Necessity's long elevation also resembles an autonomous order.
—Alberto Pérez-Gómez

It is not so much that the pursuit of architectural "being" is wrong as that it is unbecoming.
—Jeffrey Kipnis

In the beginning of architecture was the ἀρχή, we all know that, even if some credulous souls continue to confuse the ἀρχή with Λόγος. Ἀρχή is the ruling principle, the dominant, the commencement that holds sway and governs from beginning to end. Sometimes it seems as though, in the beginning, the Pythagorean astronomer called *Timaeus* was able to say it all; as though we ourselves constitute the ends of his multimillennial beginning. The second portion of the word *architecture*, we also know, involves τέχνη, or at least the teaching of the techniques and "technics" of design, fabrication, and building; the word *architecture* therefore suggests the governance or ruling sway of all the words in Western

languages that have *tec-* as their root. It is no doubt a personal quirk of mine—a classic hysterical symptom like nausea or numbness in the limbs, perhaps an uncontrollable reflex movement about the perimeter of the eye—that I wish to spell this root new. Not *tec-*, but *tic-*. Not architecture, but archeticture.

Because I had good technical training in philosophy (which is where the architects, with their unparalleled technical training, stand with *their* noses pressed against the windowpane), I was always well-informed about *tec-*. Only belatedly did I learn of the root *tic-*, and through a kind of back door, awkwardly, in the way we learn things at school, trundling oversize books—dictionaries, for example. Liddell-Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (1940) contains in its 2,111 pages a few lines about τίκτω, τίκτειν, a few sparse lines of *ticture*. Not *tincture,* especially not a tincture of philosophy, which I would not wish on anyone, but a kind of *archaic ticture*. I do not want to bore my readers with long-winded excerpts from dictionary entries, but allow me a few tidbits, scraps that usually get lost in translation. Whereas Aeschylus writes ὁ τεκών or ἁ τεκοῦσα, "begetter" or "sire," and "bearer," respectively, these words are normally translated simply as "father" and "mother" (*Libation Bearers,* lines 690, 133). When in Sophocles' *Electra* Clytemnestra exclaims, "Mother and child! It is a strange relation" (line 770), we are somehow protected from the Greek: δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν, "Uncanny, overpowering is this matter of engendering!" "Monstrous is this thing we call sexual reproduction!" Sometimes the sense of engendering in τίκτειν is quite general, as in Sophocles' *Ajax,* where we hear that favor *breeds* favor (line 522). Yet most often τίκτειν is explicitly a matter of blood and semen, of houses stained by murders and adulteries among the ancestors; it is apparently a matter of that small number of very special families, as Aristotle says, that constitute the

infamous houses of tragedy. The House of Atreus was built by *archeticture,* not architecture.

Yet the roots *tic-* and *tec-* encroach on each other. The child is τὸ τέκνον, whereas the joiner, carpenter, or master of arts, is ὁ τέκτων. Τεχνάζω, "I contrive or devise," aims at something that is τίκος, "refined, artificial," and almost inevitably gets mixed up with τεκνουργία, the begetting or rearing of children. It is as though our own word "reproduction" were quite naturally and inevitably the odd mix of technics and love life that it is, a mere mimicry of Greek "production." Indeed, the two roots of love and work, *tic-* and *tec-,* are intricately imbricated, even intertwined. Perhaps it is silly to try to muster them into a straight line, to separate out and arrange the lines of their descent, with the x's and o's clearly distinguished from one another: perhaps it is puerile to play tic-tec-toe with them.

However, I wonder—even if it sounds suspiciously like a grand narrative, indeed, the grandest of all narratives—whether in the West we have not always quite relentlessly reduced the one root *(tic-)* to the other *(tec-),* reduced it to the point where we have all but eradicated the senses of engendering and of the love play that may induce reproduction. We seem to be reluctant to concede that after one has made one's bed with technical proficiency one must sleep in it, and that it is after all rather different to sleep with someone than alone. All making belongs in the public domain, all sleeping in the private. We make things, and thus "make it" in the vertical, professional world of drawing tables and stools. If we "make it" on the horizontal, "make it" with someone, we consider it indiscreet to discuss the matter in public; or else, on the contrary, we bandy about such "making it," as though it were a matter within our manipulation and control, a matter of mere technical contrivance and design. Whether we are diffident or obnoxious about it, however, we sense

the subtle difference: it is one thing to be the world's cleverest architect or critic or philosopher, another to love somebody or something to distraction and despair. (It will therefore not have been paternity or maternity I wish to talk or write about at all, but something that such reproduction presupposes.) Freud says that all culture, and not only in the West, depends on human beings' capacity to busy themselves with *tec,* to rise on the afflatus of what we now call "high tech," because, deep down where we are all exposed superficies, we know what makes us *tic.* Yet our "making it" at that ostensibly lower level has little to do with our adept tinkering and proud professionalism, no matter how much we say we love our work.

