



LOCATING THE VANISHING POINT: STYLE IN LITERATURE, ARCHITECTURE AND BEYOND

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I. Style in Literature

An Anecdote

As it so happened, I was traveling on a vacation with my family, and stopped for lunch at one of the identifiable features of the modern highway, a Nickerson Farms restaurant—the one, you remember, with the big red roof. Later in the day, some three-hundred wearying miles later, I pulled up to another big red roof for supper, and my four-year-old daughter, who had jumped for joy at the first stop, spotted the roof and cried out miserably, “We’ve driven all day and *we haven’t gotten anywhere!*”

The Same Anecdote, sort of

As it so happened, I was traveling to Minneapolis on a sort of a vacation, and I took the opportunity to stop at a fine museum of contemporary art, the Des Moines Art Museum, where my daughter became awed at one of the works. It was an ingenious object by Claes

Oldenburg—the one, you remember, who makes those enormous sculptures out of soft materials, sculptures of objects you would normally expect to be inflexible, like electrical fans. This time it was an electrical plug, some eight feet tall, made of blue vinyl and stuffed, like a huge floppy pillow.

In Minneapolis later, we took the opportunity to visit the fine Walker Art Center, which owns its own Oldenburg. Walking into the entrance of the museum, we immediately came to the immense soft sculpture that loomed down at us from the ceiling. My daughter, proud at being able to identify the sight, cried out, “Look! The big plug!”

I want to use these anecdotes to introduce the notion of repetitions, and to say something about the idea of *style*—not the style of the two passages but what the passages inform us about the idea of style. They inform us, in their descriptions of crucial moments, that style is always a matter of expectations and contexts. They suggest to us ways of defining style, although trying to do so is

like trying to locate a continually receding vanishing point. It may only be done in theory.

We laugh at the first anecdote because of the mistake involved: my daughter's failure to recognize that Nickerson Farms exist in multiple locations. In our amusement we place ourselves above her narrow field of perception; she should, we think, learn to expect an old thing, whatever it may be, in a new context, the familiar in the unfamiliar setting. In faulting her thus, however, we forget that in this "error" she has acquired what many people of sophisticated contemporary taste have acquired—the sense of *oddness* that one should travel and yet see the same damn thing wherever one goes. The "plastic" uniformity of contemporary franchise design. Is this perception an "error" at all? Hasn't she gained, albeit inadvertently, a *sense of style* that some never develop? Isn't this the discovery of the pointlessness of travel if the traveler spends his time seeing all the things he's seen before? Let's see something *really new* this time, O.K.?

The second anecdote, in a similar movement of repetition of experience, also tells us a useful thing or two about style and context. The common electrical plug, a familiar enough object, can be given an unfamiliar status by a few blows to our expectations. Its most familiar features—inflexibility, drabness, and manageable size—are mocked, transformed into flexibility, color, and gargantuan proportion. It is as if an old friend surprises us wholly and changes character. To see a plug in this new way, moreover, is to see the familiar anew, its familiar features punctuated by means of the unfamiliar.

Those who in the history of criticism have tried to define style, to locate the vanishing point from inside or outside the picture, would have done well to have studied these two anecdotes in order to relate them to the phenomenon of *expectations* that occur in reading and writing (whether in literature or in language in general). Many attempts to define what we commonly call *style* have fallen on the effort to keep style completely separate from *content*—an effort that usually involves a privileging of content over style. When this is done, when *form* is opposed to *content*, then, *content* usually wears the pants in the family, is the privileged side of the pair of terms. Style becomes "only the style." Although this distinction sounds rather commonsensical—*how* a thing is said vs. *what* is said—the clarity of it breaks down in the scrutiny of many an example. If I say, for instance, "the cars *crashed*" instead of "the cars *collided*," you might think that the same event is being described in each case, with only a different "choice of words," one more "formal" in style, the other more "colloquial." Alas, it is not so. The words, in fact, mean different events, and they will make hearers respond differently, as psychologists of language have, incidentally, confirmed. In their psycholinguistic experiments they have shown that viewers of filmed collisions estimate the speed of collision differently if the event is described to them as a *crash* rather than as a *collision*. What's more, in remembering their viewing some time later, they even tend to recall seeing broken glass where there was none. *How* something is said may also be *what* is said. "Ornament" can be central, not peripheral.

