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Lines Building Words Taking Place

erik doxtader

The way up and the way down is one and the same.
-Heraclitus, DK, B60

1. First conceit: appearing in the midst of a projection. Wescoe Hall, 1815 Chicago Avenue, Dwinelle Hall, Bingham Hall, Vilas Hall, and the Welsh Humanities Office Building.[1] From my undergraduate days to the present, these addresses are a poor (though perhaps rather typical) recommendation to ask after rhetoric *and* architecture. At least on the institutional side of the register, building an inquiry into the taking place of words has required inhabiting spaces defined by either the monolithic-monastic impulse of concrete brutalism or the clutter of antique hodge-podge. Though fascinated (and more than a bit mystified) by the way in which buildings are constructed, the way in which hundreds of workers somehow manage to discern and enact the lines of the plot, the (mostly) "public buildings" in which i have spent by far the most time (and into which i am "officially" called) are largely background noise, an implicit if not negative referent, a frame that blunts an imagination-feeding experience of what the architect makes and how it appears.[2] And yet this is surely one of conceit's paradigmatic forms, the abstract imposition of an abstract expectation (someone somewhere should have tried harder *for me*), which may well be thin cover for a perceived sense of inadequacy, which in this case is the fact that on several registers, at best, i am illiterate in a plausibly deniable way (architrave + frieze + cornice = ???).[3] There may also be some envy in the mix – by comparison, the beauty of architecture's books is a bit depressing. At a larger level, however, conceits emerge from a variety of experiences and appear in various forms. They may reflect worry over status, a shortcoming that manifests as an indignation which covers a fear of loss – what exactly is Charles Jencks up to when he claims in his now homely classic that architecture must "go back to a point where architects took responsibility for rhetoric"?[4] In the other direction, a conceit may reflect a planned or unwitting appropriation, a self-indulgent or self-confirming attribution of relation and solidarity – let's lift up this rock and see how it rests on rhetoric or let's read Vitruvius through Aristotle's rhetoric (which is easy enough) so we can indulge in a bit of revenge porn – "hey, your rhetorical slip is showing." A

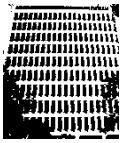
[1] The buildings featured on the following pages, in the chronological order of their "occupation."

[2] In the bleaker moments, one cannot help but wonder whether the training of architects includes a blanket ban on visiting other campus buildings and if the standard architecture curriculum approaches the academic as the very sort of rif-raf that compels Robert Venturi to complain that architecture's work "must survive the cigarette the machine."Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: MOMA, 2002), 42.

[3] Entablature.

[4] Offered in the name of an intersubjectivity that now seems naïve, the claim may be more totalizing than it appears on first glance. Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-modern Architecture*) New York: Rizzoli, 1977), 101.

mode of self-affect(at)ion, conceits aim to push the "like (me) button." In doing so, they build and expose the hinge (or the edge) of the analogic, the default way (listen to the chatter of tourists) in which we reason "to" and "from." At what point (is it a point?) does one have the standing or the ground to venture if not impose a question into a (figure, field, or practice) in the name of inter-action (how *was* your seatmate on the plane, on the same plane?), let alone presume the possibility of (non)relation or in-difference?[5] The gesture cuts in several directions. A romp into the undiscovered country to pick cherries may portend theft (I get to have this because it is really a reflection of me) or colonization (let's make you like me), just as staying put to prettify (tinker with) the already over-determined front yard may amount to a stupefying rationalization of home's virtue – everything we need is really right here.[6] The question of whether and how to cross the wall looms, a question that "interdisciplinarity" celebrates with a piety that frequently and none too subtly deters (or, for the current age: indefinitely detains) the stakes of the question itself; paralysis ensues in the face of the humiliation thought to follow (causally) from inquiry into the assumed grounds of (the) language(s) *through* which interested parties encounter one another and the conditions under which it is possible to assume the grounds of (a) language *in* which a meeting (*with* language) might begin, a meeting that would be less pretense than the expression of conceit as an inauguration, a crossing of the auger's "originating lines," a *poiesis* that blurs the lines. Was it the city's walls that rendered the sophists comprehensible or was it the sophists that rendered the walls sensible to the city?



