometry in the form of a solid edifice, an architectonic. Even though, like architecture, mathematics is semi-becoming, philosophers since Plato have turned to mathematics because it ostensibly offers the ideal ground or architectonic on which something genuinely new can be established. Philosophy, in fact, is another name for this *will to architecture*. Architecture as a metaphor dominated mathematics and even architecture itself until 1931, when Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorem invalidated mathematics as the ground for the architectonic.

In the 1970s the "text" replaced architecture as the dominant metaphor or figure. Roland Barthes distinguished the text from the work, arguing that the work is a self-contained whole dependent on the author for its meaning or signification, while the text is a textured fabric of quotations and metonymical slidings that produces significations without recourse to the sovereign author. But Barthes and the various practices of literary criticism were not the only pioneers in the development

of textuality. Parallel strategies were emerging in many disciplines. For example, the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss opposed the concept of *bricolage* to making. And in architecture, the text—even if not named as such—was, by this time, already supplanting architecture as the dominant metaphor. It is this trend that we now call postmodernism. This shift from architecture to text as privileged metaphor favors becoming over making, and continues in the tradition of thinkers such as Hume (as opposed to Kant), and Montaigne (as opposed to Descartes) who affirm textual manifoldness. Reconsidering this shift ultimately returns us to Plato.

Despite my own sympathies with the shift from architecture to text, I had many reservations. I wrote the first part of the present book when I was teaching at Yale University in 1980, at a time when I was reexamining the poststructuralist problematic. In the North American context, poststructuralism appeared to me too closely connected to literary criticism. For example, that one of Jacques Derrida's early works was an annotation to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*, and not an analysis of literature, was almost completely overlooked.¹ It seemed to me that even Derrida himself was too strictly conforming his work to North American literary criticism. Though I am a literary critic, I wanted, at that time, to protest against such a supraliterary tendency. I wanted to insist that deconstruction could be realized only by exhaustive construction; otherwise, it would degenerate into mere word games.

Plato did attack poets. The poetic counterattacks against Plato that were initiated in nineteenth-century romanticism were later developed and extended by Nietzsche and were again extended in the ascension of textualism to the status of privileged metaphor. These attacks have contributed to making deconstruction so

extraordinarily literary, thereby obscuring its constructive dimension. Since the literary text is ambiguous, it is easy and perhaps even indulgent to stress the undecidability of its meaning. But in mathematics, the discipline where precision and decidability are considered essential, the appearance of undecidability presents a more fundamental challenge.

It was Kurt Gödel who introduced undecidability into mathematics. From my perspective, deconstruction, if formalized, is tantamount to Gödel's proof. Yet this implies neither the dominance nor the impotence of mathematics. Gödel's proof presents us with a case wherein the attempt to *architectonize* mathematics results not in a mathematical foundation but in the impossibility of mathematical foundations. Gödel's proof of the lack of mathematical foundation is, however, emancipatory rather than restrictive for mathematics. Mathematics is a study that focuses on relation: contrary to the romanticist idea that mathematics is a study of number and quantity, mathematics scrutinizes only relation—for that matter, even number and quantity are forms of relation. But this raises the question of whether or not relation exists in the same way that material does. Plato speculated that relation exists in a different way; concurring with this, Mam noted that in language every relation is expressed only conceptually. It was perhaps inevitable, then, that many in the modern period who dealt with relation followed the idealist path—a path, it should be noted, that is not avoided simply by invoking material and perception.

Many formalists of this century, including the mathematician David Hilbert and the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, insisted on the existence of certain ideal forms while simultaneously rejecting the notion that they exist in some real place. Formalism apprehends

the form as a precedent and the object and the sense one makes of it as the model or interpretation of the form. It is not an exaggeration to say that some of the major intellectual issues of the twentieth century were provoked by the radical reversal of formalism as such. For example, both Saussure's linguistic model—which argues that the *signifier* exists only as a differential form, and that the *signified*, or meaning, is merely its product—and Lévi-Strauss's anthropological methodology—which, instead of deriving a model from empirical fact, builds the mathematical structure first and then observes empirical fact as a model that interprets the structure—are fundamentally formalist modes of thinking.

