

**An Interview with Arakawa and Gins:
February 10, 25; March 12, 2010
Martin E. Rosenberg**

INTRODUCTION

When Jondi and I began planning AG3-Online: The Third International Arakawa and Gins: Architecture and Philosophy Conference, we had in mind an opening sequence which would require producing a video interview with these two visionary architects. When it became clear that logistical difficulties prevented the production of a video, we came upon the idea of a series of email exchanges, from which we could then fashion an integrated narrative of questions and answers. What follows, then, is the result of a series of exchanges of questions, and answers, that took place over a period of one month, with both questions and answers negotiated in a process that proved both rigorous, far more “non-linear” than we had expected, and fun. Jondi and I hoped especially to see if we could break the frame of Arakawa and Gins’ usual rhetorical tactics. We hoped to draw out of these often hermetic thinkers some exposition through which students of their work might find “landing sites.”

We also wanted this interview to reveal, if only in tentative flashes, the continuity of their concerns: from Arakawa’s early conceptual diagrammatic works, and Madeline Gins’ poetic language games; through their commitment to exploring the relationship between our cognitive and conceptual lives in the eighty-four life-sized panels of *The Mechanism of Meaning*; to the specific and local constructions of landscapes and buildings, and their two manifestos, *Architectural Body* and *Making Dying Illegal*, which enact the procedures conceptually that are required physically of the embodied users who inhabit their visionary spaces.

I would like to thank Arakawa and Madeline Gins for their generosity and patience in embracing the aims of this interview.

MER

Why does the question of whether something is impossible or possible interest you? It seems as though you have designed semantic structures like “Reversible Destiny,” and “Making Dying Illegal” to confound us in a delightful way, as one would expect Dada, Zen koans or the sayings of Chuang Tze to do. Yet it appears that you embrace a pure, almost quixotic idealism that straddles both the absurd and the (deadly) serious. Duchamp came up with a term called “meta-irony” to offer one possible definition of the straddling of doubt and affirmation. How would you define your straddling? And, yet, I am sure that you want to go “on the record” to state that you seek to “reverse destiny.”

Arakawa and Gins

We wanted to remain or become free enough to be unenslaved.

Unenslaved by what?

Unenslaved by...the mechanism of meaning, that composite of guiding principles and tendencies that constitutes forth all that human beings can say and do.

Art-making, being artists, seemed freeing enough at first, to the extent that we felt we could use “the making of art” to invent as we pleased. But, but, and but.

Each of us knew nearly from the start that any will to express –expressivity– is a tight bind that leads sooner or later, usually sooner, to a (very) dead end.

We also agreed with each other from day one that the great seduction of life would be forever marred, and more than marred, unless something could be done about the great Unseduction, mortality. Expressivity –why, that was like fiddling while Rome burned.

Together we envisioned an escape route from.... Why don’t we leave it to you to say from what.

MER

One of the most striking accomplishments of your work is its appeal to a broad range of disciplinary practices. It almost seems as if you are at work trying to forge cognitive and conceptual procedures that short-circuit the closed and linear behavior of specific disciplinary practices. Is that why you spend so much of your time conceptually designing “terminological junctions” such as “landing sites,” “cleaving” and the related “bioscleave,” “biotopology” and so forth, that seem to resonate with foundational problems in a range of disciplines, and cognitive science in particular--long before others began to realize what that discipline had uncovered?

Arakawa and Gins

Here is a terminological junction that we might term a historical one, for it holds within it the history of our team’s relationship to embodied cognition:

BODY/ PERSON/ARCHETYPAL ARTWORK/THE MECHANISM OF MEANING/ORGANISM THAT PERSONS/ARCHITECTURAL BODY

A less bare-bones (pun only half-intended) version of this terminological junction that would be more for daily research use than for historical explication:

