Oh Pioneers! Bodily Reformation Amid Daily Life

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Arakawa and Gins have been fomenting revolution for a long time. In the last twenty years their attention has turned more and more towards architecture and urban planning as a way of reforming our bodily existence. Their proposals enter daily life rather than staying in the isolated sphere of the museum or gallery. These constructions are to be lived in, not contemplated. Will daily life then blunt or sharpen Arakawa and Gins's power to educate and revise our "architectural bodies"?

"The Task of Reform"

Architectural traces appeared early in Arakawa's paintings. Works from the 60s and 70s often include outlines of enclosures, connecting spaces, and room and street plans. In the 80s the inclined planes one climbed to see his paintings began the spatial manipulation of the viewer. This led eventually to the collaborative construction of experimental mini-environments such as the Ubiquitous Site series and theNagi Museum's recreations of the Ryoanji garden. In addition to these projects, Arakawa and Gins created plans and models of houses and parks, then of whole residential quarters.

In theorizing their architectural proposals, Arakawa and Gins analyze the perceptual and bodily world as a dispersed assemblage of different kinds of "landing sites" for perception and imagination. Our architectural body is formed by the "cleavings" (holdings together and keepings apart) within this assemblage of landing sites. These landing sites create signification with features of the environment, which are themselves ongoing "cleavings" of other energetic centers (so that ultimately Arakawa and Gins can describe the living environment as "bioscleave").

> A person parses the world at any given instant into particular distributions of landing sites, or better, an organism-person-environment can be parsed into these distributions. (AB 6)
> If persons can never be extricated from surroundings, then what must be looked at is the extent to which they are bound to and influenced by them. In what respects and how variegatedly do physical surroundings invite bodily action. How far out into the environment does an organism that persons extend? (AB 40)

Being "in" a place is not a passive being-located in the way a pencil is in a drawer. Being-in is an ongoing activity, changeable and never completed. In that sense it is always tentative, not being-in-place but holding-in-place, holding ourselves and holding the place together. At the same time, architecture is no passive container for our being-in.

> Architectural works can direct the body's tentative constructing toward a holding in place, its forming in place. But it is also the case that how the body moves determines what turns out to hold together as architecture for it. (AB 50)

Arakawa and Gins want architecture to take advantage of that interaction to re-form our lives.

We find ourselves within an already on-going process that by its nature remains mostly habitual.

> People interact with biocleave largely through what has come to be called procedural knowing, a term covering both instinctual sequences and encoded knowing, that is, habitual patterns of activity. . . . Acquiring a skill involves integrating all steps needed for skillfully performing a task and then reducing them to a procedure. . . . The many activities and considerations that subsist as procedural knowing within or to one side of sited awareness, taking up fewer of its sites now than they had need of before they were thus reduced, free it to be active elsewhere. With steps and nuances of coordinating skills handled apart from awareness, a person can go on to acquire still other coordinating skills. (AB 52-3)

Through carefully designed spatial tactics our habitual world perception-construction/action processes can be made more self-aware. Once that happens they can be reviewed and perhaps revised. Arakawa and Gins propose constructing architectural surrounds that will accomplish this task.

> That which counts as procedural will need to be enlarged and made to exist so that it can be entered wittingly. Only once the procedural can on its own account be entered, only when procedural has been writ large . . . a constructed world that has, with great forethought, been tactically posed and thus been given its procedural due will instruct people in brand-new coordinating skills and in the compounding of skills attained. Ability to coordinate a greater number of skills leads to a freer and wider-ranging and more perspicacious intellect. (AB 53-4)

The first citation suggests that freedom to acquire new coordinating skills increases when we let some processes drop out of focal awareness. The second suggests that freedom will increase when we have more focused self-awareness of already existing processes and can consciously change them. The two claims can both be true, but there is a tension in how architecture can help them to be realized together, and it is this tension that I explore in this essay.

The task of re-forming is imperative for Arakawa and Gins because they believe we are victims of long established processes that lead into personal and social harms, and ultimately to the grave. Such processes may be social, causing environmental degradation, or they may be individual habits such as improper diet. Arakawa and Gins further hypothesize, though, that harmful yet alterable processes also occur at the level of our perceptual-physical world-formation. Arakawa and Gins' gamble is that by creating architectural environments that constrain and disrupt habitual processes, we could be brought to re-vision and re-form ourselves and our world on this basic level. By

intervening to alter fundamental actions and cleavings we might be able to take charge of our destiny in unforeseeable ways. By joining such alterations (and the knowledge of human possibilities they could bring) to the scientific work on life extension, even the grave might be avoidable.

> It is because we are creatures of an insufficiently procedural bioscleave that the human lot remains untenable. . . . members of the human species have neither the wherewithal to figure out the nature of their agency nor the requisite skill to engineer for themselves . . . procedures through which we could sustain ourselves indefinitely. (AB 54)

The urgency of this task is evident from our widespread acceptance of limited possibilities, not just the grave but patterns of bodily and social functioning that are not open to the full – and presently unknown – range of human creativity.