Formalism emerged in numerous fields of study: linguistics, cultural anthropology, psychoanalysis, intellectual history, and so on. However, diverse generic application did not facilitate a radical questioning of the problematics commonly attributed to formalism. Had formalism been questioned, the problem that Plato first confronted and answered—the problem of the status of form—would undoubtedly have resurfaced. Being a Platonist himself, Gödel developed an internal critique of formalism that had repercussions in formalist practices in all disciplinary fields. Plato did not capriciously pose the being of the *ideal*, or the foundation of knowledge. Indeed, he failed rather miserably in his attempt to implement his idea of the philosopher-king. Instead, Plato realized the impossible in the *imaginaire*: he made Socrates a martyr to this impossible-to-achieve idea, in the same way, for example, that St. Paul exalted Jesus. All of this demonstrates the impossibility of the *being* of the *ideal* and yet, at the same time, it repeatedly invokes the *will to architecture* by asserting that the impossible, the *being* of the *ideal*, be realized. This *will to architecture* is the foundation of Western thought.

In my own work I could not simply deny this will. My thinking developed as follows: I assumed as a premise that a consistently critical attitude would reveal its own ungroundedness and thus reveal its own becoming; only persistent formalization or construction, I realized, would lead to the exteriority of form. To critique constructionism, however, requires more than simply invoking becoming. Becoming, or, to use Marx's term, "grown-by-nature-ness" (*Naturwüchsigkeit*),³ is not so formless or chaotic as it seems, but is rather something that can be formally demonstrated. I owe this insight to a group of city planning theorists who at the time were dealing with the problem of "natural cities." In part two of this book, I overturn the conventional conception of becoming as *Naturwüchsigkeit* and develop an account of it as a self-referential formal system. Language is not simply a differential system but a self-referential differential system, and by extension, as we will see in the concluding chapters of this book, the currency or monetary economy is a self-referential system of commodities.

It was at this point that my original project was interrupted; if it were granted that becoming itself could be formalized, the exterior of the formal system would have to be regarded as nonexistent. In the course of my attempt to move out of or beyond the formal system by a process of persistent formalization, I found myself trapped within a new type of enclosure, where—worse still—I could no longer even assume an exterior. My predicament at the time notwithstanding, we can now see that though the monetary economy appears as a self-referential formal system of commodities, in reality there undoubtedly exists somewhere (in some monetary or economic realm) an exterior; the general equivalent—money—is guaranteed only by the presup-

position that money is able at any time to return to the form of commodity, as in the case of gold. This is where the market's so-called auto-adjustment mechanism, which Adam Smith referred to as the "invisible hand," enters the picture. This same invisible mechanism has more recently been called "spontaneous order" and "self-organizing system."

The exteriority of money vis-a-vis the commodity, however, can never be interiorized or brought into the relational commodity system: no matter how high the price of gold, money cannot be metamorphosed into gold because this conversion—transforming gold into money and money into gold—is inevitably accompanied by a loss in weight. Moreover, gold is money only because it is expressed in the money form; it is only a convention. A piece of paper can be money, for example, if it is expressed in the money form. What Marx demonstrated in his theory of the money form was that the relationship between money and commodity can be explained only through the development of an asymmetrical system of forms—the relative value form and the equivalent form. That is to say, the asymmetry in the relation between money and commodity—or, more precisely, between buying and selling—has existed primordially and can never be overcome. Herein lies the crisis that Marx often refers to.

I nevertheless found it impossible to reintroduce such an exteriority in my work by following the preexisting line of formalization. A more decisive "turn" was required. Consequently, I abandoned the Japanese edition of *Architecture as Metaphor* and the subsequent work *Language, Number, Money* halfway through. In this state of stagnation, trapped in a cul-de-sac, what struck me quite forcefully was Edward Said's book *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, in particular the essay entitled "Secular Criticism."