Does such tic-talk mean to "psychologize" architecture, criticism, and philosophy? If only such psychological reduction were genuinely possible! However, psychoanalysis (to take one example) is itself twisted in this regard, its energetics of drives yoked to the ergics of its own work—the analyst's technical know-how plumbing the depths and claiming to design a productive therapy. Professional philosophy is worse: utterly enamored of its own technical wizardry in argumentation, it runs its epistemological vacuum cleaner roughshod over everyone else's language, scoring points each time an opponent's ideas can be proven to be either false or trivial. Certainly, in loquacious philosophy, as in busy-busy architecture, there is no time taken to talk about that other root, *tic-*. No time for tic-talk.

Let us carve out a snippet of time—and space—for such talk. What would architecture be like in a world where not everything and everyone were at the disposal of technical calculation, fabrication, measurement, and manipulation? Where not everything and everyone were amenable to design? What would architecture be like if

we spelled it new—or very old, as the case may be—as *archetic-ture?* What would things be like in a world where in order to *make* something one had to make it *with* that something, as though making it *with someone?* A world where one would have to be not merely polite but in the desperate position of having to *beseech,* a world where one would always be head over breakfast in love?

> Our task is to remember that we must remain among the living, among the creators of worlds. Yet we can accomplish this only through the work of the two halves of the world: masculine and feminine. (Luce Irigaray, *E,* 122)

Of course, paternity does not require love. Neither does maternity, with which paternity seems to rhyme. Accident is always a possibility, even a likelihood. Accident, resentment, and subsequent abuse. Nevertheless, even in this time of the New Puritanism, the Right-to-Life, and the Death of Sex, a certain confusion continues to run rampant. People everywhere continue in spite of it all to risk love. Not many risk it in the classroom or design studio, to be sure, but legions take a chance out on the street or in the corners of discreet rooms. The advertising on inner-city buses and elevated trains proves it: two blurbs adjacent to one another on the band of advertisements that grace the cars of the Chicago El, the first proclaiming "Free Pregnancy Testing—No Questions, Answers," the second proffering a cheery "Hi, I'm Bill. I'm learning to live with HIV." Tic-talk, in *our* time?

Such talk would have to allow itself to be complicated by all sorts of things right from the start. Indeed, it would have to become an unpronounceable *kti*-talk. For another root that is relevant to both τίκτειν and τέχνη (presuming it is *another* root, and not the result of a mere Freudian-Abelian inversion of letters) is *kti-,* as in κτίζω, κτίσις, "settling, founding, creating," "creature, creation," but also

"building," as in the erection of a temple or sanctuary. The archek-ticture of κτίζω, as employed by the historian Herodotus (4. 46) and the tragedians, does a great deal of work: the word means to people a country, to build houses and cities in it, to plant groves of fruit trees, to erect altars, or quite generally "to produce, create, bring into being." It is the word that appears in the Septuagint whenever it is a question of God's creation or of his creatures. Apparently, the root *kti-* comes from the Sanskrit word *kséti,* meaning "to reside," and *ksitis,* "habitation." *Kti-* or *ksi-* talk therefore puts us in mind of *dwelling.*

One of the complications of tic-talk that I have in mind is that introduced by Martin Heidegger in an essay—familiar to most students of architecture nowadays—called "Building Dwelling Thinking." The middle term is the crucial one for Heidegger, who is trying to *think* about *building* on the basis of *dwelling.* In the course of his reflections Heidegger engages in some tic-talk of his own:

> The Greek for "to bring forth or to produce" is τίκτω. The word τέχνη, technique, belongs to the verb's root *tec.* To the Greeks τέχνη means neither art nor handicraft but to make something appear within the scope of what is present, to make it appear as this or that, in this way or that way. The Greeks conceive of τέχνη, producing, in terms of letting-appear. Τέχνη thus conceived has been concealed in the tectonics of architecture since ancient times. Of late it still remains concealed, and more resolutely, in the technology of power machinery. Yet the essence of the erecting of buildings cannot be understood adequately in terms of either architecture or engineering construction, nor in terms of a mere combination of the two. The erecting of buildings would not be suitably defined *even if* we were to think of it in the sense of the original Greek τέχνη *solely* as a letting-appear, which brings forward something produced, as something present among other things that are already present.[1]

