THE SPACE OF THE LACERATED SUBJECT: ARCHITECTURE AND ABJECTION

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INTRODUCTION

In *Powers of Horror* (1980),[1] the psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva presented the first explicit, elaborated theory of 'abjection,' which she defines as the casting off of that which is not of one's "clean and proper"[2] self. According to Kristeva, abjection is a demarcating impulse which establishes the basis of all object relations, and is operative in the Lacanian narrative of subject formation in early childhood via object differentiation. (I am a subject: me. That is an object: not me.) Abjection continues to operate post-Oedipally to prevent the dissolution of the subject by repressing identification with that which is other, and particularly that which is only tenuously other: the abject. Though Kristeva's theory is braided into problematic Freudian premises, this essay will argue that abjection remains operative independent of the Oedipal model. The focus of Freudian psychoanalysis has largely been on the anxieties of being extracted from other subjects, usually the mother. It has concerned itself far less with the anxieties of extracting oneself from the blankets, nursery walls, and doors which were equally a part of the Real of infancy. We follow Kristeva and Georges Bataille in asserting that the necessary differentiations which occur between selves and other subjects in early childhood (especially the mothers and fathers and psychoanalytic fixation) also—or first—play themselves out in the differentiations of selves from objects (our blankets, nursery walls, and doors). In doing so, we contest the centrality of the Oedipal family triangle in subject formation, and recognise

a more general and parsimonious model of subjecthood implied by the theory of abjection—a model in which architecture necessarily plays a more substantial role, as both an object and instrument of abjection.

THE SUBJECT 'EN PROCESS'

Though Kristeva may be described today as poststructuralist, her early work on abjection is in keeping with Lacan. In *Powers of Horror*, abjection is introduced as a preface to Lacan's account of the genesis of the subject. According to that account, object relations emerge in the mirror stage, when an infant mistakenly identifies with a reflection of herself—in a literal mirror, or some other mimetic representation—and begins to imagine herself as an object which might be viewed from another perspective. Kristeva accepts this, but recognises that the Oedipal model, even as revised by Lacan, cannot account for the whole progression of consciousness from an experience of undifferentiated sensation to that of a self discerning objects and other subjects. Instead, Kristeva asserts that the mirror stage is a secondary repression preceded by abjection, a "primal" repression[3] which makes difference (differentiation) itself possible and "sets in motion, or implicates, the entire Freudian structure."[4] Kristeva goes as far as to say that the Freudian narrative is "exploded by its contradictions and flimsiness"[5] without abjection to precede it. Nevertheless, she declines to abandon the narrative altogether, leaving its linear progression of stages intact and only placing her account of the development of subject/object differentiations before it in time. Significantly, Kristeva credits Georges Bataille as the first philosopher to have "specified that the plane of abjection is that of the *subject/object relationship* (and not subject/other subject)."[6] As such, the earliest beginnings of the subject involve an extraction not from other subjects, but what will become objects:

> *Do we not find,* sooner *(chronologically and logically speaking) [than the mirror stage], if not objects, at least* pre-*objects, poles of attraction of a demand for air, food, and motion? Do we not also find, in the very process that constitutes the mother as other, a series of* semi-*objects that stake out the transition from a state of indifferentiation to one of discretion (subject/object)—semi-objects that are called precisely "transitional" by Winnicott?*[7]

According to Winnicott, a paediatrician and psychoanalyst, an infant still in a state of indifferentiation experiences subjective "omnipotence,"[8] believing that her own desire produces what is desired. The security blanket is a 'transitional object,' an infant's first 'not-me' possession which eases

the disillusionment of omnipotence and mediates the transition from undifferentiated sensation to the discernment of 'me' and other 'not-me' objects. The transitional object already operates symbolically, standing in for the "object of first relationship"[9] (traditionally the breast). Winnicott suggests that the symbolic operation of the transitional object belies an antecedent repression:

> *When symbolism is employed the infant is already clearly distinguishing between fantasy and fact, between inner objects and external objects, between primary creativity and perception. But the term transitional object, according to my suggestion, gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity. I think there is use for a term for the root of symbolism in time, a term that describes the infant's journey from purely subjective to objectivity; and it seems to me that the transitional object (piece of blanket, etc.) is what we see of this journey of progress towards experiencing.*[10]

To Kristeva, abjection is that "root of symbolism in time." It is the repression which must occur before anything can operate symbolically, the first recognition of difference in that traumatic moment when that which threatens the definition of the 'clean and proper body' (*le corps propre*) is cast off (ab-jected)[11] by the animal impulse to protect the budding cognitive edifice that is the subject. "Even before things *are*—hence before they are signifiable—[the not-yet-subject] drives them out, dominated by the drive as he is, and constitutes his own territory, edged by the abject."[12] The casting off is traumatic because in a state of undifferentiation, what is abjected is necessarily also the self.