[5] For instance, what's to be done with the claim that opens Frascari's lovely essay: "Architecture is a constructed virtue…the Queen of Virtues…by which humans interact spatially, tectonically, and culturally with a region that they modify with thoughtful tracing of lines on the paper and on the ground to their advantage as a proper expression of their humanity" (Marco Frascari, "Lines as Architectural Thinking," *Architectural Theory Review* 14:3 (2009), 201). Isn't this really just a (borrowed) definition of rhetoric (several have advanced it as the queen)? Is this appeal to expression best interpreted (on architecture's behalf, of course, so that it can better 'know thyself') as evidence of architecture's fundamental rhetoricity, not least as it more or less wittingly discloses the way in which architecture rests on the rhetorical, the possession of an express-ability in (a) language that (already) renders being human? Or is it the other way around? Is it time then for the next round of capture the *arché* (the poor but popular way of reading McKeon), a game that ends in tragedy precisely as it winds right back to what Derrida calls "the philosophical tradition [that] has used the architectural model as metaphor for a kind of thinking which in itself cannot be architectural," which might then demonstrate rhetoric's priority, except for the fact, as Derrida continues, that "It is evident that architectural reference is useful in rhetoric, in a language which in itself has retained no architecturally whatsoever" (Jacque Derrida, "Architecture Where Desire May Live," in *Re-Thinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural* Theory, ed. Neil Leach (New York: Routledge, 1997, 319). Does rhetoric then falter or flourish in its (actual or pretend) release of the quest for the first principle? Can it show architecture the "proper" way or is it well past time for rhetoric to recognize itself in architecture's mirror? And, when nuts come to bolts, doesn't all of this suggest that rhetoric and architecture are conjoined by their respective and related inability to shake off the instrumentality of (their own) expression, an expression that amounts to what Robin Evans aptly called the "great mumble," an incoherence if not an inferiority complex wrought by the commitment to a *poiesis* that is not an end in itself and which cannot manage to actually construct its (own) object? (Robin Evans, "In Front of Lines that Leave Nothing Behind," reprinted in *Architectural Theory Since 1968,* ed. K.M Hayes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 489). In this sense, what do we make of the (im)potential that characterizes and perhaps links rhetorical theory that does not make speeches and architecture that does not construct buildings?

[6] The rhetorical situation is a symptom.

> Both in general and especially in architecture are these two things found, that which signifies and that which is signified. That which is signified is the thing proposed about which we speak; that which signifies is the demonstration unfolded in systems of precepts.
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> Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Book I, i, 3

Disa Towers, City Bowl, Cape Town

2. On most (southern) winter mornings, i sit down at my writing desk and take a moment to look through my floor to ceiling window and across the bowl that holds central Cape Town. Containing residential neighborhoods, the business district, and Parliament, the bowl emerges from the slopes of Table Mountain, the anchor of the world's smallest floral kingdom and a world heritage site, and opens onto the Atlantic coast. Not a day passes when i don't pause to reflect on the interplay of mountain and city, an oscillating relation that discloses much about Cape Town's historical character and which turns, as i look from west to east, on one fixed point – the Disa Towers. Built in the 1960s, these three connected apartment towers – Blinkwater (shining water), Platteklip (flat rock) and Silverstroom (silver stream) – are a minor and largely detested icon of the city's landscape. As a whole, they are a conceit, a defining imposition that discloses something of the subject and object of the building words that ground, construct, and enact the (im)potential around which rhetoric and architecture circle and on which they may turn.

Blinkwater – Platteklip – Silverstroom…

Strength – Utility – Grace
Order – Arrangement – Proportion
Metonymy – Metaphor – Synecdoche
Real – Imaginary – Symbolic
Tower – Babble – Babel

?

Walls, winds, and words. The equation announced by Vitruvius continues to underwrite theory and practice: architecture "consists" in the order, arrangement, and proportion that serve the virtues of strength, utility, and grace. With proper training, architecture's "personal service" begins with the wall, a fortified line (punctuated with round towers) that discloses and encloses the question of the city, the possibility of streets and the intersection that they perform and invite. Vitruvius is adamant that this founding line must be laid with the wind in mind. A source of dis-ease, the wind is the (actual and metaphorical) onslaught that defies the wall's constitutive demarcation of inside and outside and so shakes the city's foundation, its security against the forces of nature that would seek to take its breath away. A fitting line, a conceit that appears in the name of breath, stands against and deflects the wind's eight vectors. Thus, if it is fitting, the city-inspiring wall will take the form of an octagon, a shape that resonates with Vitruvius' iconic figure of the human being and sets the paths along which they encounter one another.[7]