"Architectural Procedures"

As their part in meeting this crisis, Arakawa and Gins propose a "procedural architecture" that both guides and frustrates habitual actions. An architectural procedure is not just "a fixed set of called-for actions" but an ongoing "spatiotemporal collaboration between a moving body and a tactically posed surround" (AB 73). The architecture is designed to embody specific procedures which will "slow down the automatic dispersal [of perceptual-bodily landing sites, and] enter the dispersing itself" (AB 46). "A surround constructed to constrain a sequence of actions presents a procedure to be followed; and as soon as someone sets foot into an architectural surround that constrains action, the architectural procedure it stages gets going" (AB 55). An architectural procedure constructs the possibility for bodies and buildings to cooperate in the creation of new modes of phenomena. In particular, Arakawa and Gins want architectural procedures to build tentativeness into our lives and bodies, so that the processes of bodily world-formation remain open and revisable.

In *Architectural Body* Arakawa and Gins describe two such architectural procedures. The first is the Disperse-to-Contrast procedure, which works by providing contrasts to a current space. As we move through a house or a neighborhood or a city we find ourselves within repeating modules. The contrasting modules might be twins of one another, or they might be similar but not identical. A module might be a room, an apartment or house, or a city quarter. The identity or variation might show up in the overall volume, or in the terrain levels and pattern, or in orientation, scale, and surface textures. The effect would be to sharpen the process of locating ourselves within the current place, as we distinguish it from its twins or similars. The aim is that "this continual series of assessments and comparisons naturally brings about in residents a greater degree of alertness and a far sharper than ordinary sense of the architectural surround" (RD 283).

The second procedure is the Tentativeness-Cradling procedure. Here, instead of contrasting a set of clear and definite spaces, a single space is made indefinite and difficult. A room might have sections built to different scales, or a house might have twenty entrances, or an open prospect have multiple ground planes and horizons.

Arakawa and Gins superimpose different orders "to generate conditions for a multiplicity of sitings" (Knesl, RD 221). The aim is that "it will not be possible to take an unambiguous step" (RD 263). The person is to be "forever getting her bearings only tentatively," and "continually in start-again mode" (AB 77).

> When scale loses its traction on sited awareness, the tentativeness of the forming moment -- raw process, the raw process of venturing forth as existing all up in the air within nearground, middle ground, and farground simultaneously -- will be seen, heard, and smelled to as-if flutter in the breeze. (AB 76)

In both procedures, the inhabitant is brought to explicit and focused awareness of perceptual and bodily world-construction. Altering or improving that process, she is aided to "pull together an otherwise all-over-the-map sited awareness" (AB 60) into a "surefooted rightful hesitation" (AB 50). "Architectural procedures disclose, highlight, and explicate the tentative steps by which an organism maintains herself as a person" (AB 73). Habitual processes are thus brought into clear awareness so that they can be examined and reformed.

> Mediating for a person much of what hitherto existed for her as procedural or unconscious, movements and the sited awareness they modulate turn groups of walls and room features, lifeless material, **into a more focused, higher level of the procedural**. . . . the procedural having thus been **brought into palpable view**, its fixed sequence of actions can be altered. (AB 56, my emphasis)
> Activating an architectural procedure, a person **comes alive to** her own tacit knowing; body-wide and wider, occurrent **tacit knowing goes explicit**. . . . A person **stays alive to how** she is dispersed and then to how she is again and again dispersed through and into that dispersal. (AB 60, my emphasis)[1]

Procedural architectural surrounds are intended to affect the way the body organizes itself and forms its world. They are to force us to reexamine and reform our basic processes of world-construction. The reforms Arakawa and Gins are seeking cannot be accomplished unconsciously, as if someone were to substitute a more powerful engine in your car while you slept, and you discovered to your surprise the next day that the car now operated better. The active process of inhabitation is to be made more conscious and controllable, "**staying focused on** the elusiveness as such of this tenuous event-fabric or event-matrix." (AB 49, my emphasis) The question is how that investigation can stay focused.[2]

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[1] Describing his experience at an exhibit that modeled and partly embodied some of these elements, a visitor to one of their installations remarked that "Feeling dynamic, I made my way out of that space." (Kisaragi Koharu, "A Walk though the Arakawa-Gins Exhibition." http://www.ntticc.or.jp/public/ic_mag/ic025/html/173-175e.html)

[2] Does talk of focused awareness impose some centered controlling self, such as has been attacked in recent psychology and philosophy? Not necessarily. We could speak with Arakawa and Gins of the "organism that persons" rather than a centered self. We could have an ontology of the self that is Nietzschean or Deleuzean or Parfitian, with momentary selves and sub-individual processes and no central "I." However, even so the issue of the togetherness of different processes would still remain, because Arakawa and Gins want to reform processes, not just have them coexist in parallel.

So far, Arakawa and Gins have described in detail only two architectural procedures. The two are, however, general enough to encompass many different variations. Because the two work in opposed ways, using either definite or indefinite spaces, they cover a wide field of possibilities. Still, over time Arakawa and Gins can and will make explicit more architectural procedures.