And yet something happened, perhaps inevitably. From being a bold interventionary movement across lines of specialization, American literary theory of the late seventies had retreated into the labyrinth of "textuality," dragging along with it the most recent apostles of European revolutionary textuality—Derrida and Foucault—whose trans-Atlantic canonization and domestication they themselves seemed sadly enough to be encouraging. It is not too much to say that American or even European literary theory now explicitly accepts the principle of noninterference, and that its peculiar mode of appropriating its subject matter (to use Althusser's formula) is not to appropriate anything that is worldly, circumstantial, or socially contaminated. "Textuality" is the somewhat mystical and disinfected subject matter of literary theory.

Textuality has therefore become the exact antithesis and displacement of what might be called history. Textuality is considered to take place, yes, but by the same token it does not take place anywhere or anytime in particular. It is produced, but by no one and at no time. . . . As it is practiced in the American academy today, literary theory has for the most part isolated textuality from the circumstances, the events, the physical senses that made it possible and render it intelligible as the result of human work.

My position is that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located and interpreted.⁴

Said's remarks appeared to me focused precisely on the situation in which I found myself trapped. However, for me, secular criticism had to be developed within the context of my own work. In those days I was reencountering the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, specifically his thesis on mathematical foundations. Wittgenstein argued that mathematics is a motley bundle of diverse

inventions that cannot be unified into a single or unitary foundation. Mathematics is a product of historical practices. Though this sounds similar to the notion of text as a metaphor, it is completely different. If we take into account the preeminently constructive tendency of Wittgenstein's early pursuits, this "turn" is not insignificant. Far from being ignorant of Gödel's approach, Wittgenstein was completely aware of it, as evidenced by his statement "It is my task, not to attack Russell's logic from within, but from without."⁵ But Wittgenstein did not follow the same path as Gödel. From Wittgenstein's point of view, Gödel had no choice but to remain "within" Russell's conceptual framework. How, then, could the "without" be possible? Only, I determined, by way of "secular criticism."

Nothing is less relevant to the reality of architecture than the idea that it is the realization of a design *qua* idea. Far more critical factors are involved, such as the collaboration with other staff members and the dialogue with and persuasion of the client. The design, as initially conceived, is invariably destined to be transformed during the course of its execution. Design is similar to Wittgenstein's term "game," where, as he says, "we play and—make up the rules as we go along."⁶ No architect can predict the result. No architecture is free of its context. Architecture is an event *par excellence* in the sense that it is a making or a becoming that exceeds the maker's control.

Plato admired the architect as a metaphor but despised the architect as an earthly laborer, because the actual architect, and even architecture itself, are exposed to contingency. Contingency does not imply, however, that, as opposed to the designer's ideal, the actual architecture is secondary and constantly in danger of collapse. Rather, contingency insures that no architect is able to

determine a design free from the relationship with the "other" — the client, staff, and other factors relevant to the design process. All architects face this other. Architecture is thus a form of communication conditioned to occur without common rules—it is a communication with the other, who, by definition, does not follow the same set of rules.

Because architecture is an event, it is always contingent. To invoke the poet, or the literary, in an attempt to refute Plato's philosophical, architectonic use of the architect as metaphor leads only to another sanctification. In order to move beyond architecture as a metaphor, the most pedestrian understanding of architecture must be used as a metaphor. In that way, the most "secular" conditions inherent in architecture can be considered. Since Plato's intervention, architecture as a metaphor has not suppressed becoming or text, but it has suppressed the "secular architect." Thus it is not the "absolute other" but the "secular other" who is able to deconstruct the self-sufficient formal system based on architecture as a metaphor. In part three of this book (a version of a series of essays entitled "Researches" that I started after the interruption of the original *Architecture as Metaphor*), I examine Wittgenstein and Marx from this new position or perspective of secular criticism. Part three, in particular, is meant to form a secular criticism to parts one and two.

Looking back now at my previous work, I am beginning to understand two things. First, I might have been unwittingly engaging in a kind of Kantian critique all along. My works have been interventions that critically examine architecture as metaphor in order to expose its limits. The target I had in mind at the outset of the present work was the dominant ideology of modernism, understood as the "grand narrative" that insists

on "constructing" human society. I became aware of Kant only after "architecture as metaphor" collapsed; at that point it became evident to me that far from creating a total disappearance of the grand narrative, this collapse produced instead a set of alternative narratives or ideologies, namely the "end of history" debate (the ultimate assertion of the superiority of Western reason) and cynicism. "Architecture as metaphor" cannot be dissolved by denial. Today it is the Kantian transcendental critique that is called for. And it is in light of these considerations that I have begun to reevaluate my previous work.