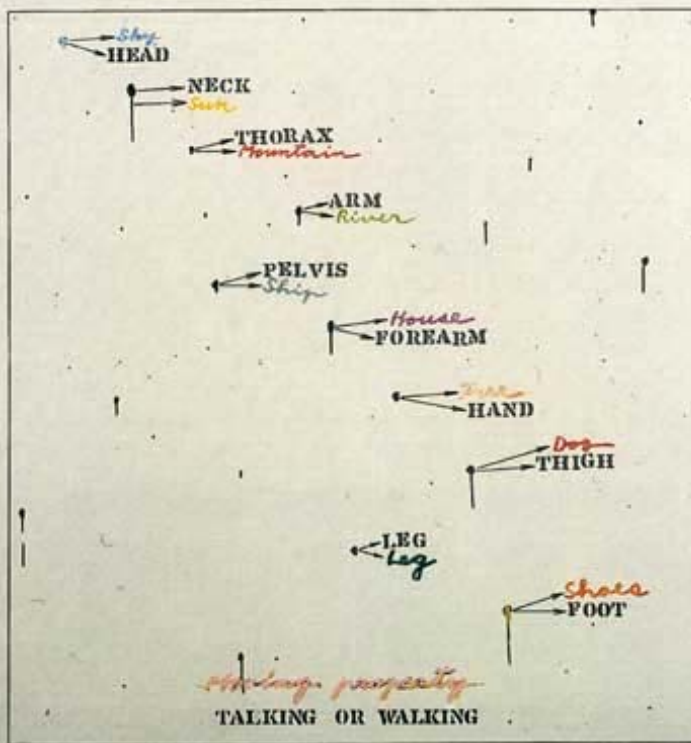
BODY/EMBODIED COGNITION/PERSON/ARCHETYPAL ARTWORK/THE MECHANISM OF MEANING/CODE OR QUASI CODE OF AUTOMATICITY/FORMING BLANK/ ORGANISM THAT PERSONS/ORGANIZED SEGMENT OF BIOSCLEAVE/ARCHITECTURAL BODY/LANDING-SITE CONFIGURATION OF THE MOMENT/IMAGING ALONG/ARCHITECTURAL EMBODYING/

On one hand, we find ourselves able to isolate whole sets of concepts or approaches in single terminological junctions; on the other, we now see that terminological junctions need to be added together or all taken into consideration at once, to whatever extent that might turn out to be possible. This PERSON (or BODY) terminological junction contains the several different ways that we have over the course of four decades or so found ourselves referring to (a) PERSON (or BODY). What makes a PERSON (or a BODY) able to present herself as a PERSON? All that goes into the forming of a PERSON (or a BODY)??

MER

I have been looking at *The Mechanism of Meaning*. For example, your term “cleaving” doubles as both merging or aggregating, and the contingent “fork-in-the-road,” or what physicists would call “bifurcation” or philosophers would call “individuation.” In panel 7.2 from *TMOM* called “This Is About To Split”, you seem to enact conceptually a form of cleaving. Might we find harbingers of all your recent theorizing, as well as specific suggestions for architectural procedures, within *TMOM*?

THIS IS ABOUT TO SPLIT



“This Is About To Split” (TMOM 7.2)

Arakawa and Gins

Embodied cognition—that is the subject matter of our research project *The Mechanism of Meaning*. Perform any of its exercises while keeping embodied cognition in mind, and you will see what we mean. What is of interest, the behavioral

tendency or principle of action named or alluded to by that subdivision to which the exercise-in-question belongs, gets elicited body-wide in each viewer/participant.

The drawing that serves as the last panel of the subdivision, The Neutralization of Subjectivity, prefigures and paves the way for our concept of an architectural body.



SUSANNAH NEUTRALIZES HERSELF

- IN MIRROR
- BY/IN WATER
- TOUCHING HER FOOT
- CLOTH BETWEEN ARMS AND LEG
- ANGLE OF BODY
- BRING SPREAD OUT ON DIFFERENT TEXTURES
- DISPERSING HER PROPERTY (COMB. PEARLS. ETC.)
- DIVIDING HAIR INTO MANY BRAIDS
- SAME BRACELET ON EACH ARM
- LISTENING

EACH ELDER NEUTRALIZES HIMSELF

- BY NOT SEEING SUSANNAH
- THE STANDING ONE BY TOUCHING A TREE (FENCE?)
- THE OTHER BY GRABBING A CLOTH AND THE LOSING OF ALL HIS BODY EXCEPT FOR HEAD AND ARM
- THEY NEUTRALIZE EACH OTHER THROUGH THE OPPOSITION OF THE ANGLE THROUGH WHICH THEY SEE NOTHING?