> *I expell* myself, *I spit* myself *out, I abject* myself *within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish* myself. … *During the course in which "I" become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit. Mute protest of the symptom, shattering violence of a convulsion that, to be sure, is inscribed in*

"I EXPELL MYSELF, I SPIT MYSELF OUT, I ABJECT MYSELF WITHIN THE SAME MOTION THROUGH WHICH 'I' CLAIM TO ESTABLISH MYSELF"

> *a symbolic system, but in which, without either wanting or being able to become integrated in order to answer to it, it reacts, it abreacts. It abjects.*[13]

From here, Kristeva follows Lacan to a conclusion which poststructuralist philosophers vehemently eschew—that the object relation is, as it was put by Lacan, "a means of masking, of parrying the fundamental fund of anguish."[14] A "desiring quest,"[15] doomed to anguished failure, for what Lacan called the *objet petit a*, the unattainable 'object-cause of desire.' In Kristeva's words:

> *The abjection of self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural* loss *that laid the foundations of its own being.*[16]

This acceptance of the premise of primordial lack is a focus of much criticism of Kristeva's philosophy.[17] In contrast, poststructuralist philosophers and psychoanalysts such as Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and (anachronistically) Georges Bataille[18] generally posit a plenitude out of which subjectivity is folded.[19] To properly address this debate—in particular, to discern the extent to which the dispute is rooted in style of articulation rather than in fundamental disagreement—is beyond the scope of this essay. Perhaps it will suffice to say that some 'desiring quest' for that which would destroy the subject as we know it if reclaimed (reunion with the mother, the world) is necessary to render abjection an operable concept. In fact, the theory of abjection appears to be entirely consistent with at least Bataille's conception of subjecthood—abjection being, in this case, an impulse which limits our access to the plenitude from which we emerged:

> *The first labor established the world of* things*, to which the profane world of the Ancients generally corresponds. Once the world of things was posited, man himself became one of the things of this world, at least for the time in which he labored. It is this degradation that man has always tried to escape. In his strange myths, in his cruel rites, man is* in search of a lost intimacy *from the first.*[20]

Bataille and Kristeva recognise abjection and the accession to the Symbolic (language, discursive logic) as necessary preconditions of culture, but also that the repression is not so total that it cannot be undone. Far from it, Kristeva argues that the subject is always '*en process*'—by which is meant both 'on trial' and 'in process.'[21] The chaos of the undifferentiated Real is always lapping at the edges of the self. "We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger."[22] The abject clings to the subject, lacerating it, necessitating the constant defensive action

of abjection. It is both horror and a siren's song. Tellingly, Kristeva observes that the abject is "edged with the sublime," which "has no object either."[23] It is the gallows humour which underlies all humour, and the reason eroticism shares so much territory with degradation and death.[24]

To Kristeva, the spectre of the undifferentiated Real is first and foremost a danger which threatens to bring about the death of the properly constituted subject. Bataille also recognises the subject as fragile and contingent, but is more motivated to remind us that a great ocean of ecstatic experience remains dammed up around us while subject/object relations remain 'properly' constituted. He reminds us that "[c]oitus is the parody of crime."[25]

> "CONTRARY TO WHAT IS GENERALLY MEANT BY THE WORD 'ABJECT' (FILTHY, LOW, WRETCHED), IT IS NOT HYGIENE, ACCORDING TO KRISTEVA'S DEFINITION, THAT DETERMINES WHAT IS ABJECT"

NO SUBJECT WITHOUT A SPACE IT IS NOT

So, contrary to what is generally meant by the word 'abject' (filthy, low, wretched), it is not hygiene, according to Kristeva's definition, that determines what is abject. Rather, the abject is that which "does not respect borders, positions, rules,"[26] and threatens the legibility of a system. Here, Kristeva draws on the pioneering work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas (chiefly in *Purity and Danger* of 1966)[27] on pollution avoidance in 'primitive' cultures. Douglas is careful to distinguish between purification and hygiene (modern germ theory):