There is something unsatisfying about Heidegger's remarks,

however promising the tracing of τέχνη back to τίκτω may be. He introduces the word for engendering and sex, but straightway reduces it to the ostensibly "original" root *tec-* and its scion τέχνη, reducing the two of them in turn to a cryptic "letting-appear." The invocation of *presence* as the meaning of being, and of presence as *radiant appearance,* does absolutely nothing to prompt our thinking in a direction that would eschew the visualist and manipulatory technics and architectonics that Heidegger himself derides. There is thus something bloodless about Heidegger's complaint, as coy as it is (*"even if"*). It is as though Heidegger, in this "letting-appear," is taking refuge from something, taking refuge from some powerful force or daimon—what one might call *daimon life.*[2] The welcome complication introduced by Heidegger, however, is that tic-talk will have to speak not only of architecture but also of the presencing of the present. *Archeticture,* spelling itself new, will be about the meaning of being as such.

However, at the moment I do not want to write about Heidegger's project. Rather, my orthographic tic wants to take me back to that most ancient tale of paternity and *poietic* craftsmanship, Plato's *Timaeus.*

Timaeus is speaking to Socrates and to two other devotees of the goddess Athena. He says that in the beginning was Chaos, or disorder, and blind Necessity. Never mind where the People's Worker (= δημιουργός) was in the beginning: let there be Chaos and blind Necessity. Timaeus then tells how the

> Let us come back to the hitherside of philosophy's self-assured discourse, which advances by oppositions of principle and counts on the origin as on a *normal couple.* We must come back in the direction of a preoriginary realm that would deprive us of that assurance and at the same time demand a philosophical discourse that is impure, menaced, bastard, hybrid. These

traits are not negative. They do not discredit a discourse that would simply be inferior to philosophy. Because if, to be sure, that discourse is not true, but only plausible, it nonetheless says what is necessary on the matter of necessity. (Jacques Derrida, *K,* 94)

Demiurge, as a kind of community organizer, brought order into the Chaos, creating the universe as we know it. Here is how he did it. He "looked up" to certain "paradigms" of "being," following their patterns in his constructions of "becoming." (I forgot to mention, or Timaeus forgot to mention, that the paradigms were there in the beginning too: *in* the beginning, *for* the beginning, hence *before* the beginning.) My readers are already impatient with this scarcely plausible story, and want to ask where the Demiurge was when he did this looking up, and why the paradigms were "above" him if he was the designer of the universe. F. M. Cornford, the well-known Cambridge classicist, argued that creation myths and cosmogonies always have to tell the story of creation twice, as though trying (in vain, as it turns out) to account for the stage setting or backdrop that the heroic creative act presupposes.[3] When Marduk slays Tiamat it is in order to stand on her back and—once again, but always for the *first* time—slay Tiamat. Creations take twelve days, not six: six days to fabricate or breathe life into the world, and six days trying to find the shoes you will have had to step into on the morning of that first day.

The demiurge formed the cosmos *in the image* of the eternal paradigm he contemplates. The *logos* that relates to these images, to these iconic beings, must be of the same nature: merely plausible (29b-d). In this domain we must accept the "plausible myth" *(ton eikota mython)* and not look for more (29d; cf. 44d, 48d, 57d, 72d-e). (Derrida, *K,* 67)

Perhaps that is the sort of problem not only the Demiurge but also Timaeus himself confronts. For once he has told the tale of the Demiurge's looking up to the "paradigms" and modeling "becoming" on "being," he confesses the need to start the story all over again, and from the beginning. Indeed, this restarting happens

twice, though in the end it never achieves a genuine beginning. Each time Timaeus recounts in detail the story of the Demiurge and his fabrication of the world soul and cosmic body, the story of the several generations of lesser gods and the generation of mortal men (that is, mortal males, male men), he winds up saying that something is missing, he cannot find the handle, he lacks the place or space or even the stuff *in which* the paradigms or models can intermingle with the raw materials of Chaos. Timaeus says he needs a mixing bowl, a kind of container or receptacle in which the "originals" can operate on and somehow influence what will become their "copies." The mixing bowl will turn out to be called χώρα *(khôra)*.