IN GENERAL

- SMALL DUCKS NEUTRALIZE THE LARGE ONE
- WATER NEUTRALIZES THE MIRROR—ITSELF DULL THROUGH NEUTRALIZATION?
- BOTH ANIMAL AND BIRD ARE LOOKING AWAY

BESIDES THIS LIST THERE MUST BY MANY MORE NEUTRALIZATIONS IN OPERATION IN THIS PAINTING.

“The Neutralization of Subjectivity” (TMOM 1.5)

MER

There must be some connection between “The Neutralization of Subjectivity” and “Forming Blank.” In Madeline Gins’ poetic works *Word Rain...* and *Helen Keller or Arakawa*, we have the historical figures Greta Garbo and Helen Keller, who, through personal and psychological isolation on the one hand, or through sensory isolation on the other, lead lives that are cognitively emergent from that isolation. How does this fascination with starting over, cognitively and conceptually, tie into the kind of blankness that is highlighted in Arakawa’s conceptual works, which is discussed in Zen Buddhism, and, perhaps, hints at that condition of the human mind that Duchamp refers to when he says “you are not as blank as you think you are?”

Arakawa and Gins

It is astute of you to recognize how the concept of FORMING BLANK marched each of us into and throughout his/her BODY (or PERSON) and then led us to give BODY (or PERSON) a name that more accurately reflects all that it encompasses.

Once again, at the outset I wish to emphasize that it was always PERSON (or BODY) we strived to observe. We began saying early on that THE MECHANISM OF MEANING is loosely synonymous with PERSON (or BODY), and we state this in a chart under the heading, Review and Self-Criticism, in the third edition of the book version of this research project. Radically, drastically kicking expressivity away for the most part, we took all the capabilities at a PERSON’s disposal when she attempts to find meaning in that which she meets along her way and presented these in such a way as to have them be elicited on the spot through the performing of exercises and the close reading of charts and illustrations. With THE MECHANISM OF MEANING, then, we opened up and put on display all that a PERSON has at her disposal for being a PERSON. Sure it was an artwork, but it was not only an artwork; and more than anything else we thought of it as a research project, or, yes, an outsized artwork for an artwork. The artwork of interest beginning, middle, and always for us has been a PERSON. Lately, in our work-in-progress “Alive Forever/ Not If, But When / Reversible Destiny/ Architectural Procedures/ Biotopological Actions,” we have taken to speaking of the many tendencies of thought and behavior and the various capabilities that give the subdivisions of our research project their names and directions of inquiry as elements or items in a CODE OR QUASI-CODE OF AUTOMATICITY. Had these possibilities for human action not been encoded, a PERSON would not have them at her disposal. That which a PERSON takes for granted as automatically within her power to do will have been prepared for to some extent – under the aegis of codes guided by codes??

That which can elicit forth out of its composing atmosphere what the exercises under a particular subdivision lead it to find: FORMING BLANK. The user/enactor of THE MECHANISM OF MEANING (sum of all capabilities of a PERSON): FORMING BLANK

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I should say formed/informed and FORMING BLANK. Formed/informed by what? Formed/informed and composed by constituents of the CODE OR QUASI-CODE OF AUTOMATICITY that equips a PERSON with a repertoire of capabilities. We were very young, in our twenties, when we named these capabilities and tendencies underlying not only all thought and behavior but also the blank, the FORMING BLANK (always at the ready to spring into action), and we fully expected that other thinkers would come quickly forward to let us know all that we had missed. Perhaps this year we will hear from someone in this regard.