> *If we can abstract pathogenicity and hygiene from our notion of dirt, we are left with the old definition of dirt as matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system.*[28]
>
> *… I have tried to show that rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience. So far from being aberrations from the central project of religion, they*

are positive contributions to atonement. By their means, symbolic patterns are worked out and publicly displayed.[29]

The insight that symbolic systems are "worked out" (not just "displayed") and ritually maintained by expelling dirt lends support by analogy to Kristeva's theory that subjecthood is established and shored up by abjection. To Kristeva, not only is there a system wherever there is dirt, the impulse to expel the dirt preceded and inaugurated the system. The corpse is the ultimate abject—just as death is the ultimate elision of the subject with the world—not because it is infectious, and neither because it is a symbol of death (yet), but because it "*show[s] me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live."[30]

Perhaps more importantly, Douglas's work affirms the hypothesis that abjection is at work at every scale, across bodies and non-bodily objects:

> … *[A]ll margins are dangerous. … Matter issuing from [the orifices of the body] is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body. … The mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins.*[31]

In fact, there would seem to be nothing in the infant's experience of undifferentiated sensation to categorically privilege the mother's nipple as the first object of abjection, and so as the symbolic locus of post-Oedipal abjection. Abjection, then, is general to the subject's intimacy with the world. This implies that architecture is a potential object of abjection—a potential abject.[32] The artist Victor Burgin goes as far as to describe first abjection as a "demarcation of space," and engages the dictum: "No space of representation without a subject, and no subject without a space it is not."[33]

A BURNING CATHEDRAL

The abjection of space presents a troubling corollary. In reverse, it reveals architecture to be not only a potential abject, but also the instrument or vector of abjection. Just as blood, tears and come are abject to bodies, traitors, scapegoats, and parvenues are abject to bodies politic. Just as shit and slough are flushed away and occluded by architecture, it is architecture again which surveils the suitably constituted subject and excludes or imprisons the category-transgressing other. Social and subjective abjection "follow the same logic, with no other goal than the survival of both group and subject."[34] Unfortunately, writes Kristeva, "the absorption of otherness proposed by our societies turns out to be inacceptable by the contemporary individual, jealous of his difference—one that is not

only national and ethical but essentially subjective, unsurmountable."[35] The complicity of architecture in this problem is perhaps obvious after Foucault, but it is Bataille, as ever, who cleaves to the deepest root of the problem.

Bataille problematised architecture by writing on the prison (among other typologies). But Bataille's prison has nothing to do with Foucault's Panopticon, and is instead, in Denis Hollier's words, "an ostentatious, spectacular architecture, an architecture to be seen."[36] The prison is both the display of the general condition of the human subject and the "generic form of architecture … primarily because man's own form is his first prison."[37] Hollier writes:

> *The greatest motive for Bataille's aggressivity towards architecture is its anthropomorphism. The article "Architecture" describes it as an essential stage in the process of hominization, as a sort of mirror stage that might be called in a parody of Lacan's title "the architecture stage as formative function of the We, man's social imago." In this sense, even though he seems to denounce the repression exercised over man by architecture, Bataille is really intervening against the catachresis requiring that man only take form with architecture, that the human form as such, the formation of man, be embedded in architecture.*[38]

That is, Bataille's animus towards architecture is rooted in his fundamental revolt against the operation of abjection in the accession of the subject to culture. Architecture is at once formative of the subject/society and that through which the subject/society generates its norms. In the cited article, Bataille describes architecture in general:

> *It is clear, in any case, that mathematical order imposed upon stone is really the culmination of the evolution of earthly forms, whose direction is indicated within the biological order by the passage from the simian to the human form, the latter already displaying all the elements of architecture. Man would seem to represent*

"MAN WOULD SEEM TO REPRESENT MERELY AN INTERMEDIARY STAGE...BETWEEN MONKEY AND BUILDING"

merely an intermediary stage within the morphological development between monkey and building.[39]

The declination to acknowledge the distinction between living bodies and buildings is not merely a provocation. If the prison is the generic form of architecture, the cathedral must be the most profuse and comprehensive imposition of "mathematical order … upon stone," and the culmination of the "morphological development" encompassing humanity and architecture. Considering the cathedral in the context of what Bataille calls the 'general economy' of mediaeval European life reveals a mode of abjection which cuts across stone and flesh.