Yet where does he find the mixing bowl—is it up there on the shelf with all the other paradigmatic forms and intelligible molds of "being," or is it down here below, where all the other materials of "becoming" are strewn higgledy-piggledy all over the floor? And can the receptacle possibly contain all the molds plus all the material stuff that should go into making the copies? Timaeus very much wants to reply to these questions. The problem is that he has begun by dividing everything into two, with a never-the-twain-shall-meet gesture and attitude—the very attitude and practice of diacritical division that wreaks so much havoc in Plato's *Sophist:* Timaeus draws a hard and fast line between, first, pure and immutable "being," which is invisible and untouchable, accessible to thought alone, intelligibly paradigmatic as such, and, second, the grosser world of "becoming" or γένεσις, the things we can see and manipulate.

> *Khôra* means a place occupied by someone, a country, habitation, designated seat, rank, post, assigned position, territory, or region. In fact, *khôra* will always be already occupied, invested, even as a general place, even if it is always distinguished from everything that takes place in it. (Derrida, *K,* 58)

How are we to think that which, although it exceeds the regularity of the *logos,* its law, its natural or legitimate genealogy, nonetheless does not pertain, *stricto sensu,* to *mythos?* Beyond the arrested or but lately arrived opposition of *logos* and *mythos,* how are we to think the necessity of that which, granting a place to this opposition, as to so many others, sometimes does not seem to submit to the law of the very thing it *situates?* What about this *place?* Is it nameable? And would it not have some impossible relation to the possibility of naming? Is there something to *think* here, as we have so hastily said, something to think in accord with *necessity?* (Derrida, *K,* 18)

Yet how could the Demiurge "look up" to pure being if it is invisible? To be sure, Timaeus is speaking metaphorically or by way of analogy when he says that the Demiurge "looked up"; we all know that the Demiurge gazed aloft with or in his *mind's* eye; and if someone persists, asking Timaeus which is the original and which the copy, the mind's eye or the paired bodily eyes, that is, vision or mental envisaging, Timaeus will simply refuse to answer. For he is only repeating someone else's story, an old Pythagorean story, which is what Plato too will have been retelling. In fact, Timaeus is quite explicit about it. He says, "I'm only telling a story, and it *probably* happened like this, but you'd have to be a god to be sure."

Discourse on the *khôra* is thus also a discourse on genre and gender *(genos),* and on the different genres of genre. . . . The *khôra* is a *triton genos* [a third kind] with regard to the two genres of being (the immutable and intelligible vs. the corruptible and sensible, which is in becoming), but it also seems to be determined with regard to sex and gender: Timaeus speaks of the matter as "mother" and "nurse." He does so in a way that we shall not hasten to name. Practically all the interpreters of *Timaeus* avail themselves of the resources of rhetoric, without ever inquiring into the matter. They speak quite calmly of metaphors, images, and comparisons.

However, even with the best will and all the patience in the world, we are going to have trouble with Timaeus's mixing bowl, his recalcitrant yet absolutely necessary "receptacle," which eventually will be called χώρα, which in turn will eventually be translated as *spatium,* space. Allow me to reproduce a page or two from the middle of Plato's *Timaeus.* Here is how the Pythagorean astronomer,

Timaeus of Locri, describes the predicament he is in, as he tries to start all over again:

> This new beginning of our discussion of the universe requires a fuller division than the former, for then we made two classes [48e 3: εἴδη]; now a third must be revealed. The two sufficed for the former discussion. One, which we assumed, was a paradigm, intelligible and always the same, and the second was only the imitation [48e 6: μίμημα] of the paradigm, generated and visible. There is also a third, which we did not distinguish at the time, conceiving that the two would be enough. Yet now the argument seems to require that we should set forth in words another kind, which is difficult of explanation and but dimly seen. What power and nature are we to attribute to it? We reply that it is the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation.

(Note: The apparent multiplicity of metaphors or mythemes in general in these places signifies, not that the proper sense can become intelligible only by means of these detours, but that the opposition between proper and figurative meaning, albeit without losing its value altogether, here encounters a limit [*K,* 100–101].) They pose no questions about the tradition of rhetoric, whch places at their disposal a stockpile of very useful concepts—but all of them construed on the basis of this distinction between the sensible and the intelligible to whcih precisely the thought of the *khôra* can no longer accommodate itself. Indeed, Plato gives us to understand without ambiguity that the thought of *khôra* has the gravest difficulty accommodating itself. This problem of rhetoric—which is singularly a proglem of naming—is not, as we can see, a merely accessory problem here. (Derrida, *K,* 20–21)