Other attempts at defining style have been numerous in literature, often beginning with the traditional notion that style is *individuality*—the way a person does something, like swing a racket, that reveals the stamp of his personality. The signal of his own specific rhythm. This definition is that of the eighteenth century critic, Buffon, whose famous aphorism is "the style is the man." The present century has seen any number of refinements on this theory—from computer analysts of style who identify characteristic vocabulary or sentence formation of individual authors (in an approach resulting in some stylistic detective successes in determining, for example, the authorship of some of the anonymous Federalist papers), to Freudian literary analysts, such as Norman Holland, who examine the way in which different readers have reading or interpreting styles of their own, styles appropriate to their personalities and accounting for the pluralistic way that an individual work can be looked at by a number of readers. We do not, the theory goes, all read the same way, nor should we be expected to.

But there is one modern theory of style that gets at the heart of the connection described by the anecdotes, the connection between style and expectations. The theory, going back to the twenties and thirties, and experiencing some revival currently, is known as Russian Formalism. One of its major proponents, Viktor Skhlovsky, proposed that the essence of artistic style, and indeed of literary

language itself, is *defamiliarization*—that is, making us see old things in a new way, making the familiar *strange*. We see the "plugness" of a plug, to use our example, by the unfamiliar ways in which Oldenburg presents it to us. The theory of defamiliarization has an implicit moral side to it, in its attempt to keep us from dulling our perceptions, from letting habit and routine rule our lives and our understanding. This, ultimately, is what style is all about.

The second anecdote, conforming to the theory of defamiliarization as described, does the theory one better, by clearly demonstrating that style is always a matter of expectations and contexts, and that there is no timeless, one-to-one relationship between some stylistic element or event and its meaning or effect. The originally familiar plug, newly made unfamiliar by the artistic process of style, will become in turn familiar again, as it did in the anecdote for my daughter. (*There's another of those big plugs.*) In fact, its environment, an art museum, begins to take on its own familiarity as the context of the art work: art museums are just places where there are always big plugs. (Such a process of defamiliarization and refamiliarization is the evolution that Andy Warhol counts on in his repetitions of figures and works of art.) The familiar becomes the unfamiliar becomes the familiar again. My daughter, in a sense, acquired, and then lost, a sense of style. Such is always the progress of changing styles, or senses of style, in literature, where *contexts* and *expectations* are everything. Style is always time-bound.

II. Style in Literature and Architecture

The deeper symbol, the knowledge of which transforms your whole view of the building, is not absolutely necessary in order to grasp its more obvious meanings. But like multivalent works in other fields, it speaks to many different people on different levels.

These kinds of work, the six major tragedies of Shakespeare for instance, have the power to engage the mind and open our imaginations to new meaning. They are catalytic, provocative and creative, stimulating each generation to reach beyond its familiar abstractions and discover new interpretations; whereas the univalent work is reductive, dull, and ultimately repressive. A multivalent architecture remains alive because its meanings are so related as to allow new paths to be discovered between them.

Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), p. 101.

If style in literature is a matter of expectations and contexts for the observer, as we have seen through the discussion of *defamiliarization*, an analogy should hold in the other arts, such as architecture. Jencks, in the passage above, draws on an analogy of literature to architecture, and shares the notion of style as an act of the interpretation of an observer or reader. His ideas about the *multivalence* of a work of art happen to be shared by contemporary readers and critics of literature, where the term for multiple possibilities of interpretation (whether of an individual word or of an entire literary work) is *polysemy*. But the present discussion of defamiliarization suggests that Jencks' view of style may be somewhat misleading, at least in calling the work itself multivalent or univalent, since those are qualities brought to the work rather than somehow inherent in it. Expectations and familiarities are in people, not in objects.