Kant maintained that while logic is an analytic judgment, mathematics is an a priori synthetic judgment; mathematics requires sensuous intuition and thus cannot be logically grounded. In fact, it is precisely because it cannot be grounded that mathematics is an open-ended mode of inquiry. (This account of mathematics as a synthetic judgment was nevertheless scornfully denounced by post-Kantian philosophers.) Gottlob Frege's and Bertrand Russell's treatment of mathematics as subordinate to logic became conventional in the study of mathematical foundations. It was Gödel who criticized this convention by invoking the Kantian antinomy — undecidability — and it was Wittgenstein who criticized it from the orientation of practical ethics. This does not mean, however, that post-Kantian philosophy has been a series of hapless struggles. Instead it is only in the ruins of those struggles that for the first time we can begin to excavate the possibilities embedded in Kant. In this way, Kant's role can be extended and amplified on many different levels.

Kant called that which is constituted by the form of subjectivity "phenomenon" and that which affects subjectivity, yet cannot be composed by it, the "thing-in-itself." The thing-in-itself can be conceptualized,

though it cannot be experienced. It follows that our recognition can only be synthetic judgment. In this way, Kant came to regard those thoughts that theoretically grasp the thing-in-itself as an "arrogation of reason." Kant called these thoughts *Schein* (semblance): what is understood by the term *Idee* (idea) is a *Schein*. Kant's thing-in-itself is neither the *Hinterwelt* nor the true world, but the opposite; he means to criticize such realms by suggesting that they are mere *Schein*. At the same time, Kant did not simply dismiss *Idee*; instead, he asserted that *Idee* cannot be proven theoretically, and therefore must not be realized constitutively. Even so, *Schein* is indispensable in that it functions regulatively. In this way, the triad of thing-in-itself, phenomenon, and *Schein* constitute a structure whose potential is fundamentally compromised if even one of the three is discarded.⁷

The antiquated term "thing-in-itself," for example, can be discarded and replaced with something else if we wish, but the composition of the triadic structure cannot. In psychoanalysis, Lacan's categories "Real," "Symbolic," and "Imaginary" are similar to the Kantian divisions thing-in-itself, phenomenon, and *Idee*. Freudian psychoanalysis was established as a metapsychology, as a transcendental psychology; as post-Freudian psychoanalysis degenerated into an empirical psychology, Lacan appeared on the scene to revive the "transcendental critique." Lacan became aware of Kant, however, long after the invention of his own triadic formula. Many thinkers who appear to be antagonistic toward Kant—Marx and Nietzsche, for example—repeated, employing different terms, the same structure that Kant introduced. In other words, these thinkers attempted to revive the thing-in-itself on their own terms and in different contexts. As I have sought to

argue in what follows, Marx presented a historicity to which we belong and by which we are constantly motivated, a historicity that, paradoxically, slips through the framing of any construction built with linguistic speculation. This historicity is, in other words, a *naturwüchsiges* manifold. Furthermore, Marx's *Capital*, as its subtitle, "The Critique of Political Economy," implies, is neither a denial nor an affirmation of classical economics or of Hegel, but a Kantian "critique" of them. What Marx attempted, then, was a transcendental rather than an empirical retrospection of the value form.

The fact that Kant's triadic concept is replaceable with different triads indicates that it forms a kind of structure that can be grasped transcendently. Kant called this structure "architectonics." While philosophical discourses generally disregard rhetoric in order to achieve their much-desired precision, and philosophers, especially those who emerged after Kant, sought to do away with figurative expression, Kant's critique is marked by the omnipresence of the "metaphor." Kant employed architectonics as a metaphor in the following way:

For if such a system is some day worked out under the general name of Metaphysic—and its full and complete execution is both possible and of the utmost importance for the employment of reason in all departments of its activity—the critical examination of the ground for this edifice must have been previously carried down to the very depths of the foundations of the faculty of principles independent of experience, lest in some quarter it might give way, and, sinking, inevitably bring with it the ruin of all.⁸