In their series of panels, "The Mechanism of Meaning," Arakawa and Gins investigate the processes by which visual and perceptual meaning is established. The procedures employed in this piece indicate new architectural analogies. I wonder if another heuristic for finding more architectural procedures might consider the ways we "inhabit" the "architecture" of written texts. The analogy is imperfect, since textual inhabitation is not so bodily, but reading a text does involve perceptual and imaginative landing sites as well as bringing together a dispersed multiplicity of signifiers and signifieds. In addition, reading as a process includes a long history of attempts by authors to turn the process back on itself, making us aware of what we are doing as we make sense in and of a text. Literary authors have tried to make textual inhabitation into a process that is self-aware, complicated, and self-reflexive of its own process, thereby changing the way we read. Such textual procedures might provide clues for architectural procedures.

Gins' own writings are full of textual maneuvers that might be translatable into more architectural procedures, but wee could just as easily consider other authors. In fact, if we were to take architectural procedures to be the architectural equivalents of repeatable words --as Arakawa and Gins at one point suggest -- then we might look at how words can be worked on and changed, for instance in James Joyce and Lewis Carroll. What would be the architectural equivalents of portmanteau words,[3] such as those Carroll invented in "Jabberwocky," or of Joyce's multilingual puns and creations in *Finnegans Wake*? Or, hou might wee fynde architectural equivalents ov using deliberately archaique or artificiall spellynges, or Elizabethan iregularr spelings, or tabun mixing Wörter från linguae différentes?

If, on the other hand, we were to take the sequence of experiences in an architectural procedure to be something like a sequence of sentences and paragraphs, then what would be the architectural equivalents of walking among the different rhetorics of the chapters of Joyce's *Ulysses*? Are there spatial equivalents for Italo Calvino's self-enveloping narrative in "*If on a winter's night a traveler...*"? Of Pynchon's overloaded narratives? Of Whitman's stringing-togethers or Eliot's excerpts, or Pound's relentlessly allusive *Cantos*?

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[3] "This term for "blend word" comes from "portmanteau", "a leather traveling case that opens into two hinged compartments" (from the French for "carry cloak"), by way of Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* : 'You see it's like a portmanteau -- there are two meanings packed up into one word.' Although most modern blends are simply the first part of one word plus the last part of another (e.g., 'brunch' = 'breakfast' + 'lunch'; 'smog' = 'smoke' + 'fog'; 'Chunnel' = 'Channel' + 'tunnel'), Carroll himself formed his portmanteau words in a more subtle manner: 'slithy' = 'lithe' + 'slimy'; 'mimsy' = 'miserable' + 'flimsy'; 'frumious' = 'fuming' + 'furious'. Carroll's coinages 'chortle' (which is now in most dictionaries) and 'galumph' (which is in the OED) are generally understood as 'chuckle' + 'snort' and 'gallop' + 'triumph' respectively, although Carroll himself never explained them." (http://alt-usage-english.org/excerpts/fxportma.html)

Indeed, there could be spatial analogues to such textual maneuvers,, and such textual tactics suggest the expansion of existing architectural procedures. To date Arakawa and Gins' designs ignore historical styles and culturally specific meanings. Rather, the variations and contrasts they manipulate are bodily-geometric-perceptual features such as scale, volume, and ground plane. Their procedures do not involve decorative styles or cultural purposes, but they could: imagine the Tentativeness-Cradling procedure providing working bathroom fixtures on living room sofas, or a room that is both Empire and Bauhaus, or even a room whose indicated use(s) reach toward five different cultural horizons at once. There are many variables that procedures could manipulate, and many dimensions of contrast and definition to work with.

Of course, to treat such aspects procedurally risks descending into the kind of dull pastiche found in bad postmodern design. The austerity of Arakawa and Gins' designs successfully avoids this peril. Nonetheless, their spaces are pure, and if actually lived in from day to day, they would surely acquire decorations and culturally specific assignments. Those might overpower the intended procedural effects, so perhaps decor and cultural readings of the purpose of a room could also be subject to procedural manipulations.[4] So far Arakawa and Gins have built only isolated examples, the largest of which is the Site of Reversible Destiny, located in the town of Yoro, in Japan. It was designed before the notion of architectural procedures was fully developed, but it contains many objects and features meant to provoke the user/visitor into new bodily and perceptual spaces.

"Working Out Yoro"

In the summer of 2000 my wife and I visited the site at Yoro park, and the theme of this essay was triggered by my experiences there. We rode a Japan Rail medium-sized train from the large city of Nagoya to the town of Ogaki, then a Kintetsu private railroad diesel putt-putt from Ogaki to the village of Yoro, passing farm fields and clusters of houses. We arrived at Yoro station just after lunch; no one was around. From a tourist map on a billboard, I plotted what I hoped would be the shortest route to the park. It turned out to be the long way around and included a steep hill, but perhaps that put us in the mood for the park's own slopes. The proper shorter route would have brought us to the northeast corner, where the looming bulk of the park's construction would not have been so obvious at first.

A sign located where we paid the entry fee offered us, free of charge, bicycle helmets and rubber-soled shoes to wear while in the park. We didn't take them, but we could imagine that some stylish Japanese, especially women in fashionable heels, might need such equipment. Still, the emphasis on safety created a distracting undertone that suggested holding back full commitment to the terrain. There were only a few other people at the site that day, plus two or three wardens patrolling along the upper part of the rim. They

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[4] Such manipulations would magnify the concerns about central control that are discussed briefly later.

were keeping an eye out for accidents, but their presence against the skyline distorted the scale and interfered with the interaction of the rim and the nearby mountains.