The usual charge against the Disa Towers is that they amount to so much brutalism, the negation of classical architecture and the desecration of the landscape with raw and lifeless concrete. It's a reasonable case, one that would be compelling if not for the way in which the complex stands against the Cape's ferocious wind, the "southeaster" that literally sweeps people off their feet. Viewed from above, it forms two segments of the Vitruvian octagon, a tower-hinged line that marks one of the city's edges. A concrete recollection of Jan van Riebeeck's hedge of bitter almonds, the tower's walls mark the ground of law and secure space in which to pronounce the words of its rule.

A*t the point of expression.* Here, within this place, there is space to mingle and a passage into relation. The wall has a point, a position from which to turn the word's possibility into a manifestation of its utility: architecture's building words aspire to wordy buildings, a confluence of lines that opens lines of confluence, a place in which expression's streams meet. The names of the towers thus shed more than a little light, not least on architecture's hope to engender public life. As they loom over Parliament, the towers conceal and project the space of private life – the apartments amount to both sanctuary (necessarily apart from the political) and constituency (a necessary part of politics).

For the habitation of words, Vitruvius triangulates the precise point on the forum's stage from which the voice will "range in its utmost clearness…along innumerable undulations of circles" and harmonize the collective.[8] With its words, syntax, and semantics, architecture ***as*** a language, according to Jencks, is "much more malleable than the spoken language," and "like the inclusive building, makes use of the full arsenal of communicational means," all in the name of giving expression to culture.[9] Perhaps this is the architect's conceit - an instrumental gift of expression which is given to that defined by its expression. Yet, when Vitruvius contends that the "unfamiliar sound" of architecture's terms "seem to obscure perception," he is asking the question of whether architecture depends on a given language for its building(s) or if it holds the very gift of language itself, a structure of the lifeworld that functions only as it remains implicit, a question that cannot be asked.[10] Do building words allegorize the trope's turn? Is the turn of a trope an allegory of words (for) building? Tragedy may lurk in the decision.

Hubris Towers. These pillars on the hillside, on the city's roof, are known largely by a different name – the Tampax Towers. Few pause to think beyond the vague visual pun. They neglect to consider that these structures did hold the blood, the blood that discloses fertility, the blood considered to be waste (the Afrikaner relegated to the status of poor white "trash"). In short, these pillars may embody three of apartheid's pillars – the regulation of space, labour policy, and social control.

Here, in space zoned for "Europeans," a panoptic place (the interior of the towers form a claustrophobic network of cells and stairways that wholly resemble a prison) to house a middle-class destined to reap the fruits of "reserved" employment. Brutalism in the service of barbarism, the complex manifests if not monumentalizes non-relation.[11] In the name of unity as difference, its form floats – above and across the line. It is just as much an icon of the laager that sought to protect the volk from the so-called swaart gevaar (black danger) as it is an instantiation of what many of its inhabitants long distrusted, a modernism that covered and rationalized British colonialism.
In this way, the towering conceit of these towers is a refusal to ask after the cost of conception, the violence of building words that assume their potential and turn it into the line of a promise, a demonstration of what cannot yet take place.

[7] Vitruvius, *On Architecture,* ed. and trans. Frank Granger (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1998), Book I, ii, 1; Book I, iii, 2; Book I, v, 1-3; Book I, vi, 1;

[8] Vitruvius, V, iii, 5-6.

[9] Jencks, *Language,* 58, 101.

[10] Vitruvius, Book V, Preface, 2. The latter is the very problem of modernist architecture according to Jencks, not least as it reduces expression to the exploitation of ornament (Jencks, 58). So goes rhetoric?

[11] As "geometric fundamentalism," see Nikos Salingaros, *A Theory of Architecture* (London: Umbau, 2006).

No geometry without the word. Without it, figures are accidents…
With it, every figure is a proposition that can be compounded with others.
Valery, Eupalinos ou L'architecte

3. Second conceit: projective conception. The hallmark of any conceit worth its name is the projection of self-certainty, the attribution of a relationship in which the relational is assumed to be less a question than a one-way street, a given path along which there is no going back (and forth). Facing the Disa Towers, this is partly to say that there is something not quite accurate and not quite interesting about the conceit that professes the architectural quality of rhetoric *or* the rhetorical quality of architecture: the line of the wall makes space for the taking place of language at the same time that language takes place in the name of making a fitting wall; the shape of the building stages a pattern of interaction in the name of recognition, an interaction that turns on recognizing the difference between staging contingent appearances and producing self-sealing ornament; the language of (the) building assumes the structure of the name that discloses the violence of its assumption.