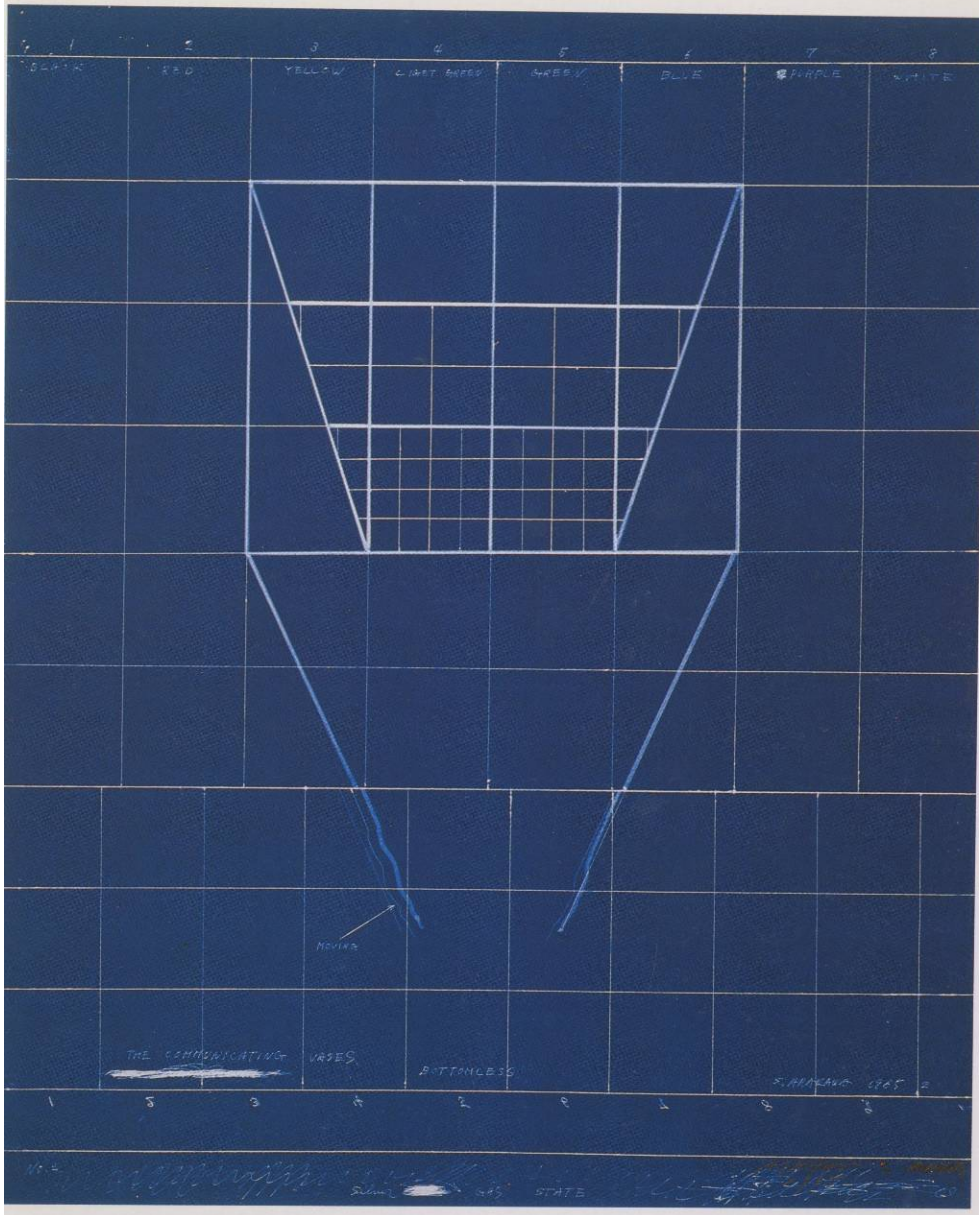
Next we began training ourselves in how, if need be, to give way to blank, by now our dear friend.

MER

How did you each prepare for blankness?

Arakawa and Gins

Arakawa had been pursuing what he spoke of as concrete abstractions in the form of world-aligning diagrams resplendent with blankness. He had been handling blank and blankness from the first time he stood before a blank canvas. Because he refused to ignore the reality of blank, he spoke of himself as a realistic artist as well as a critical one.



Arakawa, "Bottomless", 1962

The splendid poet and outstanding art critic Nico Calas saw Arakawa as the most radically critical post-surrealist painter the world had produced – Nico Calas did not have a racist bone in his body. He became upset and annoyed when Arakawa started discussing and evoking blank on his canvases. “It will hurt your trajectory as an artist to do so. People will toss you back into the oriental pile. They will cease admiring you as a critical artist.” Although Arakawa, who loved Nicolas Calas and respected his judgment, admitted the grave danger he faced, he went on writing about and painting blank. His blank was, in any event, a critical blank.

As for me, to begin to embrace blankness abundantly and in the large, I needed to write into and pull asunder the frenetic involution that had started in my adolescence. I knew blank well, having never painted a painting nor written a text without drawing on it deeply. What I did not know was how to let blank give me more amplitude in my daily life. It was time to learn how to keep open “holding open.”