The entry path wound up onto the tipped concrete rim of the bowl, where we looked over the city street maps filling the surface. The maps did not work on us, perhaps because we were not familiar enough with the street patterns of the Japanese cities being referred to. Nor was I observant enough; during our whole visit I never registered the ochre and green outline of the Japanese islands that sprawled across the bowl, though perhaps the high grass made it less visible.

We hiked further along the rim and then descended into the bowl. My first reaction was that the bowl was both steeper and smaller than I had expected from photographs. My second reaction was that the design was as exciting and challenging as I had hoped. We walked and climbed all over the park, from one striking vista or object to another. We also made probes into the Critical Resemblance House. I was most taken by the recently constructed "office building" near the entry. Unlike the other constructions in the park it featured bright exterior and interior colors in striking combinations. It had usable rooms, yet their strange shapes, uneven terrain, and the half-height partitions that interrupted the path created interesting effects. It was not exactly disorienting, but it demanded a heightened bodily attention to the surroundings and to my maneuvering within the paths I chose.. The changes in floor level and steepness were particularly effective because even though I could see the whole room, the small partitions that interrupted any straight path also prevented me from seeing the floor as a whole. Consequently, as I walked I was continually surprised and needed to readjust my body at each turn.[5]

The instruction sheets for the Yoro site suggested exercises in movement and perception:
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> If accidentally thrown completely off-balance, try to note the number, and also the type and the placement, of the landing sites essential to reconstituting a world.
> Try to incorporate two or more horizons into every view.
> Associate each of the extreme forms your body is forced to assume in traversing the field with both a nearby and a distant form.

I found these difficult to carry out. In the end, the Yoro site did not have its full effects on me. Perhaps this was my failure, like the failure of the person who "just doesn't get" a Jackson Pollock painting. Should we then take the Yoro site as a work of art that needs to be approached in some special way? Since there is a set of instructions for the park, perhaps so. But is it as "a work of art" that the site should be approached? Was my problem akin to the philistine who can't appreciate Pollock, or more akin to the person who wanders into a gym but does not use the exercise machines? It was clear from the structure that the double horizons were built into the park. I could see how they were

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[5] When we were finished exploring the site, we walked to Yoro station to once again ride the little train, but this time when we arrived at Ogaki, we impulsively continued on to Kyoto. We ended up at that city's Maruyama Park, a pleasant, standard collection of recreational and display areas. I imagined it strewn with Yoro-type constructions that interfered with its casual flow and easy progression of horizons.

supposed to work, but I could not make the effort because other goals interfered. This gym-explanation avoids the aesthetic elitism of the original objection, but at the same time it raises concerns about Arakawa and Gin's goals in relation to those of daily life.

My first reflection on the experience at Yoro was that while we were there we were too busy taking in the novelty -- "look at that!," "and over there!". I thought that more time would have helped the park to work on or with us. More specifically, we needed enough familiarity with the park to be more fully affected by the multiple horizons and other features, allowing us to experience movement through the terrain without being focused on getting to the next remarkable space or artifact. If we had enjoyed a picnic lunch, or conversed with friends as we strolled about, or walked a dog or tried to throw a Frisbee, there would have been less touristic demand to see each item. But later reflection evinced a different analysis, one that sees the park not as a site for daily activities subliminally influenced by architecture, but rather as a site for concentrated exercises and strenuous efforts. Once the novelty had worn off, we should have devoted ourselves more to following the instructions.

"Pioneer Life"

Arakawa and Gins intend their constructions to do more than influence people indirectly in the way architecture usually does. Accordingly, theirs is to be a special zone of exercise. But if it is the latter, then we still have to ask how these sites will relate to the daily activities that will also be carried out there. For Arakawa and Gins have gone beyond designing specialized equipment such as the Yoro park, and are designing procedural architecture for residences and towns.

Architecture is always an impure art: even the most artistically designed building is not just contemplated but lived in. Walter Benjamin pointed out long ago that most architecture has its effects through distraction rather than concentration.

> Distraction and concentration form polar opposites which may be stated as follows: A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of the Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art. This is most obvious with regard to buildings. Architecture has always represented the prototype of a work of art the reception of which is consummated by a collectivity in a state of distraction. The laws of its reception are most instructive. . . . Architecture has never been idle. Its history is more ancient than that of any other art, and its claim to being a living force has significance in every attempt to comprehend the relationship of the masses to art. Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception -- or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building. On the tactile side there is no counterpart to contemplation on the optical side. Tactile appropriation is accomplished not so much by attention as by habit. As regards architecture, habit determines to a large extent even optical reception. The latter, too, occurs much less through rapt

attention than by noticing the object in incidental fashion. This mode of appropriation, developed with reference to architecture, in certain circumstances acquires canonical value. For the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation.[6]

Standard non-procedural architecture already shapes bodies and actions. It is not accidental that so many civic buildings have a solemn Roman form: our body changes upon entering a courthouse or a capitol or a cathedral.. Entering a home or a nightclub, it changes in other ways. Even though there are social norms for different spaces—a home or a nightclub change the body in different ways than a courthouse--the architecture of the space on its own also alters our comportment, our bodily extension and possibilities.[7]

People notice architectural objects "in incidental fashion" because they are in the building or on the street with a purpose or goal that they glimpse across the architectural landscape. They are not concentrating on the landscape itself. Otherwise how could they change the baby's diaper, or get to the grocery store? But do Arakawa and Gins intend us to go the grocery store? Certainly not at Yoro, which is a special experience. At Yoro, Arakawa and Gins constructed a "philosophical garden" (RD 195), but they also want to build philosophical towns and cities. These would provide the means for long-term experiments and pervasive influences: "It would be better not only to construct the procedural but also to have it become one's home ground, one's training ground" (AB 55). Such training grounds will require inhabitants to be more directly involved with the local architecture than in the distracted way described by Benjamin. These inhabitants are to concentrate on the phenomena and the processes of world-and-body-formation that movements in these surroundings will reveal.