Such analogies as the one between literature and architecture are powerful, not merely as tools of analysis, but as ways of opening up new possibilities of experimentation. The literature/architecture metaphor has, in fact, been recently explored by Ellen Eve Frank in *Literary Architecture* (University of California, 1979). Analogies that cut across the arts are, however, themselves a long tradition, both in the case of regarding literature as if it were a visual form, and in the case of regarding visual arts as if they were literary or linguistic. Horace, for example, contended that poetry ought to be like pictures ("*ut pictura poesis*"); Walter Pater in the last century called architecture "frozen music"; and some modern architects, such as Jencks, speak in linguistic analogies of the ways in which one combines architectural elements in a building. Thus, the conventional ways of combining elements are referred to as architectural *syntax*. Accordingly, Jencks invokes again the literary metaphor in order to regard violations of a "syntax" as a form of artistic experiment or creativity, authorized by the parallel case of literary violations of syntax or semantics that we sometimes find. Such violations are usually the territory of modern verse, although not exclusively (Shakespeare,

for instance, committed them too). We might look at the characteristic example of e.e. cummings, whose distortions of conventional grammar constitute his own poetic individuality, as in the following lines:

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

This sort of creative violation (verbs as nouns, nouns as verbs or something) is the sort that Jencks would seem to approve of as an aesthetic principle, since he contends that the "syntax" of architecture—"the rules for combining the various words of door, window, wall, and so forth"—can similarly be violated, as they are violated by poets and schizophrenics, for interest and excitement: "The 'violations' call attention to the language itself by misuse, exaggeration, repetition, and all the devices of rhetorical skill" (*The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, p. 72).

This idea of violating syntax, of innovative combinations, carries with it, both in literary and architectural theory, a premium placed on self-consciousness and on *multiplicity* of styles. Multiplicity is related to "multivalence" but not the same thing, since it suggests multiple, unexpected combinations of styles rather than multiple strategies of interpretation. The *eclecticism* of architectural styles generally praised by Jencks has its parallel in the radical stylistic theory of Richard A. Lanham in *Style: An Anti-Textbook* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1974), where he argues for training in a sense of style, or rather of styles as the basis for learning to write. The worst, he contends, is to try to fix boundaries in separating styles from each other—worst because "stylistic experience constitutes a full continuum," and because such categorizing "reinforces the worst of American errors, the delusion that style is only for poetry, for the classroom, not for—and part of—everyday life." The prescriptive that concludes his argument is the postmodern prescription—to play with the styles, to allow for eclecticism:

The obvious therapy is not only to normalize jargons but to imitate them, parody them, and translate them one into another. America possesses no central, normative prose style considered that of an educated man, no BBC English. We haven't the social structure a normative style emerges from and is built upon. Americans are born eclectics, in prose as in every other kind of style. Why not make the most of it? (p. 93)

To descend for a moment to the concrete, take the following literary example, an excerpt from one of our best living stylists in verse, the contemporary poet John Ashbery:

I pledge me to be truthful unto you
Whom I cannot ever stop remembering.

Remembering to forgive. Remember to pass beyond you into
the day
On the wings of the secret you will never know.
Taking me from my self, in the path
Which the pastel girth of the day has assigned to me.

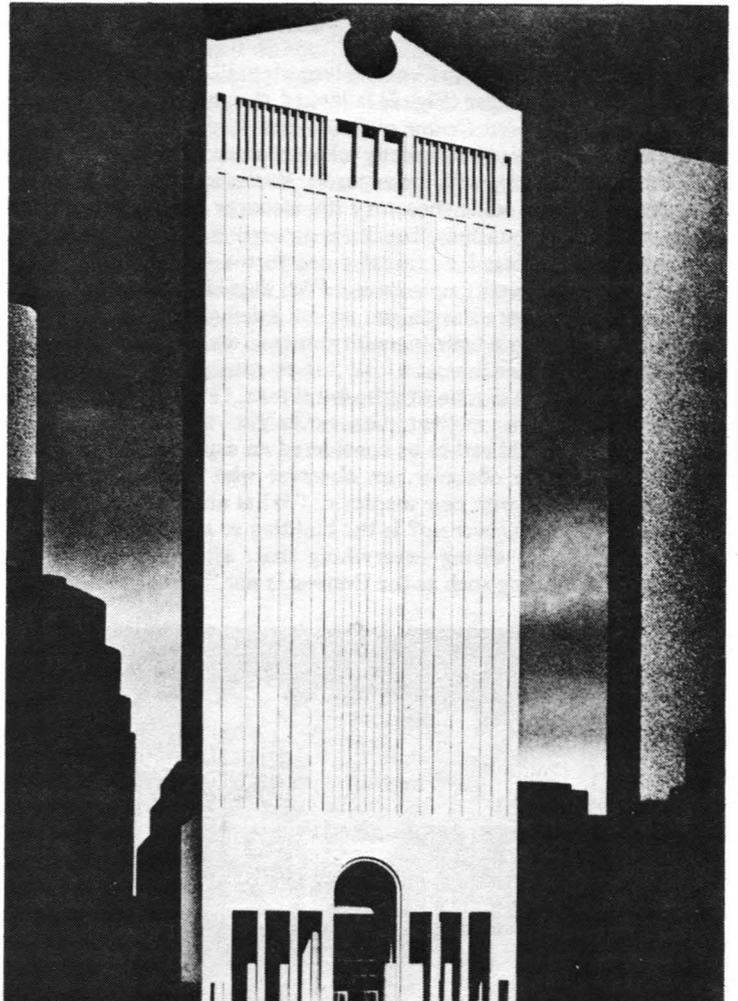
I prefer "you" in the plural, I want "you,"
You must come to me, all golden and pale
Like the dew and the air.