Although I had, after all, written a senior thesis at Barnard /Columbia on Sunyata (Emptiness), I desperately need a great more blank. To get myself into a state in which I could field blank, I had to learn to pace myself differently, and I accomplished that to some degree by writing “Essay on Multi-Dimensional Architecture”. I worked on that essay for years, and all along its working title was “Essay on Multi-Dimensional Texture.” When Charles Bernstein decided to publish a portion of it in *Boundary 2*, Arakawa insisted that I substitute “architecture” for “texture.” To this day, I am still not sure whether that was the right thing to do – the essay needs both titles. Writing that essay gave me blank. No, I had had it before, as does everyone else, but I needed to give it a chance to take over everything and then a next chance as well.

THE MECHANISM OF MEANING lives the life of a diagram – yes, a diagram can have a life. I would not mind coming back to that point later. As such it is replete with blanks. Not only is blank the animating force for the enacting of what this project suggests and proposes, blank is loudly there and shifting about and tumbling into view across many if not all of its panels; to see this simply look at this project’s first two subdivisions, *Neutralization of Subjectivity and Localization and Transference* (TMOM 1.1, TMOM 1.4, TMOM 1.5, TMOM 2.1, TMOM 2.3)

FORMING BLANK served as a “main character” in our book titled *To Not To Die*. Philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard brought our manuscript to Éditions de la Différence and insisted that they publish it. There was a tremendous buzz in Paris about this

work of ours, we were told, but in the end our anti-mortality stance shut everybody up; it often does.

Here is this about FORMING BLANK (page 74):

*When it itself,
an open possibility for reassembly,
behaves in waves across and through configured energies,
at its own pace,
it gradually becomes a FORMING BLANK+
into which all configurations are drawn, absorbed, condensed,
and out of which unrecognizable places jump,
shaping volumes* into images.*

** Neighborhoods*

+ not in caps in original

Then on page 108, we write this:

*Forming space,
the perceiving,
brings about the perceived image
of fiction of place as detail;
by repeatedly cleaving,
it initiates the game of distance,
making it possible, for example, for
one's arm, hand or foot to be seen.*

In our later work, we did away with the term “space,” replacing it with a whole slew of terms – a terminological junction SPACE/BIOSCLEAVE/ BIOSCLEAVINGS/ONGOING SERIES OF LANDING-SITE CONFIGURATIONS OF THE MOMENT/ARCHITECTURAL BODY/ IMAGING ALONG/ ARCHITECTURAL EMBODYING

In the light of the fact that the last four member terms of this SPACE terminological junction also belong to the PERSON one that harbors FORMING BLANK within it as well, we feel justified—by the nascent law of substitution for member terms of terminological junctions – to make the switch from *Forming space* to FORMING BLANK when revisiting this text.

With this text we leave off enumerating and evoking the capabilities of a PERSON (or a BODY) and begin observing what is in action as a PERSON (or a BODY).

Your guess is right on the mark. Our sojourn and training in FORMING BLANK gave us the atmospheric amplitude required to stare down BODY (or PERSON) so that ORGANISM THAT PERSONS, a term more accurate to our purposes, could emerge.

MER

Could you say a bit more about how an ORGANISM THAT PERSONS functions as a member of a “terminological junction” that in some sense emerges from your initial focus on the notion of “forming blank”?

Arakawa and Gins

We introduced the notion of a terminological junction in our book *Making Dying Illegal*, believing it to be an important methodological tool of the new art-science biotopology. In our work-in-progress, we begin distinguishing types of terminological junctions; in one type, the lead term is followed by terms that reveal what it consists of (terminological junction consists of); in another, the lead term is followed by the variants of itself that it has generated (terminological junction variants); and in by far the most common type of terminological junction, the lead term is followed by close equivalents of or near-synonyms of itself (terminological junction close equivalents); some of the latter give an historical overview of usage (terminological junction close equivalents, historical) and others reveal an active set of terms in currency (terminological junction close equivalents, current).