But these training grounds are also houses, which are not just gyms but places to carry on daily activities. The directions for the use of the Yoro site say "[t]ry to incorporate two or more horizons into every view." How are the two "horizons" of body-world reformation and daily life activities to be combined? Is being with-in a piece of procedural architecture to be an all-consuming occupation meant to occupy our total awareness? If the housing and city quarters Arakawa and Gins design are meant to be environments in which inhabitants carry out daily activities in a new self-aware way, what kind of awareness is involved?

Arakawa and Gins' rhetoric often expresses uncompromising rejection of daily activities in favor of self-investigation. In Arakawa and Gins's earlier, rasher years, before they worked out the full notion of an architectural procedure, they might have been heard to say: "imbalance, life-threatening danger, and absolute chaos are needed to enable us to

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[6] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." The essay is reprinted in many anthologies. This excerpt is from a translation found at http://www.student.math.uwaterloo.ca/~cs492/Benjamin.html.

[7] The social norms are powerful enough, though, that they may counteract the architectural effects: imagine a courtroom turned into a night club. Arakawa and Gins need to give more attention to the potential tension between social norms and architectural forms, since it could affect their constructions.

realize how our lives are constructed […] and so to begin to reverse our destiny" (RD 217).This would make it hard to keep an eye on the children. In this uncompromising mood, Arakawa and Gins can maintain that "[c]omfort is no longer a factor. That it might take several hours to go from one room to another in a reversible destiny house is of no importance a long as the sensibility of the person traversing the room flowers and catches onto itself in transit" (RD 241). Such a house would make urgent operations impossible when they are needed. If my body is to be "so greatly and so persistently thrown off balance that the majority of its efforts have to go entirely towards the righting of itself, leaving no energy for the routine assembling of the socio-historical matrix of the familiar or, for that matter, for the 'being of a person'" (RD 33), then this would not help me go to the library or buy a loaf of bread. In instances such as these, I need social conventions and smooth negotiations.

Arakawa and Gins' willingness to be disruptive stems from the worry that daily activities might be part of the crisis of humanity. They seek inhabitants for their constructions who will be pioneers.. They will be experimenters, taking nothing for granted and willing to develop new ways of being and acting rather than passively accepting the fate of death and mediocrity. The motto of these pioneers seems to be: let ordinary functions be suspended if necessary while we come to know who we are and what we can be, and invent new ways to live. There is an elitism here, but it does not come from the usual avant-garde aesthetic or political elite.[8]

However, the issue of daily activity cuts deeper than whether or not we go to the grocery store. Ordinary life doings are part of a net of practices that rely on other practices. For instance, to take a bath I have to know how to use the faucets, soap, and a towel. Handling soap requires a familiarity with what kind of thing a bar of soap is, what it is "for," and how that fits into a network of activities concerning hygiene, which in turn get their meaning and direction from fitting into a broader network of bodily practices which in turn fit into yet broader networks. The linkages never come to an edge where they stop. The net cannot be seen as a whole and it cannot be disassembled, though any part of it can be examined and reformed. Insertion into the network is the condition of the possibility of any purposeful activity. Both practical and cognitive meaning requires a horizon of absent practices, "know-hows" and goals that can never be made totally present.[9]

Arakawa and Gins ask "what would a hat be for you if you had never seen one before? Let every act of perceiving be unique to itself" (qtd. in Haxthausen 321). But life would be impossible if we had to negotiate unexpected novelty for every action and social transaction.[10] Without the background absences, objects and actions would have no

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[8] It might seem that these pioneers would have to be supremely willful and controlled, but in fact their powers of concentration would be put at the service of a program of desubjectification aimed at cracking open standard self-unities.

[9] The most thorough analysis of these conditions on everyday activity is found in the first part of Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

[10] In a similar vein Lyotard asks of one of their constructions, "Would its space begin anew each day?" (RD 11) He does not say that it should begin anew each moment. He dreams that "instantaneous habits would come and go." Yet an instantaneous habit is not a habit. Presumably

meaning. It is true we need to perceive things afresh, but without the taken-for-granted (but questionable later) background we could not perceive at all.

Arakawa and Gins' designs for regions and cities involve varying terrains and disrupted ground planes, modular repetitions of many kinds, and other scale effects within their architectural procedures. For example, they describe their proposal for a new city sector in Tokyo Bay as including "layers of artificial terrain, multiple horizons, winding roads, numerous pocket parks, module-based, paired and contrasted neighborhoods, panoramic views at regular intervals" (RD 232). Even though their proposals so far have been single-use residential districts including parks, there is no reason their constructions could not be multiple-use. These would be locales where people will carry out the activities of daily living. How do we live and act within their constructions in a way that is both efficient for daily purposes (posting letters, caring for the children, etc.), yet also mindful and investigatory?