A moment later Timaeus elaborates on this vaguely envisaged and wholly unaccountable "nurse." She—if we can call her that—is of a nature that "receives into itself all bodies." Herself utterly promiscuous—or generous, as the case may be, but in any case capacious—she must always be addressed as *the same,* for,

> inasmuch as she always receives all things, she never departs at all from her own nature and never, in any way or at any time, assumes a form like that of any of the things that enter into her; she is the natural recipient of all impressions, and is stirred and informed by them, and appears different from time to time by

One must not confuse *khôra* with a generality, attributing to it properties that would always be the properties of a properly determinate being, that is, of one of the beings that *khôra* "receives," or of one of the beings whose image she "receives": for example, a being of the feminine

gender—and that is why the femininity of the mother or nurse can never be properly attributed to *khôra*. (Derrida, *K*, 33)

reason of them. But the forms that enter into and go out of her are the imitations of eternal beings, imitations modeled after their paradigms in a wonderful and mysterious manner, which we will hereafter investigate. For the present we have only to conceive of three genera: first, that which is in process of generation; secondly, that in which the generation takes place; and thirdly, that of which the thing generated is a resemblance that has arisen naturally [50d 2: φύεται]. We may liken the receiving principle to a mother, the source or spring to a father, and the intermediate nature to a child.

Who are you, *Khôra*? (Derrida, *K*, 63)

Such is the happy and holy family of the Demiurge: the paternal font, the nascent ordered universe, and the maternal "in which." Timaeus notes that the "in which," the mother, must be shapeless—in order not to impose her own form on her offspring—and neutral, "like the base of a perfume." "Wherefore," he concludes, "the mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things is not to be termed earth or air or fire or water, or any of their compounds, or any of the elements from which these are derived; but it is an invisible and amorphous being that receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is utterly incomprehensible" (51b). A moment later Timaeus sets an impenetrable seal on the mystery of the receptacle, which seems to lie neither on the shelf nor on the floor but to hover in midair, as though she were a great daimon or titaness: we understand her, says Timaeus, only when we leave our five senses out of account, and our lucid ratiocinations as well—only when we enter into a dreamlike state, engaging in a kind of "bastard reasoning" (52b 2: λογισμῷ τινι νόθῳ). Such a dreamlike state opens a space for tic-talk.

In truth, every narrative content—whether of fable, fiction, legend, or myth matters little for the moment—becomes in its turn the container of another tale. Each tale is thus the *receptacle* of another. There are only receptacles of narrative receptacles. (Derrida, *K*, 75)

The philosophical tradition has often identified "bastard reasoning" as φαντασία, *imagination* or *fancy,* an essential—yet essentially seductive—faculty of the soul. The great Renaissance translator of Plato, Marsilio Ficino, renders the phrase as "adulterated reasoning," but, whether we opt for bastardy or adultery, it is clear even to Timaeus that the nurse and mother of becoming is not only difficult but also dangerous to descry and describe, especially for an expectant father, whose craftsmanship and technique will not help him now that he is going to confront the Mother of Becoming—and perhaps the Mother of Being as well.

> If the cosmo-ontological encyclopedia of *Timaeus* presents itself as a "plausible myth," a tale ordered upon the hierarchical opposition of the sensible and the intelligible, of the image that is in becoming and eternal being, how are we to inscribe and situate a discourse on *khôra* there? *Khôra* is of course an inscribed moment, but it also turns on a *place of inscription* concerning which it is clearly said that it *exceeds* or *precedes*—in an order that, moreover, is alogical, achronological, and anachronistic as well—the oppositions that constitute the mytho-logical as such, mythical discourse as well as discourse *on* myth. On the one hand, by resembling a thought process that is *dreamlike* and *bastard,* this discourse causes us to think of a kind of myth-within-the-myth, of an abyss opening up within myth in general. However, on the other hand, giving us to think about what pertains to neither the sensible nor the intelligible, neither becoming nor eternity, discourse on *khôra* is no longer a discourse on being, is neither true nor plausible, and thus appears to be heterogeneous to myth, at least, to the mytho-logical, to this philosopho-mytheme that orders the myth in the direction of its philosophical *telos.* (Derrida, *K,* 67-68)

Bastard reasoning concerns the mother of the sole *legitimate* son or daughter of the universal father. *Adulterated* reasoning concerns the *only* consort whom the *sole* father of the "monogenic" universe can have embraced. Timaeus needs a kind of illegitimate logic to envisage her, even though she is eidetically unique (and thus on the side of pure "being"), for she is beyond all seeing and touching and thinking. Yet it seems clear that the Demiurge will have had to touch her, and not with his mind's eye. The mother and nurse of becoming is called Ἀνάγκη, blind and fateful "Necessity."