The "building words" of rhetoric and architecture demonstrate what we well know: the conceit is janus-faced, a confluence that forms the threshold on which beginnings turn. Vitruvius says precisely this (or wishes that he could say it). Taken together, heard in the same moment, his first two books figure the good architect as a "man of letters," who brings the (in)formed word to the work of an art of building, an art that begins only with the question of the word's formation, a gathering together that discloses the necessity of indication such that space becomes the potential for place, the development of shelters that follow from the onset of deliberative concourse and turn "wandering and uncertain judgments to the assured method of symmetry."[12] The cut that divides nature, barbarism, and culture occurs at a threshold on which the proper materials of building are as much the elements of language as the proper elements of language are materials of building.[13] As Robert Venturi puts it, "Designing from the outside in, as well as the inside out, creates necessary tensions, which help make architecture. Since the inside is different from the outside, the wall – the point of change – becomes the architectural event."[14] And the rhetorical event? Between rhetoric and architecture, the constellations of the towering "master tropes" (strength – utility – grace; order – arrangement – proportion; metonymy – metaphor – synecdoche) are both the projection of the trope's constitutive turn *and* a projection of the turning line that composes the trope.

What's intriguing about Vitruvius' first two books is that they draw parallel lines – in the beginning and for a beginning, architecture and rhetoric run side-by-side, a movement in which both can be seen to be *for* the potential of building words, *in* the potential of building words, and *as* the potential of building words. The question then becomes how these lines cross, how the architectural and rhetorical gesture project from, towards, and onto one other in the name of disclosing a figure. In each case – in the temple, theater, and forum – the answer is a matter of geometry, a *declaratio terminorum,* a declaration of boundaries that speaks directly to the name "geometry" and

[12] Vitruvius, Book I, I, 4; Book II, I, 7.
[13] One could go at the argument in a different way. In book two, Vitruvius moves from the question of the origin of language to constituent supplies of building. He starts with bricks and their proper formation, an account that can be read advice on the formation of tropes.
[14] Venturi, C*omplexity,* 86

speaks in the name of finding proper ground, taking good measure, and (trans)forming a "fitting" image.[15] The projection of a well-placed stage follows from the placing of lines from which the voice can take place and project a touching figure that blurs the lines along which (and through which) it moves. More broadly, as Robin Evans worked out in significant detail, geometric projection encloses space into forms at the same time that it discloses the space between them.[16]

Blurring the line between making and doing, the projection is a facture, the laying of a line that may or may not be followed, that may or may not form the point of (a) building to which it may or may not refer. Whether it appears in the (out)line of a structure or a speech, the projecting mark is a poetic gesture, an expression that makes an expression of potential, an expression that discloses something of what is here and what is not. If so, as Frascari contends, the projected line may be important precisely as it demonstrates what remains assumed, not least the "interacting parts" of building as they (do not) appear within the edifice of the wall. A clue as to what remains implicit, the geometric projection asks the genetic-ontological question of what was deemed necessary in the name of beginning the work of building, the necessity "necessarily" forgotten in the face of its form.[17] This is precisely why Husserl turns to geometry and why Derrida "follows" – geometry's projection of shapes, figures, and motion opens the phenomenological door to a recollection of an "originally self-evident production," the infinitely transmittable experience of necessity that constitutes an "essentially general structure" of meaning and projects it into history.[18] The basis of common and sharable understanding, according to Husserl, this "ideal objectivity" is composed and disclosed in geometry's "apodictic self-evidence," a demonstration of the shapes, surfaces, and magnitudes of bodies that are projected in and through (a) language, (a) language which the projection assumes, motivates, and calls into fundamental question.[19] Opening to the "art of design of buildings" [Husserl, 178] and "the pure possibility of an inquiry into a pure language in general" [Derrida, 77], the objectivity of geometry is less a propositional deduction than a demonstrative hinge, an experience that simultaneously sets the curve of an *arché* and throws it for a curve.