For instance, Arakawa and Gins propose a whimsical baseball field with a wildly varying terrain(RD 228). Its wonderful twists certainly defamiliarize the ordinary, but suppose you had to play baseball on that field, and your team was in a league that played games on other fields. Suddenly the field seems impractical; its self-awareness function obstructs its ordinary function. Its odd terrain becomes a barrier to getting on with the game. "So," you might respond, "let's have all the league fields be distorted in different ways, each a different kind of experience. Even today variations in size and lighting and wind are taken as acceptable challenges and hazards as a team moves from field to field. We could add a dimension to all the games with more extreme new fields." But then the specific design of each extreme field would become a strategic maneuver to enhance home field advantage; there would be complaints that this or that field was designed to favor excessively a home team that had practiced its slopes and twists; regulations would soon limit the procedural possibilities. In short, the daily function--playing the game-- would end up overpowering and restricting the procedural self-awareness function.

Arakawa and Gins intended their twisty ball field for some new, yet-to-be created game. But my point is that if the field were to be a place for playing any game that had its own built-in rules (rather than being a place where one played at playing a game while concentrating on examining the architectural body), then the field will be enmeshed in a

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what he means is that a novel act could contain its own projection of a future of similar acts and a way of living them, then be replaced by another unique act projecting a new future. But this pushes up to a second level the question of the active unity of the self through time as these horizons and habits change. Romantic paeans to total fluidity and constant change make forceful rhetoric but questionable philosophy, risky policy, and weak architecture. Habituation and routinization are inevitable, yet so is resistance to them and change within them. There is no arrival at total freedom, yet it can still make sense to ask for "A fluid teleology in service of a transgressive ethics. Not in service of a reintegrative strategy, either socially or on the level of the individual, but in a quest to invent new selves constantly" (Keller, qtd. in RD 217) -- as long as that "constantly" is not "every five minutes," or there would be no life at all.

network of activities and goals that go beyond self-examination and self-reformation and will limit the effect of their manipulations.

Again, could a heavy industry factory be designed with an undulating terrain or other features that made workers self-conscious of their world-forming perceptual cleavings as they moved within the building? If the workers' attention were so distracted, it could endanger their safety and the efficiency of production. Could someone come up with features that introduce architectural procedures without compromising the function of the factory? Architects with less radical goals have had some success introducing new moods and social interactions into office buildings and light industry, but heavy industry resists such maneuvers. Of course, there are a few striking exceptions, such as Gropius's turbine factory and some automobile plants, but there the innovations were mostly limited to exterior appearance and symbolism.

Life has other goals than self-examination, and no sense of crisis will make those goals disappear. On our home ground we bathe, prepare meals, call our business associates, make love, play with the children, dust the furniture, solve math problems, read novels, write poetry. How could Arakawa and Gins' architectural procedures keep their strength while such daily functions absorb attention? The answer to this must lie in the bodily nature of their investigations. We should not have to choose between focused self-examination and Benjamin's distracted attention. The activities of our lives take place within what Arakawa and Gins call our architectural body, that dimension created by the dispersal and joining (cleaving) of perceptual landing sites, imagination, spatial construction, and features of the environment. This creation is not a separate goal or process within the mesh of goals and meaning; it opens space for that mesh. While Arakawa and Gins want their pioneers to engage in a specific process of bodily self-examination, what they are examining is not one process among others within the net that is the condition of possibility for meaningful actions. It is the bodily reweaving of that net. Furthermore, the horizon of meanings and goals is not totally created by our bodily activities; the architectural body is within a social and historical surround. Nevertheless, the presencing of that net happens within the architectural body, and thus it should be possible for self-examination of that presencing to accompany other activities. Even though Arakawa and Gins' rhetoric often uses images of total concentration, their investigation is meant to continue even while we move about our daily rounds.

The Buddhist meditator sits on a cushion becoming aware of her breathing and thinking. In slow walking meditation she tries to be aware of the most subtle movements of her legs and muscles. Outside the meditation hall she faces the problem of keeping that awareness active in daily life. An awareness that can only be achieved in the protected environment of the meditation hall is not yet full mindfulness. She must learn how to keep that mindfulness while going about her daily activities, such as balancing the checkbook or directing a large office. The Christian tradition calls this the problem of contemplation in action.

In performing her daily activities mindfully, the meditator is not being asked to divide her attention between two separate goals. Mindfulness is not multitasking. Rather she is

being mindful of the *how*, the manner in which she accomplishes her ordinary activities. That how is both bodily and psychological, as she stays aware of how she performs her movements and of her desires and attachments. Such an ongoing awareness of the bodily *how* of our actions provides an analogue to what Arakawa and Gins are proposing. Their architectural surrounds could provoke an accompanying mindfulness rather than constant focal awareness.