A salient characteristic of the Gothic cathedral at its highest development was its fractal scalelessness, or the quality of being governed at every scale by the same repertoire of geometric rules, such that a singular order could be observed in the smallest baldachin as in the tallest tower—an order exhibiting only a tenuous, grudging relationship with the dimensions of the human body. Every detail from the general arrangement of the plan to the profile of mullions might be derived procedurally, through the scaling, tessellation, rotation, and superimposition of polygons believed to be numinous. In principle, a single module (such as a square defining the width of a choir) could underlie the whole cathedral, rotations or divisions of which would determine the size of every element. So comprehensive and predictable was this craftlore that the historian François Bucher suggests, "to exaggerate one might say that a single finial preserved from a crumpled tower could suffice for a reasonably close reconstruction of the total structure, provided its position within the system were known."[40] Except for logistical purposes, it was not necessary until the moment of construction to assign a measure to the module of the cathedral, which in theory could be infinitely large and infinitely detailed. With no change whatsoever to the logic of its design, a cathedral could be expanded to absorb any surplus.

What Bataille finds objectionable in the cathedral is only an exaggeration of the bad faith he finds in all architecture—indeed in all work, or what he calls 'Icarian' projects. These are organised teleological acts which result in the 'deferral of living to later' (*la remise de l'existence à plus tard*). According to Bataille, Icarian projects circumscribe us in closed, 'restricted' economies which blind us to the Real of the 'general economy.' Restricted economies are the economies of accountancy; posed in the zero-sum terms of equilibrium, of profit here equated with loss there. They are also the economies of much psychoanalysis founded on the corresponding notions of a stable subject, developmental progression, and primordial

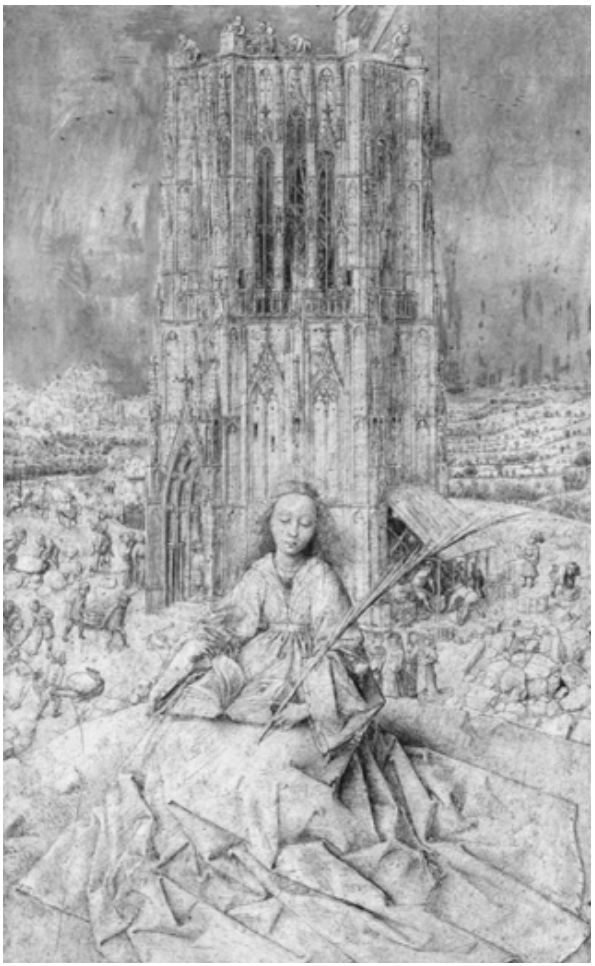

FIGURE 1: JAN VAN EYCK, SAINT BARBARA (1437)

SAINT BARBARA, OUT OF SCALE WITH THE BUILDING SITE BEHIND HER, IS ENLARGED TO INDICATE HER NUMINOUS IMPORTANCE. THE MEASURE OF THE HUMAN BODY IS INCIDENTAL TO THE SCHEME OF THE CATHEDRAL, WHICH IS PERPETUALLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

loss. The remit of the general economy is wider than the field of traditional economics:

> *Economic science … restricts its object to operations carried out with a view to a limited end, that of economic man. It does not take into consideration a play of energy that no particular end limits: the play of* living matter in general, *involved in the movement of light of which it is the result. On the surface of the globe, for* living matter in general, *energy is always in excess; the question is always posed in terms of extravagance. The choice is limited to how the wealth is to be squandered.*[41]

Bataille insists that because in general, energy and wealth are always in excess, some share of it must be consumed without profit, or 'sacrificed' according to his use of the term. The fundamental problem of political economy then, is how to sacrifice the surplus so that living is not deferred to later. For Bataille, this requires the removal of the surplus from circulation in the realm of exchange values—an extravagant consumption which is a means to no end, which burns brightly like "*the sexual act … in time,*" like a "*tiger in … space.*"[42] This 'useless' consumption nevertheless has the use value of briefly restoring intimacy with the Real. In fact, a failure to sacrifice the surplus leads to ruination:

> *These excesses of life force, which locally block the poorest economies, are in fact the most dangerous factors of ruination. Hence relieving the blockage was always, if only in the darkest region of consciousness, the object of a feverish pursuit. Ancient societies found relief in festivals; some erected admirable monuments that had no useful purpose … Their existence* in excess *nevertheless (in certain respects) has perpetually doomed multitudes of human beings and great quantities of useful goods to the destruction of wars.*[43]

The cathedral is one of many modes of sacrifice available to society, some more ruinous and ethically bankrupt than others. The enormous cost of a cathedral cannot all be held against its account, since some portion of that spectacular consumption was necessary to avoid even worse ruination. (Better a cathedral than a crusade.) Perhaps this is why Bataille does not attack the cathedral head-on as an instrument of theocracy, but instead uproots it, and all architecture with it, by locating the problem in something like abjection. Fundamentally, what is objectionable is the repression of the sovereignty of the subject exercised by its idealism, its presumption of an *a priori* ideal form for matter. As Hollier emphasises, this is only an ossification of the anguished relation human subjects already have to objects, as architecture is 'anthropomorphic.' Architecture, like all symbolic practices, is a "frock coat"[44] of form and meaning thrown over the unassimilable Real. But the cathedral is particularly egregious because it is totalising (claims total moral authority) and monist (establishes a system of infinitely regressive geometries capable of assimilating all matter, all difference, at any scale). In this sense, the cathedral is the Icarian project *par excellence.* A canon of Seville is said to have uttered, in 1402, "We shall build so large a cathedral that those who see it in its finished state will think that we were mad."[45]

Not by accident, one of the events which turned Bataille towards contemplating the limits of human experience was the shelling of Notre-Dame de Reims, where he received baptism in the summer of 1914 amid

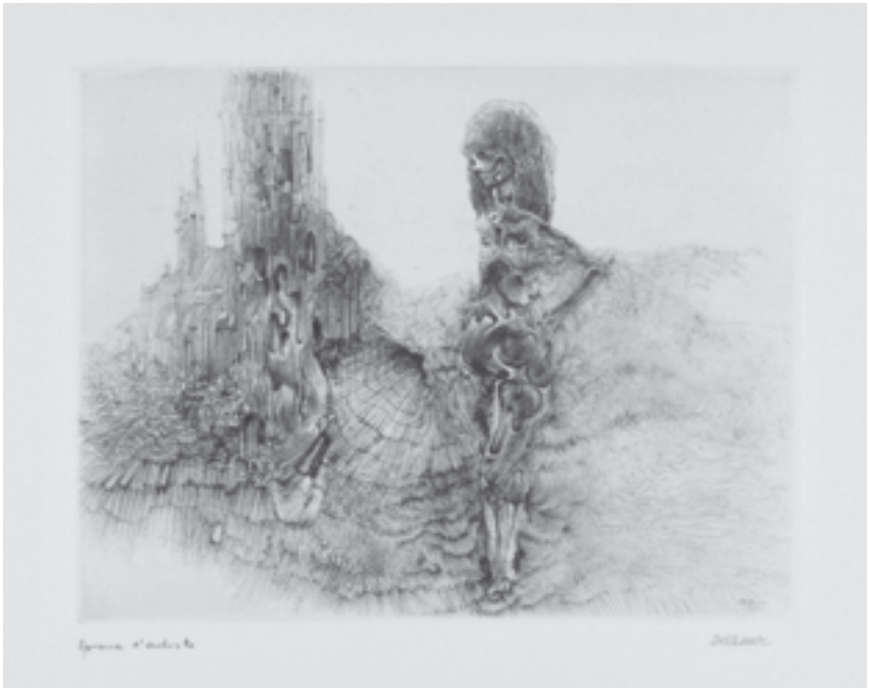

FIGURE 2: HANS BELLMER, THE WOMAN AT THE CATHEDRAL, 1948, REPRINTED BY PERMISSION.