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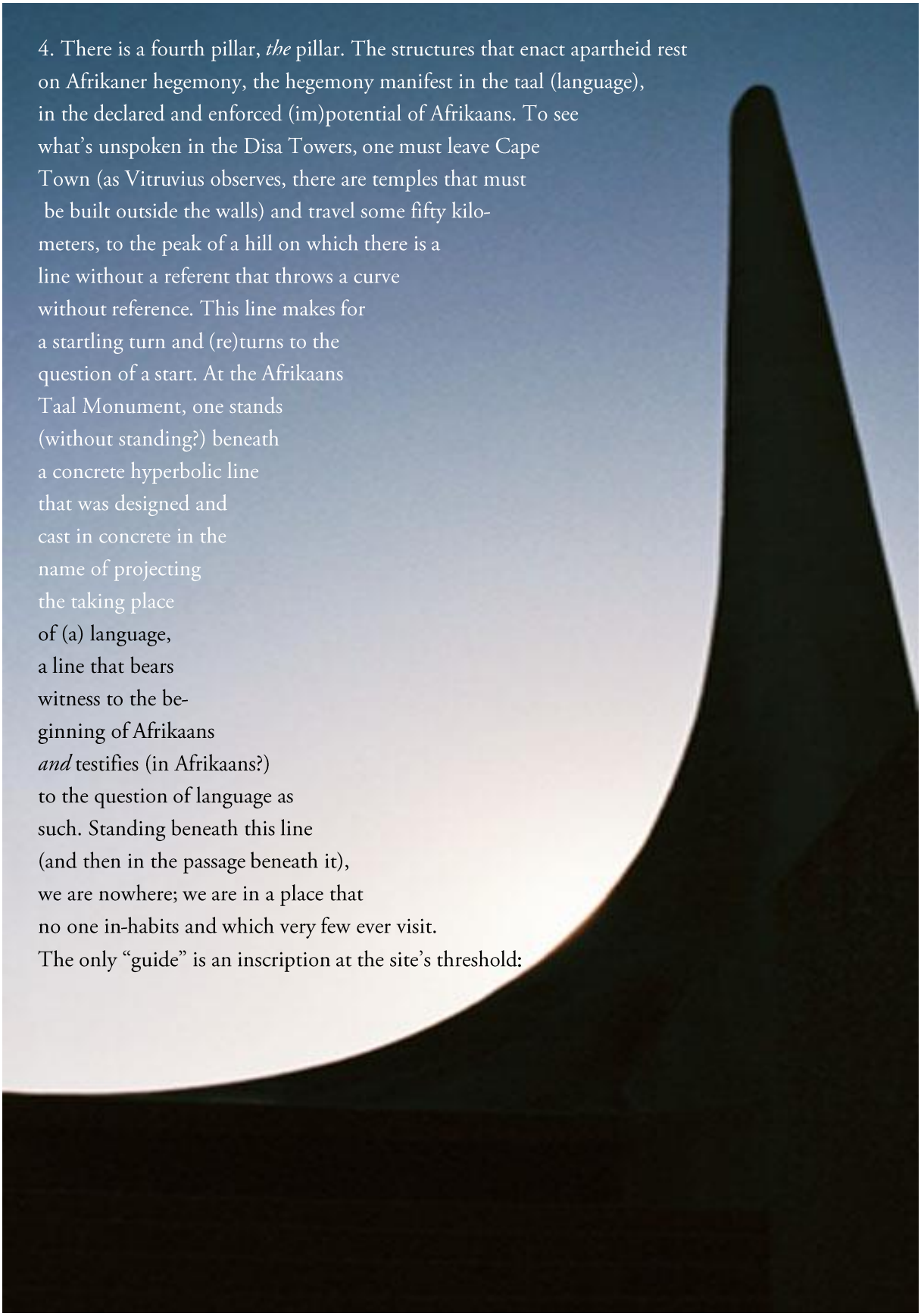
[15] Evgeny Zaitsev, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Geometry," *Isis* 90 (1999): 522-553. Also see, Apostolos Doxiadis, *Circles Disturbed: The Interplay of Mathematics and Narrative* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012; Arielle Saiber, *Giordano Bruno and the Geometry of Language* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005); David Metzger, *The Lost Cause of Rhetoric: The Relation of Rhetoric and Geometry in Aristotle and Lacan* (Carbondale: SIU Press, 1995).