The terminological junction we are discussing, an example of the type that is most common, gives a historical overview of a set of near-synonyms that all pertain to or epitomize its two lead member-terms (as in lead singers), PERSON and BODY. Although from the start and then for close to a decade we considered THE MECHANISM OF MEANING, all that a PERSON has at her disposal for being a PERSON, to be loosely synonymous with PERSON, we were in time forced to admit that without an activating FORMING BLANK, this set of capabilities and tendencies would never succeed in approximating a PERSON. In point of fact, a PERSON has her corporeality, and all that goes with that, and consists as well of the whole of THE MECHANISM OF MEANING plus the source of moment-to-moment discerning and invention that is FORMING BLANK.

MER

So I am getting the idea that there are interpenetrating realms associated with “the mechanism of meaning,” the “person,” the process which you call “forming blank,” and “the architectural body.” Do the ubiquitous diagrams that represent continuity from the earliest days to the present have anything to do with your realization that the “marking” of those realms must be somehow both distinct and vague--what you call later “approximative-rigorous abstractions”?

Arakawa and Gins

Yes! While we were devising the exercises, charts, and illustrations of THE MECHANISM OF MEANING, we felt sure that, once we had it all worked out, we would have to proceed to assemble a living, breathing person (THE MECHANISM OF MEANING) from scratch. Back then we surmised that only by building one, only through what we dubbed our Frankenstein project, would we ever be able to break open the enigma of PERSON.

But then, once it became evident that PERSON encompassed THE MECHANISM OF MEANING plus FORMING BLANK, a whole other way to approach this problem, this enigma, presented itself to us in a violet eureka moment.

Up to and through the eureka moment: After having, through several decades of work, more or less identified, at least to our own satisfaction, what forms and guides a PERSON (THE MECHANISM OF MEANING) and then having also schematized, again, at least to our own satisfaction or in a way that sat comfortably enough with us, what animates a PERSON (FORMING BLANK), we had come naturally to assume that adding the two together to make a new one (PERSON) should come next. But hold on--wait a minute – we already had one at the ready – billions of them. We did *not* need to build a PERSON – **proof by manufacture. *All we needed to do was to surround a PERSON so as to reveal how she walks and talks – proof through interaction.* **We give the name closely argued built-discourse to this body-wide interaction; works of procedural architecture invite this order of discourse.****

No longer tasking ourselves with “building a human BODY from scratch,” we took on instead the assignment of both minutely observing what goes on as the BODY (or PERSON) and figuring out how to coax it to reveal its full potential. Although BODY, the strange-attractor term of the international art world in the late sixties, talked a big talk, it led nowhere except to the short-lived field of “BODY art.” We set up a classroom-size blackboard in our loft and set about breaking open this pet term of that decade. We will be surrounding an organism, we kept reminding each other, and not just any organism, but one that becomes a PERSON. The generative figure of our long-in-the-making version of autopoiesis got chalked into existence: organism that persons.

MER

So, the invention of the “approximative rigorous abstractions” that surround the BODY are what constitutes the art/science of BIOTOPOLOGY?

Arakawa and Gins

Surround the ORGANISM THAT PERSONS, and you surround an ORGANIZED SEGMENT OF BIOSCLEAVE. FORMING BLANK and an ORGANIZED SEGMENT OF BIOSCLEAVE have everything in common, inasmuch as we have posited blank to consist of cleaving, simultaneous attaching and separating. Lately we have taken to thinking of bioscleave, the sum of all cleaving that produces life, as all that fills and animates FORMING BLANK. These days, in our estimation, you see, blanking equals bioscleaving – a particular compounding of the bioscleavings that generate and surface as bioscleave. When we started thinking in terms of surrounding an ORGANISM THAT PERSONS, we realized that what we would be studying and inviting to exist would be an ARCHITECTURAL BODY. We declared that, when attempting to delimit PERSON, the smallest operative unit to be taken into consideration for investigation should be the ARCHITECTURAL BODY, defined as the BODY proper (ORGANISM THAT PERSONS) plus its ARCHITECTURAL surround. We diagrammed the ARCHITECTURAL BODY into place through the heuristic positing of landing sites and of a LANDING-SITE CONFIGURATION OF THE MOMENT, an ongoing series of them. The three types of landing sites we introduce in our book *Architectural Body*, can be taken as three primary divisions or fields of operation of a FORMING BLANK. We assume that close readers of that book gather that the LANDING-SITE CONFIGURATION at t_1 of an ORGANISM THAT PERSONS is one and the same as her ARCHITECTURAL BODY at time t_1 .