Each time Timaeus has to recommence his story, things get more difficult instead of easier for the father—necessarily so. Why? Because—or so at least it seems to him—blind Necessity is a bitch.

Let us not get upset. Let us—whether we identify ourselves as women or men or some third thing—not be offended if the mother of the legitimate universe is called a bitch, while the father is touted as the best and most generous of benefactors. For *someone* must be held responsible for the slippage that makes becoming or γένεσις something less than pure being; *someone* must be held responsible for the nameless adversity and inscrutable attrition that causes every copy to be worth less than its original; *someone* must be found or invented who bitches the type, as it were. For millennia hence, and not only in the West, *she* will be held responsible for the slippage or seepage, the adversity and attrition; *she* will be held responsible for the gaping wound or fissure in being. It is as Mary Shelley's monster declares as he bends over the sleeping figure of Justine: "[N]ot I but she shall suffer; the murder I have committed . . . she shall atone. The crime had its source in her: be hers the punishment!"[4] *She* will be derided as that exceedingly ill-tempered breed whom the male man fears whenever he sees the sign on the garden gate: Beware of the Dog.

Let us not growl. For "dog," at least for a bastard orthography, is a sort of illegitimate Abelian-Freudian palindrome, as "madam" is a legitimate one: spell it backwards and you get (almost) the same word. D-O-G, G-O-D. (I am writing very cryptically, well-nigh theologically, and my readers must forgive me that, but I think both they and I see what the Demiurge is beginning dimly to discern and vastly to fear—namely, the reversibility of all hierarchies.) The Demiurge is afraid of that bastard palindrome. He hopes it is only a problem

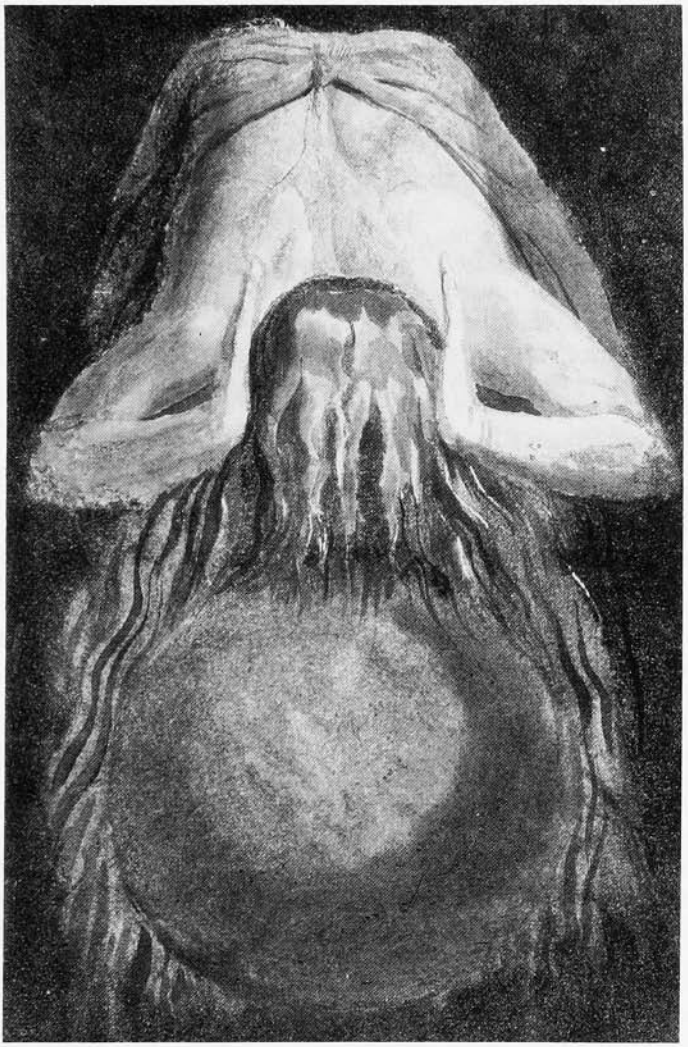

Fig. 2 William Blake (1757–1827)
The First Book of Urizen. Lambeth, 1794
Bentley Copy A
pl. 11 [Bentley 17]
Relief etching, color printed with watercolor
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

with his spelling. It is not. It is the fundamental problem of *archeticture*. And for any master patriarch or male man, archeticture embodies a truly pestilential danger, the danger of the utterly uncanny.