[16] Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and its Three Geometries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

[17] Frascari, "Lines," 210. Also see Jacques Derrida, "No (point of) Madness – Maintaining Architecture," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II,* ed. Peggy Kamuf (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2008), 90-1.

[18] Edmund Husserl, *The Origins of Geometry,* reprinted in Jacques Derrida, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry, trans. John Leavey Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 169-174; Husserl writes, "By exhibiting the essential propositions upon which rests the historical possibility of genuine tradition, true to its origins, of science like geometry, we can understand how such sciences can vitally develop through the centuries and still not be genuine. The inheritance of propositions and of the method of logically constructing new propositions and idealities can continue without interruption from one period to the next, while the capacity for reactivating the primal beginnings, i.e, the sources of meaning for everything that comes later, has not been handed down with it." (Husserl, Origins, 170).

[19] This points to the question of what Husserl understands by 'indication,' a question to which Derrida devotes a great deal of time in *Voice and Phenomena*.



4. There is a fourth pillar, *the* pillar. The structures that enact apartheid rest
on Afrikaner hegemony, the hegemony manifest in the taal (language),
in the declared and enforced (im)potential of Afrikaans. To see
what's unspoken in the Disa Towers, one must leave Cape
Town (as Vitruvius observes, there are temples that must
be built outside the walls) and travel some fifty kilo-
meters, to the peak of a hill on which there is a
line without a referent that throws a curve
without reference. This line makes for
a startling turn and (re)turns to the
question of a start. At the Afrikaans
Taal Monument, one stands
(without standing?) beneath
a concrete hyperbolic line
that was designed and
cast in concrete in the
name of projecting
the taking place
of (a) language,
a line that bears
witness to the be-
ginning of Afrikaans
and testifies (in Afrikaans?)
to the question of language as
such. Standing beneath this line
(and then in the passage beneath it),
we are nowhere; we are in a place that
no one in-habits and which very few ever visit.
The only "guide" is an inscription at the site's threshold:

Two lines set in concrete.[20]

The first line, a hyperbola – a line without a limit; an excessive line, not least as it exceeds the boundary needed to form a figure (Euclid); a plane curve with two equal and infinite branches; the towering line of a wall, in one stroke, with one turn.

The second, a line that exceeds translation and across which we may be thrown over into a space given to the taking place of (a) language. It's too soon (or too late) to tell, but perhaps then a hyperbole – a throw in the name of, a swing or a stroke toward or against; a throwing beyond or an overthrowing (of) power, perhaps beyond a mark.[21]

Before that, the question of translation. Many years ago, this unpunctuated phrase was first rendered for me as "This is our seriousness." Some hear it as "This is our purpose" or "This is our character." The monument guidebook contends that it is best read as "We are dedicated to this cause."

What is "this"? To what cause does it point? What caused this? Perhaps, this place is dedicated to a recollection, a gathering of (a) language that emerged and took form through the cause of two "language movements," one of which appeared in response to the British decision to create the world's first concentration camps (to be sure, this place does not simply serve aims of apartheid, although on one register it does do precisely that). Or perhaps, in "this…seriousness," a line that refers to its own taking place – the express-ability of this expression demonstrates seriousness, shows a form of character. So too, these lines may be self-referential, a call to set the word in stone, to lay down lines, the lines of a proper written language that emerged through a movement dedicated to the development and recognition of a derided oral vernacular, a language that could move forward. And pointing

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[20] On a table, spread and set this page so that it is six or so inches below the one that precedes it. From that perspective one can get a rough approximation of how the two lines are situated in relation to one another within the larger monument. And there is a larger monument, composed of a number of different elements, all of which depend on the two lines that are the focus of this abbreviated reflection.

[21] In the background and beyond what I can treat here, there are several reflections on hyperbole. Christopher Johnson, *Hyperboles: The Rhetoric of Excess in Baroque Literature and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Stephen Webb, "Theological Reflections on the Hyperbolic Imagination," in *Rhetorical Invention & Religious Inquiry,* ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (New Haven: Yale UP, 200), 279-99. All of this requires an extended consideration of the connections and incongruities that appear between Derrida's accounts of hyperbole. Compare "No (Point of Madness)" and "Cogito and the History of Madness." The former recalls much more of Husserl than the latter.

forward, we may be standing at the threshold of a call for Afrikaans as the medium of education and the means of public life (the monument was dedicated just months before students took to the streets in Soweto).