And then I start getting this feeling of exaltation.

The stylistic shocker here is not that of the cummings excerpt, where "how" looks as if it's been turned into an adjective, "did" into a noun. The shocker is that the poet concludes with a line like, "And then I start getting this feeling of exaltation." *Exhaltation*?? Is that the sort of word we might expect to conclude the colloquial phrase, "I start getting this feeling of . . . ?" It sounds more like a word picked out of a thesaurus, in a forced phrase, in an assignment written for a composition class rather than for a loved one. Certainly not by someone in a state of ecstasy. Like a big, soft, blue plug, it deliberately calls attention to its oddness, its stylistic curiosity, and it works largely by virtue of *expectations*. The reader experiences it after having been through the previous lines, with their smattering of vaguely "poetic" or "personal" or "romantic" words and phrases: "wings of the secret" . . . "all golden and pale" . . . "like the dew and the air." Lulled by those sorts of phrases, the reader experiences the final plain line like an odd torpedo. The poet teases our ex-

pectations, having a sort of elegance (or at least what may pass as elegance to some) that is to be followed by a banality, a delicate step followed by a pratfall.

Philip Johnson does the same thing architecturally in his much debated design for the A.T. & T. skyscraper. (Fig. 1) He employs the same rhetorical strategy and "twist." The imposing size of the structure, the immense form that presumably first strikes the viewer's eye, creates a pressure of expectations for familiar modernist design, just as the first lines of the Ashbery excerpt create their own expectations. The overall configuration first suggests, to this observer, a form in the best glass-and-steel-box manner, what in modernist architecture passes for formal "elegance"—uninterrupted, monumental, rectilinear form. We expect an overall unity in such a form, though our expectations will be defeated when we attend to the specifics of the structure's top and bottom. We expect the form to remind us of other such sleek designs (if we are architects) or perhaps of some pure geometric abstraction (if we are regular folks). This first impression (or expectation) is on all fours with the dictum of Mies van der Rohe that "less is more"—a notion resolutely hostile to practices of ornament or decoration. Next, however, like the concluding line of the Ashbery poem, the base and pinnacle of the building play tricks on the viewer's expectations, by shifting styles on him. The architecture shifts to classical arches and to the ornate flourish of a piece of eighteenth century furniture—a decorative motif as deliberately out of proportion on a skyscraper as an eight-foot tall electrical plug is on a wall. The expectations of an anti-decorative tradition assumed to be appropriate for skyscrapers are defeated by a decorative, concluding twist comparable for willfully flat, mundane and ordinary, the speaking style in "And then I start getting this feeling of exaltation." The incongruity of expectation and conclusion is, in both cases, the work's *wit*. The overall configuration and proportion of the building invokes the convention of modern skyscrapers, but the whole is then attacked by the parts—funny phrases, out of place, deliberately clumsy or reductive.