Plato, I believe, is asking Timaeus and his Demiurge to surrender something, to expose themselves to their own limits and limitations, to forfeit their proud independence, to allow their cocksure confidence to be shaken, to interrupt their absorption in their own expertise. Plato is asking the astronomer to loosen up and laugh a little at himself, to shake off the air of imperious power and know-how that surrounds him. In fact, Plato's *Timaeus* is at times a very funny dialogue, something on the order of a situation comedy. I must concede, however, that for the past two thousand years philosophers have taken it as gospel, without the slightest inkling of its nature as farce.

> In this theater of irony, where the scenes are contained in one another as a series of receptacles without end and without bottom, how are we to isolate a thesis or a theme that one would tranquilly attribute to "the-philosophy-of-Plato," indeed to the only philosophy there is, which is Platonic? This would be to misconstrue or deny outright the textual structure of the scene, to believe one could resolve all the questions of a general topology, including the question of the places of rhetoric, and to believe that one comprehends what it means to receive, which is to say, to comprehend. It is a bit too soon. As always. (Derrida, *K*, 80)

I do not have the time or space to present even the wackiest parts—for example, the parts where Timaeus, who is a leading member of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, explains that in the cycles of reincarnation women are barely one level above dogs and fish, or those where Timaeus tells us all about disease and about the way illness came into this otherwise perfect world, built by design and modeled on paradigmatic being. The last disease he describes is ἀφροδίσια ἀκολασία (86d 3), "sexual intemperance." That disease is communicated to male men by female women, communicated, miraculously, *even before women come to exist as such,* even before

the female makes herself available as the receptacle into which wicked or cowardly men can collapse and suffer degradation. A nonexistent womankind injects the men with the very disease that will call for her own introduction into the world. She thus marks the contagion (along with the pusillanimous lust) with which and by which—and even *in which*—men come to exist. Such are the vicissitudes of bastard reasoning, the distraught reasoning that quakes in fear before both the bitch and the bastard, before Necessity and all her children. Allow me to reproduce one last passage from the zaniest sitcom of Western philosophy, even though some of my readers are weary of my sense of humor, or of Timaeus's, and rightly so.

Who are you, *Khôra?* (Derrida, *K,* 63)

> On the subject of animals, then, the following remarks may be offered. Of the men [i.e., males] who came into the world, those who were cowards or led unrighteous lives may with reason be supposed to have changed into the nature of women in the second generation. And this was the reason why at that time the gods created in us the desire of sexual intercourse, contriving in man one animated substance, and in woman another. . . . Wherefore also in men the organ of generation becoming rebellious and masterful, like an animal disobedient to reason, and maddened with the sting of lust, seeks to gain absolute sway, and the same is the case with the so-called womb or matrix of women. The living creature in them passionately desires to make children, but when it remains barren long past the proper time it often suffers fretful irritation; and wandering everywhere throughout the body, obstructing the respiratory passages, it prevents them from taking in breath, drives the body to the worst extremes, and produces all sorts of illnesses, until passionate desire and love from each side gather together, plucking fruit from the trees, as it were, sowing in the fields of the matrix living creatures that are invisible because they are so small and have no shape, letting them develop there and come to maturity within, and after all this bringing them to light, thus fulfilling the generation of living creatures.
>
> In this way, women and all that is female were made. Now, as for the race of birds. . . . (90e-91e)

The passage is memorable if only for its classic symptomatology of hysteria. Yet its importance is truly universal. For the wan-

What is said mythically thus resembles a discourse without a legitimate father. Orphan or bastard, it is distinguished from the philosophical *logos* which, as *Phaedrus* tells us, must have a responsible father, a father who responds—for it and about it. We find this familial scheme on the basis of which one situates a discourse once again at work whenever we try to situate, if we can still put it this way, the place of any site, meaning *khôra*. (Derrida, *K*, 90)

dering womb and room of the universe, the mother and nurse of planetary becoming, is itself hysterical. Complete with nervous tic, the hysterical somatic conversion of τίκτειν. Whatever touches her cont(r)acts contagion. Indeed, she does not even need to *be* there for her contagion to spread. It is as though she sprang armor-clad from the head of Zeus the Father as "fretful irritation," cowardice, lubricity, and distress, which of course ought to have made us wonder about Zeus's head. At all events, she makes all the stories falter, and causes the storytellers to begin all over again, and each time they begin it is one more new botched—or bitched—beginning.