And yet there is a further twist to the problem of daily life. Arakawa and Gins claim that "[p]erforming an architectural procedure, a person launches an inquiry-on-the-go into her own constituent factors. As long as that inquiry-on-the-go continues, the procedure has not gone dormant" (AB 73). But how long can it be kept awake? Won't we become habituated to the surrounding contours so that they no longer challenge us? The most contorted piece of procedural architecture might become routinized. I could eventually treat its odd terrain just as something to be dealt with as I go about my business. No self-investigation, just perception and moving, as I might navigate a difficult rocky path in the rain and wind on the way to the house of a friend. I cope with the surroundings but they do not change me. A procedural house could soon become a background that would influence me in the indirect way Benjamin describes, but it would not continue to provoke special investigation or awareness. The wardens at the Yoro site probably receive no lasting effects from its design, simply because they must be there all the time and are busy with their tasks.

If this routinization poses a problem, one response could be to fight to keep the architectural procedures always active. Arakawa and Gins hope that they have built in "enough self-subverting elements" to prevent their procedures from ever becoming "de-radicalized." In fact, there is a temptation to see routinization as a failure of the user's attention, akin to my failure at Yoro, and so to demand constant attention from the devoted pioneers. However, routinization is a necessity, not a danger to be avoided. The know-how that a practice relies on has to have a habitual component in order to be available.

Aristotle argues that activities are perfected when they become habitual; the best craftsperson does not need to deduce from theory what to do with a particular piece of material. Heidegger may write polemics against "*das Man*" and the stifling averageness of life, but he knows that what he calls "everydayness" and "fallenness" are structurally necessary. There can be no total self-awareness or self-control. Nor can all world-constituting activities be made present at the same time. Some of what Husserl calls the "passive syntheses" that bring about our unified experience of the world can be made conscious by reflection, but they cannot all be kept actively self-aware. Husserl urged that the layers of constitution and passive synthesis be made available, but his interest was in evidence, not reform. In what they seek, Arakawa and Gins are closer to Deleuze's desire for new modes of bodily self-awareness.

Arakawa and Gins address the problem of habituation when they employ images from athletics rather than from scientific investigation: at the "training ground" the formation of new habits is not a problem, but is part of the solution. What happens on a training

ground? Athletes practice by concentrating on individual movements in order to perfect them. The batter examines her swing. The martial artist develops a new maneuver. But later they concentrate not on the moves but on the game. There is a rhythm of training and life: practice intensely, then play "in the zone," effortlessly, without focusing on your movements or tactics. Catch the ball, react fully in the moment. Arakawa and Gins gamble that this rhythm could apply to the deeper level of world-body-formation itself.

We can envision architectural procedures influencing people through a rhythm of focal self-examination that leads to the formation of new habits, but Arakawa and Gins envision a still larger rhythm. They propose multiple and different procedural architectural constructions and movements from one to another. They imagine environments that include a great many "tactically posed architectural surrounds." Some would aim at increasing self-awareness, others would aim more at transforming our bodily world-formation. Some would do both at the same time.[11] An architectural procedure might change us and we could let its adjustments and changes become a new habit. There would be many architectural surrounds enacting different procedures and provoking different re-visions. When we have learned or been transformed by one, we could move on to another. As we relocate our residence, or our workplace, or our leisure, we learn. What we gain would not be an accumulation of facts about ourselves, but new ways of being our bodied self. Some of this learning would be in new habits, some would be in new tentativeness.

Arakawa and Gins see multiple locations and procedures combining into spatial discourses of discovery. Different areas might invoke the same procedure, but concretize it in varying ways. A town might combine procedures into an architectural rhetoric that encouraged different self-discoveries. "It is hardly a far reach to think of architectural procedures responding to and expanding on the consequences of other constructed procedures" (AB 56). Even today, "Los Angeles has a lot to say to your body about what Chicago or Paris or Singapore has led it to become" (AB 60).

> She contrasts in slow motion, or in odd motion, her intricate sitings of herself in terms of this town and the previous one, examining effect and upshot of landing-site dispersal, savvy to the need to identify constituent factors that knit, explode, and weave the world's occurrence. (AB 61)

At one point Arakawa and Gins compare architectural procedures to words, and combinations of procedures to paragraphs and discourses with "three-dimensional THEREFORE'S, BUTS, ORS, ANDS" (AB 59). As yet they have no grammar or rhetorical rules for these combinations. Perhaps these cannot be developed until the repertory of architectural procedures is expanded. Here again, though, the textual analogy might be helpful, considering the ways in which rhetoric and sequence have been used and deliberately abused by experimental writers.[12]

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[11] This would, of course, "exponentially increase the tremendous amount of forethought that is needed for town planning." (AB 61)

[12] Arakawa and Gins want architecture to take up many of the tasks traditionally assigned to science and philosophy: the discovery of new bodily and social phenomena, the creation of new kinds of personal and social unity, the experiential validation of hypotheses about how we ought

To create a world of such elaborated spaces would demand great expense and control: "We ask only that enormous sums of money be spent on constructing the world as a tactically posed surrounding for the benefit of the body" (AB xix). This is reminiscent of the dreams of the great modernist architects such as Le Corbusier, who thought that greater architectural control and planning on many scales could improve cities that suffered from unhealthy and disorderly nineteenth-century conditions. With the appropriate translations, Arakawa and Gins are arguing something similar. As Knesl says, "[t]heir modernist hubris is invulnerable to accommodating temptations" (RD 215). Individual projects obviously require great planning and control. (Although procedural control does not extend to the level of style and decoration, I argued above that their ends might be enhanced if their procedures did extend that far.) To create dialogue among their multiple projects would demand yet further control.[13]