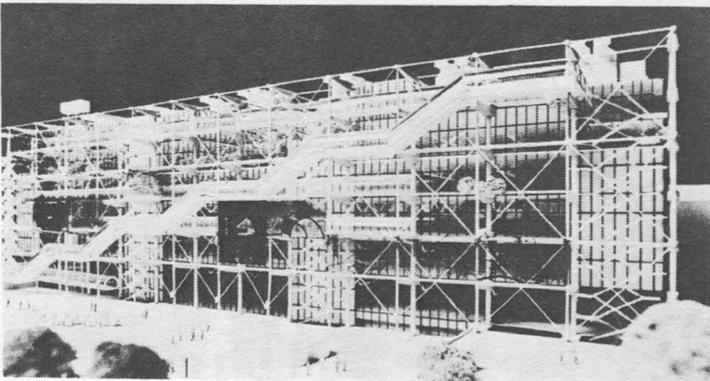


(Fig. 1) Philip C. Johnson, AT & T Building, New York City, 1978-82

The architectural "move" or "strategy" of this building consists of another thing as well, something that parallels the rhetorical procedures of *parody*. An important phenomenon in parody is that it often has a way of altering perception, particularly visual perception as a result of *caricature* (a visual form of parody). The exaggerations of parody, in fact, call attention not only to themselves, but also to the features of *what is parodied*—an aesthetic phenomenon like that of defamiliarization. Thus, after seeing political cartoons of Jimmy Carter, we tend to focus on the *teeth* when we see him in a photograph or even in person. For Richard Nixon, the exaggeration by caricaturists of his baggy jowls makes it difficult for us to view the man without some similar exaggeration in our own perception. Such wit, then, has a back-projecting effect on our perceptions; accordingly, if the parody or caricature is strong enough, Carter or Nixon will *never again look the same to us*. It is no wonder that a number of civilizations throughout the history of mankind have attributed magical powers to those who write or speak satire. A funny name, if apt, will always stick, and the person it is directed towards is accordingly transformed (in the perception of all who have heard the name). In a verification of this, the comedian Michael O'Donoghue of "Saturday Night Live" discovered such a transforming power when he was bullied as a youngster; he reports that he could think up names to say to the bullies, names that would keep them crying into their pillows for nights to come. The transforming power of the A.T.&T. building, like that of any parody, is one that makes it difficult to look at any modernist building without some amusement—amusement, that is, at the simplemindedness of the concept. Indeed, the "elegance" of the modernist lower part of the structure is called into question when conjoined to the ornamental "elegance" of the top. We no longer trust the older, parental design.

This back-projecting effect, then, may be thought of as the influence of a newer style on the older one. Our perceptions of an earlier, familiar style are altered as the result of the newer style. Such is the strategy of much experimental, postmodern architecture, whose strongest effect is on our perceptions of modernist architecture, as illustrated in the following juxtaposition:

When the older "modernist" or "international" style of Pei's *Everson Museum* in Syracuse (Fig. 2) is looked at again after viewing the postmodern *Pompidou Centre* of Piano and Rogers (Fig. 3), for instance, its formal, blank simplicity takes on a new context. The colorful Pompidou Centre, with its exposed, cluttered structures, visible ducts and invisible walls, becomes the stronger style. The Everson Museum, or any building like it, is treated like one of Michael O'Donoghue's bullies; it is transformed into a thing barren, cold, humorless, and, well, *repressive*. We should not consider its repressiveness or totalitarianism as an intrinsic character of its design, for with only a little ingenuity we can imagine a viewer whose architectural experience would lead him to consider the form a kind of aesthetic piece of wit, an architectural joke. (Perhaps an architect time-traveling from ancient Greece might so regard it.) Its repressiveness should rather be considered an aspect of the changing expectations of the observer, an observer who learns to view the modernist building with new suspicion: "What are those great spaces of concrete trying to *cover up*? Is the building so ashamed of its ductwork, its vents, its wiring—everything that, after, all, makes it a *building*?" A building such as the Everson is not "humorless" until set



(Fig. 3) Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, *Pompidou Centre*, Paris, 1977

into opposition with the "wittiness" of the Pompidou Centre. Ultimately, the sobriety or the wit is in people, not in buildings.

An odd confirmation of this is provided, incidentally, by my architectural editors of this essay, who questioned my description by noting that the Pompidou Centre may itself be "cold and repressive" and, what is more, not even postmodernist, since it carries on a tradition of technology-worship in the building style of some nineteenth-century architecture. In saying so they establish conventions and expectations (differing, of course, from my untutored ones) about what constitutes "repressiveness" in buildings, although "repressiveness" ultimately resides in people, not in buildings. Their perception, like mine, *creates the style*.