Time is ticking by and some or all of my readers are getting increasingly ticked off. Rightly so. What has any of this to do with those who dominate the contemporary architecture studio? I have spent a long time with Plato's *Timaeus* because, frankly, it has spent a long time with us: it is one of the two or three Platonic dialogues that never disappeared from the Western archive, not even after the fire at Alexandria, not even during the barbarian invasions and the ensuing Dark Ages of Europe. Although it existed for a time in the West only in Latin translation, we did not need to have *Timaeus* reintroduced into European circulation via Toledo or Damascus. It was there for Vitruvius to peruse, there for Suger of Saint-Denis and Odo of Metz to ponder. Even if it was not always there in the full splendor of its "archaic, Aeschylian diction" (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff), not always there in the tictonic Greek, Plato's *Timaeus* was available

throughout two millennia as the splendid comedy of a cosmic *Midsummer Night's Dream*—no mere sitcom—except that it became our blueprint for a universe, our model for what an architect is, and our schematic for what it means to be a man or a woman. In its august presence all laughter was stilled. The irrepressible Samuel Taylor Coleridge—arriving after William Blake, whom one must imagine laboring over Plato's *Timaeus* daily—came closest to bursting the bubble. He tells us the following about his reading:

> . . . I have been re-perusing with the best energies of my mind the *Timaeus* of Plato. Whatever I comprehend, impresses me with a reverential sense of the author's genius; but there is a considerable portion of the work, to which I can attach no consistent meaning. In other treatises of the same philosopher, intended for the average comprehensions of men, I have been delighted with the masterly good sense, with the perspicuity of the language, and the aptness of the inductions. I recollect likewise, that numerous passages in this author, which I thoroughly comprehend, were formerly no less unintelligible to me, than the passages now in question. It would, I am aware, be quite *fashionable* to dismiss them at once as Platonic Jargon. But this I cannot do with satisfaction to my own mind, because I have sought in vain for causes adequate to the solution of the assumed inconsistency. I have no insight into the possibility of a man so eminently wise using words with such half-meanings to himself, as must perforce pass into no-meaning to his readers.[5]

No doubt, Coleridge's reluctance retains a "reverential sense" even at the moments when all sense is lacking and bastard reasoning runs rampant. When it comes to the reception of Plato's *Timaeus,* laughter is far—even when nonsense is nigh.

Feeling anxious that something is missing from my own account, I too want to start over again, no matter how restive my readers may be. I shall start over under the guise of a summary. Plato's *Timaeus*

> One does not begin again at the beginning. One does not . . . find one's way back to first principles or to the elements of all things *(stoikheia tou pantos)*. One must go farther, taking up again everything that, up to now, one felt able to consider the origin; one must come back to this side of elementary principles, that is, to this side of the opposition between the paradigm and its copy. (Derrida, *K*, 93)

introduces the Demiurge as ποιητὴς καὶ πάτηρ (28c 3) of the universe, the "poet" and father, the maker and begetter of the world. Almost immediately it reduces these two rather different epithets to one, calling the Demiurge ὁ τεκταινόμενος (29e 6), the craftsman. The first reduction of paternity to technique has occurred: for *tec-* is not *tic-*, no matter what either Plato or Heidegger says or neglects to say. From hence, the Demiurge is the master of arts rather than one who for reasons beyond his control desires something or someone and so begets a world-child.

The reduction occurs in a strange context. Timaeus's question is: Did the artificer look to the paradigm of what is always itself, ever immutable, or did he look to the paradigm of the generated? Of course, one will ask how there can be an immutable paradigm of the mutable. However, even if there were such a paradigm, the skilled and beneficent Demiurge would not look at it. No, we are told that he looked to the eternal in order to mimic it—copying the eternal precisely in order to fabricate the temporal, temporary, transient, and changeable. If one wishes to know what sort of master designer looks to a paradigm he or she cannot replicate, or worse, a paradigm he or she has no intention at all of copying, no one will know what to say. Yet doubts concerning the Demiurge's skill as a joiner do not bother me as much as worries concerning his social skills. For, from the outset, wherever Necessity is concerned, the Demiurge is in deep waters.

There are two details about the father's creation of the universe that I want to emphasize. First, the *result* of his creation is a world