Despite their modernist tone, unlike the high modernist planners Arakawa and Gins do not work with a limited palette of functions that they think architecture and city planning should allocate. Rather they want to open up experimentation and the creation of new functions and values. Their planning is very directive, but this is to clear away old directives that are giving us bad messages. It does not replace the old with new definitive messages, but rather with a space for new discoveries.[14]

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to live. We can even imagine "arguments" and "dialogues" among differently posed procedural sites, leading to informed choices and rejections. It seems right that new kinds of sites could re-form us and open us, so that the self-re-making side of Socrates' quest could be enriched. But Socrates does more. The testing of general principles, precise arguments in logical form, questions of consistency and basis, these demand discourse and explicit linguistic concept creation to provide a thought-space within which experiential effects can be questioned. Still, philosophy always seriously underestimates what kinds of self-reflection can be possible without explicit language. Underlying this is the worry of Plato and the philosophical tradition generally about allowing art and rhetoric to have the last word, and the desire for reflective distance from immediate experience. But the expanded possibilities from the arts do not disprove that linguistic discourse is needed for some important kinds of self-reflection. An argument about the necessity of discourse could not be conducted in painting or architecture.

[13] Arakawa and Gins argue the necessity for such control when they point out that "For those who have no choice but to be contingent, the engineering of contingency is all that is the case." (AB xii)

[14] Learning from different architectural procedures resembles the process of incremental criticism of beliefs and values proposed by Habermas, and earlier by pragmatists such as Peirce, Dewey, and Quine. However, Arakawa and Gins's aim is more directly bodily than the kinds of criticism proposed by such thinkers, though without denying the formation of social meaning by other processes. Arakawa and Gins need to say more about the connection between architectural and social meaning. It is not enough to say that "By creating a second horizon, or better yet many more, we can be released from the out-of-date moral values or obsolete structures of common sense that accumulate on the ground-surface we normally exist on. We'd be truly free to develop potentially more fruitful and expansive moral values." (RD 32) Values are rooted in social and communal structures that need their own critique, since the linguistic and the cultural cannot be fully reduced to the level of architectural body formation, though they are active on that level. It is not yet clear how the kind of self-criticism they propose relates to other modes of criticism and to the reformation of explicit and implicit beliefs, leading on to the criticism of ideological formations and political-social systems.

The proposal for multiple procedural architectures introduces a further element of complexity, and a new kind of space. This becomes evident by asking whether if the result is what Deleuze would call a *striated* or a *smooth* space. For Deleuze the archetypal striated space is a centrally controlled agricultural society such as existed on the edges of Eurasia. The archetypal smooth space is the central Asian steppes inhabited by nomads. In the striated agricultural society, space is striped and cut up into parcels tied by ownership to specific groups or individuals. People, too, are separated into groups tied to bits of land and/or to particular social roles. The society is administered from a center that has a view of the whole and orders it by separations and assignments. A smooth space lacks such divisions. It is far from empty, but its texture comes from small variations in natural conditions. The nomad does not own any land, and is assigned nowhere, but in his wandering he observes microenvironments and determines where best to pasture his animals, and when to move on. It is not that the nomad is free to wander without any constraints, but the constraints come from the environment and from dispersed attention to detail, rather than from central decrees.

At first glance, the spaces of the multiple tactically posed surrounds Arakawa and Gins suggest seem prime examples of striated space. Each area would have a task and each would be highly designed and divided into modules that resemble tightly striated fields. A given area would control how you can walk and what you can build there. You have your space; your neighbor has hers. Neither in the ordinary sense nor in Deleuze's special sense are these spaces smooth. Still, what Arakawa and Gins are proposing is a new hybrid space. It is like striated space in that it is defined and assigned with a high degree of imposed organization. However, there are multiple horizons and ground planes, and multiple and competing, perhaps incommensurable, definitions running at angles to one another. Places are indicated, but you seldom are unambiguously in only one of them. Navigating such spaces would demand the kind of micro-attention to the local environment that the Deleuze's nomads need in their smooth spaces. What you might learn from living in such spaces would not be a centrally distributed lesson or role; indeed it would try to uproot you from such roles. An inner nomadism is being created, and an outer as well, if you move from one such learning space to another. In the new spaces there could be new selves.

Arakawa and Gins' exciting discussion of perceptual landing sites provides another way of questioning the dominance of the subject-object relation. They offer an approach to architecture beyond the usual discussions of social meaning and symbolism. Their proposals for procedural architecture seek to reform our bodily space and time. In this they are akin to Deleuze, who urges such reformations and analyzes artistic modes that reflect such changes, for instance in his discussion of space and time in modern cinema.[15]

As Benjamin said , "the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of tactile appropriation." [need reference] As Arakawa and Gins say "[t]he tense of architecture should be not that

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[15] See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: the Movement-Image*, and *Cinema II: the Time Image*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986 and 1989.

of 'This is this' or 'Here is this' but instead that of 'What's going on?'" (AB 49). We go back to the twisty ball field, we practice and then play.

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