THE WOMAN AND CATHEDRAL ARE EQUALS IN THE COMPOSITION, BUT THIS TIME BECAUSE THE CATHEDRAL IS FORESHORTENED. THE CATHEDRAL AND WOMAN ARE ELIDED, BOTH CONSTITUTED THROUGH THE FORCE OF ABJECTION IMPOSING ITSELF ON THE HYPERGRAPHIC HORROR VACUI OF THE REAL.

a crowd of soldiers.[46] (He would later recognise his conversion as bad faith.) German artillery arrived within range of Reims and soon after, on the 20th of September, the cathedral burned. By then Bataille and his mother had evacuated Reims, 'abandoning'[47] his blind, paralytic father to apparent doom. Bataille recalls the "filthy, smelly state to which [his father's] total disablement reduced him (for instance, he sometimes left shit on his trousers)."[48] The abjected real father, as it were, put the lie to the Name-of-the-Father. "Still," remembers Bataille, "I believe he faced up to it, as always."[49] Joseph-Aristide Bataille's immanent sovereignty, it might have seemed to his son, was analogous to a perpetually burning cathedral—a cathedral in the grip of a violent sacrifice which put the lie to the Word of the Father, which left only a Father with shit on his trousers.

The ghost of his father was no doubt on Bataille's mind when he fixated on the man with

shitty breeches in Salvador Dalí's painting, *The Lugubrious Game*, seeing in him an emasculation fundamental to the human condition.[50] André Breton and the Surrealists (including Dalí himself) were disgusted by and rejected the interpretation, exposing themselves to criticism by Bataille as being 'Icarian' themselves. To Bataille, their surrealism only served to exchange one restricted economy for another which happened to privilege creative inspiration in dreams. Bataille's revolt was more total, and general to abjection.

BASE MATERIALISM

Thankfully, Bataille points us to a "loophole"[51] in the Symbolic which promises to restore the sovereignty of the subject, if only momentarily. It is a narrow path "traced by the painters,"[52] which might also apply to architects:

> *Nothing is more common than for a painter to accept the reduction of his being to painting.*
>
> *Living in a world in which to paint is one possible function, he chooses it as his limit. […] From this moment he defines this* means *as an end, for he must deny his servility. […]*
>
> *Nevertheless, it is not as futile as it seems at first.*
>
> *This domain of means at least offers a loophole. All traditional means are asserted as a law which one can possibly breach, and this painter, attached as he is to his scorn for what painting is not, finally comes out of by means of a negation of the limit he wanted to uphold. At this moment his passion ceases to be painting, and becomes liberty …*[53]

A sovereign architecture ought to be, in Hollier's words, a "Bastille in no way different from its own storming."[54] The paradox may be a rhetorical simplification. (We recall that the Native American potlatch is "at once a surpassing of calculation and the height of calculation.")[55] A sovereign architecture, though still an Icarian project, is an architecture which 'negates the limit the architect wants to uphold.' It is a cathedral which perpetually burns, a wall which perpetually crumbles, just as the abject perpetually clings to and tears at the frayed edges of the subject.