The transforming power of a new style, in literature or in architecture, characteristically sets up some such opposition where it did not exist before, usually through some sort of defamiliarization process. There are a number of such oppositions that seem to be currently at play in a number of artistic fields at present, oppositions which might be set out very roughly as follows, with the right-hand column constituting the terms that are currently becoming privileged or dominant, progressively replacing those on the left:

compression	versus	elaboration
function		ornament
less		more
work		play
earnestness		wit
univocality		pluralism
clarity		ambiguity
simplicity		complexity
symmetry		asymmetry
completion		incompletion
unity		strategy

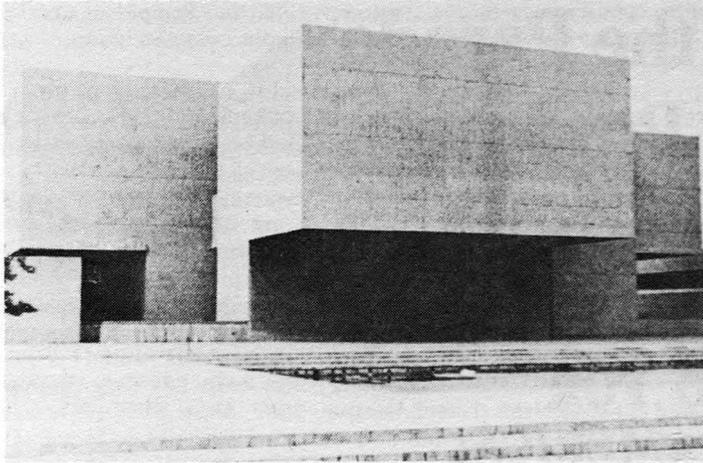
These sorts of notions, often applied in the visual arts such as architecture, are closely related to the notions and terms of rhetoric. Indeed, visual artists would do well to browse around in some handbook of rhetorical terms and examples, such as Richard A. Lanham's *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (University of California, 1968). Since the parallels between literary and architectural style exist in the realm of contexts and expectations and usage—the realm of rhetoric rather than the more narrow technical realm of linguistics—such browsing should be more illuminating and suggestive than browsing in the realm of grammatical theory, or "syntax" (where language tends to be used only incidentally for the purpose of communication between people).

The architectural examples already cited are good instances of at least one of these sets of oppositions at work—the opposition between *compression* (the reductive quality of the Everson) and *elaboration* (the Pompidou Centre's giving attention to every detail of the building's structure and function). In literature, we might draw a parallel to a modernist master of radical compression in poetry, Ezra Pound, who compresses an intense image in the lines of his famous two-line poem, "In a Station of the Metro":

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Replacing this tough-minded compression, as the elaborate and the ornamental are currently replacing it in the visual arts, are the witty styles of the best stylists of contemporary fiction and poetry, writers whose language is often ornamental, self-consciously and willfully calling attention to its surface, aggressively complex and playful and copious and flashy, as in these two passages, whose stylistic extravagance stands out all the more for the reader attuned to the radical restraint of a Pound or a Hemingway:

The males of the firefly, a small luminous beetle, more like a wandering star than a winged insect, appeared on the first warm black nights of Ardis, one by one, here and there, then in a ghostly multitude, dwindling again to a few individuals as their quest came to its natural end. Van watched them with the same pleasurable awe he had experienced as a child, when, lost in the purple crepuscule of an Italian hotel garden, in an alley of cypresses, he supposed they were golden ghouls or the passing fancies of the garden. Now as they softly flew, apparently straight, crossing and recrossing the darkness around him, each flashed his pale lemon light every five seconds or so, signaling in his own specific rhythm (quite different from that



(Fig. 2) I.M. Pei, *Everson Museum, Syracuse, New York, 1968*

of an allied species, flying with *Photinus ladorensis*, according to Add, at Lugano and Luga) to his grass-domiciled female pulsating in photic response after taking a couple of moments to verify the exact type of light code he used.

Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada* (N.Y.: McGraw Hill, 1969), p. 77

Where's the city Slothrop used to see back in those newsreels and that National Geographic? Parabolas weren't all that New German Architecture went in for—there were the spaces—the necropolis of blank alabaster in the staring sun, meant to be filled with human harvests rippling out of sight, making no sense without them. If there is such a thing as the City Sacramental, the city as outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual illness or health, then there may have been, even here, some continuity of sacrament, through the terrible surface of May. The emptiness of Berlin this morning is an inverse mapping of the white and geometric capital before the destruction—the fallow and long-strewn fields of rubble, the same weight of too much featureless concrete—except that here everything's been turned inside out. The straight-ruled boulevards built to be marched along are now winding pathways through the waste piles, their shapes organic now, responding, like goat trails, to laws of least discomfort. The civilians are outside now, the uniforms inside. Smooth facets of buildings have given way to cobbly insides of concrete blasted apart, all the endless pebbled rococo just behind the shuttering. Inside is outside. Ceilingless rooms open to the sky, wall-less rooms pitched out over the sea of ruins in prows, in crow's nests . . . Old men with their tins searching the ground for cigarette butts wear their lungs on their breasts. Advertisements for shelter, clothing, the lost, the taken, once classified, folded *burgerlich* inside newspapers to be read at one's ease in the lacquered and graceful parlors are now stuck with Hitler-head stamps of blue, orange, and yellow, out in the wind, when the wind comes, stuck to trees, door frames, planking, pieces of wall-white and fading scraps, writing spidery, trembling, smudged, thousands unseen, thousands unread or blown away.

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (N.Y.: Viking, 1973), pp. 433-34.

Describing fireflies, describing a bombed city, the passages, each in his own rhythm, show off their style, or rather their styles (with their mixtures of the "formal" and the "informal"). As a bomb does to the architecture of a city (the point of the Pynchon passage), they make us see the ordinary anew, they defamiliarize, they turn contexts on their heads.

III. Style Beyond

The last move, the last strategy, seems to be to allow *all* styles, to swallow up all contexts, to view them from a point outside any frame of reference. The last move seems to be to go beyond the privileged position of either of the sets of terms that have been set up, to refuse to allow any sort of opposition to flourish, by going beyond any con-

fidence in the lasting quality of a particular opposition. The last move is to be persistently suspicious.

This final move prevents our feeling satisfied with the right-hand set of terms currently holding sway over taste, and it is a move prefigured by the second part of the Oldenburg sculpture anecdote. The anecdote indicated, in brief, that defamiliarization is a process that doesn't have to stop; it continually turns on itself. The unfamiliar will again become familiar in time; big plugs will look completely ordinary in art museums. The "wit" of a piece of postmodern architecture will not be seen as witty forever, an idea that reminds us of William Blake's observation that, although he loved nothing more than fun, "too much fun is loathsome." Architecture, if it regards itself as an institution committed to the perpetuation of fun, will also become loathsome. Even eclecticism and multivalence, notions that swallow up styles, notions that attempt to liberate from the imprisonment of a single authorized style, are themselves subject to familiarization. It is, admittedly, a mistake to consider a single style as some sort of absolute; but it may be the complementary mistake to think that one can stand absolutely outside all styles, magisterially eclectic, having located the vanishing point.

Of the two forms of error—being bound by a single style and trying to embrace all styles—the latter may, in fact, be the most dangerous position, or the position that leads inevitably to a dead end. For it may be difficult to acquire any sense of style by starting with all styles. It may be necessary, in developing a sense of style, to immerse oneself fully in a particular style, to make almost instinctive its nature and its expectations.

For in literature, architecture, and beyond, the acquisition of style is the chief activity. Every employment, at its best, knows the activity of acquiring a style, the work done as if it were the most natural thing in the world, one's own specific rhythm. It is never time-bound. It is, for the philosopher Whitehead, the "ultimate morality of mind":

Finally, there should grow the most austere of all mental qualities; I mean the sense for style. It is an aesthetic sense, based on admiration for the direct attainment of a foreseen end, simply and without waste. Style in art, style in literature, style in science, style in logic, style in practical execution have fundamentally the same aesthetic qualities, namely, attainment and restraint. The love of a subject in itself and for itself, where it is not the sleepy pleasure of pacing a mental quarterdeck, is the love of style as manifested in that study.

Here we are brought back to the position from which we started, the utility of education. Style, in its finest sense, is the last acquirement of the educated mind; it is also the most useful. It pervades the whole being. The administrator with a sense for style hates waste; the engineer with a sense for style economizes his material; the artisan with a sense for style prefers good work. Style is the ultimate morality of mind.

A.N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education* (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1929), p. 19.

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Frontispiece by David McCaulay, "Locating the Vanishing Point," 1978