Although at first glance Kant appears to incline toward the Platonic use of architecture as metaphor, the opposite is true. Kant claimed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

that his investigation could not properly be called a doctrine, but should instead be called transcendental critique. To put it differently, Kant's critiques were intended not to construct a system but to reveal that any system "inevitably bring[s] with it the ruin of all" inasmuch as it is upheld under the aegis of the "arrogation of reason." Since "arrogation" is a juridical term, Kant's architectonics might also be substituted by a set of juridical metaphors. What is crucial to note is that architectonics as metaphor is indispensable to the critique of architecture as metaphor.

What Kant called the "Copernican turn" offered a position from which to consider the world that humans recognize as a "phenomenon"; it implied a view from which to see the world not as a copy of something that exists externally, but as that which is only constituted by "throwing in" a certain form or category. It is possible to see twentieth-century formalism, including the linguistic turn, as an expansion of the Kantian inversion. Yet to stop there ignores Kant's pivotal role. The "Copernican turn" literally reverses the man/earth-centered view in favor of a heliocentric view; Kant's turn, metaphorically speaking, is a turn toward the "thing-in-itself"/heliocentric position. Because of its inherent lack of the thing-in-itself, formalism, understood in the broadest sense, inevitably leads to a humanism of another kind, to textual idealism, or to skepticism. The "turns" that I analyze apropos Marx and Wittgenstein are the ones that truly deserve to be called "Copernican," because from a secular perspective the thing-in-itself is the "other." Because the Kantian problematic became apparent to me only recently — after this present work was completed and thus after the historic fall of the grand narratives — I deal with it here only in notes at the end of certain chapters.

The other thing that has become clear to me concerns the reason for my turn to the issues of formalization in the first place. As a non-Westerner and foreigner, I could not, nor did I need to, participate in the wordplay that, at the time, was a requisite of Western theoretical writing. Despite, or rather because of, the fact that I am a literary critic myself, I deliberately swerved away from literature. In the cultural soil of Japan, no critical impact could be achieved from such a stratagem carried out a *la lettre*: in Japan, the will to architecture does not exist—a circumstance that allowed postmodernism to blossom in its own way. Unlike in the West, deconstructive forces are constantly at work in Japan. As strange as it may sound, being architectonic in Japan is actually radical and political. Therefore I had to act like a performer with dual roles: at the same time that I was investigating the perverted origin of the will to architecture, I had to analyze the origin of the deconstructive power structure that suffuses Japan.

As I mentioned earlier, an overwhelming feeling of emptiness and futility interrupted me in the midst of my pursuit, which was due, I now assume, not only to the self-referential nature of my investigation but also to my required performance of dual roles. Although in this book I have not mentioned my Japanese predecessors in these struggles, I am a beneficiary of their intellectual legacy and more than conscious of their importance. Among them, I would especially like to name an architect, Arata Isozaki. It was his book *The Dissolution of Architecture* (1975) that prompted me to speculate on deconstruction through the problematics of construction. Regardless of Isozaki's reception abroad, he was at that time the only architect in Japan who dared to confront head-on the issues of modernity. Isozaki, too, was living dual roles: while criticizing Japanese modernity

and architecture he persisted in the will to architecture. Moreover, it was Isozaki who, to my surprise, most highly appreciated the importance of *Architecture as Metaphor*, which had not been directed toward architects and has but little relevance to architecture in a narrow sense. Thus my primary gratitude goes to him. I would also like to thank the American architect Peter Eisenman and the editor-in-chief of Anyone Corporation, Cynthia Davidson, who heard of this work from Isozaki and determined to publish it in America.

This book is not aimed at architects in a narrow sense. I would be honored, however, if it were read by those who, though denying architecture with a capital A, strive to be architectonic, and those who, denying subject with a capital S, choose to be subjects of and as difference.

Finally, I thank Sabu Kohso and Judy Geib for their translation and Michael Speaks for his editorial work. It was the passion and zeal of these three that encouraged me to face this work that I otherwise would have allowed to rest in peace.

Kjiri Karatani

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Architecture as Metaphor