In the Oedipal narrative of subject formation, the revolt begins with a matricide (the objectification of the mother) and culminates in a single event, the patricide. But to Bataille and Kristeva, revolt is a part of the constant deconstruction and reconstruction of the subject. Revolt serves to subvert and perhaps reform the symbolic order it ruptures through, and is the implicit goal of art which exploits the potential of non-sense

and non-meaning—including, as Hollier observes, Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette. Tschumi writes, "Good architecture must be conceived, erected and *burned in vain*. [our italics] The greatest architecture of all is the fireworker's: it perfectly shows the gratuitous consumption of pleasure."[56]

Both Bataille and Kristeva prescribe revolt—a confrontation with the abject, which Bataille spoke of in terms of 'low' or 'base materialism,' and which Imogen Tyler described critically as "affirmative abjection."[57]Neither Bataille nor Kristeva were the first to observe that the accession to culture entailed a concomitant denial of our base material, or to suggest its (temporary) undoing. Hollier observes:

> *In April 1929, Emmanuel Berl published his pamphlet,* The Death of Bourgeois Thought. The Death of Bourgeois Morality *followed a few months later. Its conclusion, entitled 'Defence of materialism', proposed a materialism that deserves Bataille's label of* base materialism, *a materialism of an aggressive vulgarity which Berl presents as the proletarian weapon* par excellence, *the only ideological weapon of any weight against the bourgeoisie.*[58]

But Bataille in particular was aware that this weapon of the proletariat cuts both ways. Every explicit attempt at affirmative abjection either fails as it were to consummate its revolt, ultimately reinforcing the symbolic order it was designed to subvert, or simply reverses the hierarchy to establish another. Abject art, so-called, usually succumbs to the first pitfall. In response to an exhibition of such artworks, Hollier asks, "What is abject about it? Everything was very neat; the objects were clearly art works. They were on the side of the victor."[59] The problem is not of course that the artworks were insufficiently repulsing, but that in exhibiting them, they were constituted as objects rather than abjects, and inscribed in a particular closed political economy. Presumably the artworks were to be viewed from a

"... A CATHEDRAL WHICH PERPETUALLY BURNS, A WALL WHICH PERPETUALLY CRUMBLES"

distance rather than licked.

CONCLUSION

It may be that affirmative abjection is definitionally futile. Culture cannot be sustained outside the symbolic order, and a project to escape project is still a project. But we infer from Bataille that architecture may be incited to do, at the very least, a little more. Doesn't its deep complicity in fact render it a singularly suitable instrument for material political action attenuating the cruelties of abjection—if only because it is most guilty?

Drawing further on Bataille, we pose an alternative inflection to the project of affirmative abjection. Lacan suggested that the conscious subject is structured as text, just as the structuralists established the intellectual habit of reading buildings as texts. Whereas a text might be persuasive, teleological, or metaphorical, a document is, in theory, according to Hollier, "aggressively realist,"[60] something which "cannot be invented."[61] Documents expose "the radical incongruity of the concrete: all at once, the most ordinary beings resemble nothing at all, cease to be in their places."[62]

A building which is a document would be one which declines to wear its frock coat—one which aggressively negates symbolic operation, so that what is formless, different, or meaningless cannot be appropriated, cannot be commodified. (A cathedral, we might say, is absolved of symbolic operation when it burns.) Such a building, so designed (or ignited) as to frustrate its own operation as an instrument of abjection, might be a venue for sacrifice, for the "gratuitous consumption of pleasure."[63] But unlike the Parc de la Villette, which may be analogous to the avant-garde non-sense poetry Kristeva once championed (but has since cooled on), a building which is a document would not so much carve meaning out of its signifying containers (a kind of Surrealist project), but rather expose the wounds of abjection which it already bears. A building which is a document might be a space for the kissing of bared wounds.

ENDNOTES

1. Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, [1980] 1982.

2. (*propre*) "Usually, in expository prose, the context removes the ambiguities that poetic language thrives on. Kristeva is not averse to using polysemy to her advantage, as other French theorists like Derrida and Lacan have also done. The French word *propre*, for instance, has kept the meaning of the

Latin *proprius* (one's own, characteristic, proper) and also acquired a new one: clean. At first, in *Powers of Horror*, the criteria of expository prose seemed to apply, but in several instances I began to have my doubts about this. When I asked Kristeva which meaning she intended the answer was, both." Leon S. Roudiez, translator's note to *Powers of Horror*, by Julia Kristeva (New York: Columbia University, [1980] 1982), viii.

3. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 10.

4. Ibid*,* 33.

5. Ibid*,* 32.

6. Ibid*,* 64.

7. Ibid*,* 32.

8. Winnicott, D. W., *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, [1971] 2010), 15.

9. Ibid, 12.

10. Ibid, 8.

11. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 13. Abject: ab-ject, from the Latin roots *ab* (away) and *iaci*o (to throw).