For an endless beginning, a space given to the taking place of a language, to the taking place of its promise, to its taking the place of the languages from which its line emerges and which its line encompasses. Perhaps then, the oath of an overthrow, a call to create space without bounds. Two lines forming the wall of law, the threshold of a speaking place that gathers in the name of the word and assumes its power. From the beginning and for a beginning – in the garden, on stage, at Babel – such places pronounced tragically, with words that fashioned an indissociable relation between meticulously designed commonplaces to speak (*logein*) the loss of words and speeches that resisted barbarism in a manner that produced its effect. In praise of Afrikaans: a speaking place that takes the path of tragedy's discovery.

The line of words in stone may be enough, the words setting forth the (self-confounding) taking place of (their) language. And yet, this movement has yet to begin. There is something ahead that reaches beyond, something over the line of this threshold, along a line that exceeds the threshold. Between the lines, there is something then that remains unconvincing, or that perhaps open without a call to convince, without a conception (of that) which must be convincing.[22] If this place takes place in the name of Afrikaans, it may also project a question of what abides in language before it takes its name.

This question may appear in several ways, through the (non)intersection of several lines.

There is a sadness that resounds. This place is out of place, not least at it may mark the boundaries of that which ought to have never taken place. Today, for most, it is as close as a monument can come to being trash; its recollection of the word has no point – at least as a promise.[23] To stay here long is to discern that this place projects a lament, one that demands no sympathy but which sounds an echo, an echo of what Benjamin called "over-naming." Slipping over the wall and across the threshold, this echo (re)turns language into the wind, into its breath, a question of its arrival and movement.

This very movement may unfold in a complex dynamic of demonstration and display. In this place, the inscription is a demonstrative turn, a projection of axiomatic (hyperbolic) words that underwrite the movement of an open curve that displays language, that sets its forth, into an appearance that calls for(th) its name. And simultaneously, the inscription displays what the movement of language demonstrates, that the arrival of the word unfolds in a hyperbolic projection, a line that literally marks the exceeding of boundaries, a throwing over and throwing beyond the capacity to name let alone understand. Between the rhetorical and the architectural, as the geometric shuttles, what appears is an experience of allegory, an experience of under-meaning that remains inside and outside the name, the (im)potential of overthrowing being thrown into language.

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[22] Benjamin is close: "To convince is to conquer without conception" and "The tragic rests on a lawfulness governing the spoken word between human beings. There is no tragic pantomime. Nor is there a tragic poem, tragic novel, or tragic event."
[23] We will save the question of lefty promises about 'never again' for another day.

6. Third conceit (briefly): projecting the question of an (un)certain line. This may all be babble, a potential condition (in both senses) of rhetoric and architecture. There may be no point to this, no beginning that runs a line of argument or traces a circle in the name of interpretation. Without the eternal hope for a productive three-way, there is no squaring of circles or synthetic labor of triangulation, no fashioning of vectors into planes of transcendence or everyday life. Not then the given *topoi*: find an angle; develop a (narrative or argumentative) line that comes from and to the point of a claim; defer circularity for moments of interpretation and don't wind up in a corner; reflect carefully on how to best join, intersect, and cross other figures, the figure of the other.

In the name of building a commonplace, a space in which to conceive, these in/con-structions are the concrete conceits of the deliberative line, the line run in the name of the deliberative gesture that touts its capacity to begin (inter)action while it forgets, like the Parliament and public that it claims to inspire, the question of its contingent origins, the question of how it came to assume (its) language. But this is no time to speak of such things. Indeed, there is no time. Far too many are too busy to indulge (in) the poetic gesture on which the (im)potential of building words may turn (look at our journals) or too riddled with distraction to think beyond the declared imperative of action (look at how political science textbooks stage the grammar of persuasion). Too many are brainwashed to distrust motion at the cost of seeing and hearing something of the word's (re)turn, the line of a curve that (over)throws the figure, that shows and shows off a building.

Between architecture and rhetoric: a crossing line that discloses an "open figure"; a taking place of words in which origin and beginning are non-coincident; a sense of demonstration that points to building projects which (over)throw the operativity of language, a movement that (re)turns to the question of what (im)potential abides in the shape of a trope; an experience of giving the name back to the under-meaning of language; a conceit that prays for not a day without a line.