12. Ibid*,* 6.

13. Ibid*,* 3.

14. Lacan, *Seminar of 1956-57*, quoted in Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 33.

15. Ibid*,* 35.

16. Ibid*,* 5.

17. The problematic gendering of Kristeva's model of abjection has also been criticised. See for example: Tyler, Imogen. "Against Abjection." *Feminist Theory 10*, no. 1 (2009): 77–98. doi: 10.1177/1464700108100393.

18. "There is something anachronistic in associating Bataille [1897–1962], a writer who died even before people started to talk about structuralism, with poststructuralism." Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille,* trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, [1974]

1992), ix.

19. The spatial aspects of the philosophies of Kristeva, Deleuze and Guattari are compared in: West-Pavlov, Russell. *Space in Theory: Kristeva, Foucault, Deleuze.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

20. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy,* trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1, *Consumption* (New York: Zone Books, [1967] 2007), 57.

21. 'Process' is an English loan word (see note 2).

22. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 9.

23. Ibid, 11, 12.

24. On laughter and the Kristevan Abject: John Limon, *Stand-up Comedy in Theory, or, Abjection in America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 73–75.

25. Georges Bataille, "The Solar Anus," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939,* ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 5.

26. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 4.

27. Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo.* London: Routledge, [1966] 2009.

28. Ibid, 44.

29. Ibid, 3.

30. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 3.

31. Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* 150.

32. For example, the symptoms of abjection in architecture have already been theorised in terms of the erotic and *unheimlich* by architectural theorist Anthony Vidler's discussion of Roger Callois' theory of "dark space" and "legendary psychasthenia." Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 173.

33. Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 52.

34. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 68.

35. Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves,* trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 2.

36. Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille,* trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, [1974] 1992), x.

37. Hollier, *Against Architecture,* xii.

38. Ibid, xi–xii.

39. Georges Bataille, "Architecture," in *Encyclopædia Acephalica,* eds. Robert Lebel and Isabelle Waldberg, trans. Ian White et al. (London: Atlas, 1995), 35. The passage originally appeared in the journal *Documents* (no. 2, May 1929), co-founded and later solely edited by Bataille.

40. François Bucher, "Medieval Architectural Design Methods, 800–1560," *Gesta 11*, no. 2 (1972): 41, doi:10.2307/766593.

41. Bataille, *The Accursed Share I,* 23.

42. Ibid*,* 12.

43. Ibid*,* 24.

44. Georges Bataille, "Formless," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939,* ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 31. This passage originally appeared in *Documents* no. 7, (December 1929).

45. Quoted in the frontmatter of: Erlande-Brandenburg, Alain. *The Cathedral: The Social and Architectural Dynamics of Construction.* Translated by Martin Thom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1989] 1994.

46. The cathedral was the subject of Bataille's first published text, written some time before 1920 when he apostatized. See: Hollier, *Against Architecture,* 14–19 (in which the text is reproduced).

47. Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye,* trans. Joachim Neugroschal (New York: Penguin Classics, [1928] 2014) 78.

48. Ibid, 72-73.

49. Ibid*,* 78.

50. Georges Bataille, "The Lugubrious Game," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939,* ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 24–30.

51. Georges Bataille, "André Masson," in *The Absence of Myth,* (London: Verso, 2006), 180.

52. Bataille, "Architecture," 36.

53. Bataille, "André Masson," 179–180.

54. Hollier, *Against Architecture*, xi.

55. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: Essay on General Economy,* trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 2, *History of Eroticism* (New York: Zone, 1993), 47.

56. Bernard Tschumi, "Fireworks" [1974], extract from *A Space: A Thousand Words,* (London: Royal, 1975). Cited in: Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 262.

57. Tyler, "Against Abjection," 77-78.

59. Denis Hollier, "The Use Value of the Impossible," in *Bataille: Writing the Sacred,* ed. Carolyn Bailey Gill (London: Routledge, 1995), 147.

59. Denis Hollier quoted in: Martin Jay, "Force Fields: Abjection Overruled," *Salmagundi* no. 103 (Summer 1994): 244.

60. Denis Hollier, *Absent Without Leave: French Literature under the Threat of War,* trans. Catherine Porter, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 141.

61. Ibid*,* 140.

62. Ibid*,* 139.

63. Tschumi, "Fireworks," 262.