The remaining two member terms of this terminological junction came to us as we have labored on our work-in-progress. Through IMAGING ALONG, which we have designated a world-constituting procedure, and which has come to convey to us not only all that is PERSON but also the active constitutive forming principle and medium of all that gets identified as perceiving, an ORGANISM THAT PERSONS manages to PERSON; and through ARCHITECTURAL EMBODYING, also designated a world-constituting procedure, AN ORGANISM THAT PERSONS assumes her full stature as her own environment -- an ARCHITECTURAL BODY.

Because the cognizing BODY ought to be addressed on a scale appropriate to it, exercises, charts, and illustrations of THE MECHANISM OF MEANING appear on panels that are 5 ½ feet wide and 8 feet high (eighty-four panels in all). The subdivisions of THE MECHANISM OF MEANING: paths traveled by and possible moves of EMBODIED COGNITION. ARCHETYPAL ART WORK: a PERSON. Maker of the ARCHETYPAL ARTWORK: ORGANISM THAT PERSONS.

MER

If you could say a bit more about how the emergence of the “organism that persons” requires an initial condition of “blankness” that contains within itself an impetus to construct diagrams, or “approximative rigorous abstractions.” To put it in another way, is approaching “blankness” and then moving through “blankness to something

–more-- in some way entails a process that involves replacing one style of cognitive functioning implicated with “the mechanism of meaning” with some other, more “life affirming” form of cognition?

Arakawa and Gins

We have through the years developed and explored the implications of a diagrammatic style of thinking and living. As organizing principles formative of this style of cognitive functioning took shape, we grew more optimistic in regard to what could be done on behalf of -- to use a clear but unclear term -- life. A more life-affirming style of cognitive functioning did not replace an old standby way of proceeding; instead, our forging of and then expanding on a certain style of cognitive functioning led us to believe that we had the means to handle the thus-far-intractable problem that is the human condition and, in the light of this promising possibility, we became ebulliently constructive or, if you like, life-affirming.

Arakawa painted diagrams that were precisely aligned with “landscapes” of world and world-formation and that evoked outpourings of on-the-spot events vital to concrete circumstances – his were concrete abstractions, not unaligned ones. He championed diagramming, insisting it into the twentieth century. I wrote *Word Rain, A Discursive Introduction to the Intimate Philosophical Investigations of G,R,E,T,A,G,A,R,B,O, It Says* to evoke consciousness (primitive term) a few inches above each of its un-paginated pages, and *What The President Will Say and Do!!* to mix directly into the events of the world other and still other post-surrealistic strivings, verbal but not only verbal castings out into the universe. Next, we teamed up to present diagrammatically the world and that which underpins world-formation, the code or quasi code of automaticity.

Arakawa and I were completely set on always keeping the end in sight, and the streamlining inherent to diagramming helped us eliminate the extraneous and maintain our focus. Diagramming also helped us resist being drawn into the world of artifacts, which we wanted to use for nothing more than to evoke events we could study. It would be far better to open enigmas of world for examination than to add additional puzzling objects to it.

As I said earlier, we have been from the start intent on puzzling out what constitutes a person. Yes, I recognize this to be a quite classic goal. As we were working on our research project, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, it stood for us as an act of tremendous resistance to art or artifact for its own sake. By choosing to “make art” about how art can be made, we were elevating the maker, a person, into being recognized as the greatest artwork of all. A dematerialization of art? More a reorganizing of constituent factors in the diagramming of world. Because the code or quasi code of automaticity that underpins the human modus operandi lies centrally embedded within life itself

(in the vicinity of and within organisms that person), the eighty-four panels (an edition of two sets) we assembled to evoke it constitute not an artifact off on its own but a giant reference guide to life as an organism that persons.

As artists we had always respected blank, and had done its bidding often enough, but welcoming it thoroughly, which equals precisely, into the mix made us able to expand the reach of our diagrammatic thinking. We speak of our current work as procedural architecture, but we might just as well have called it diagrammatic architecture.

MER

Can you connect specific “architectural procedures” with enacting this or that aspect of a new style of cognitive functioning?

Arakawa and Gins

Consider that world has always been formed and embodied, emblematically and diagrammatically. Biological diagramming will simply be a many-fold more precise type of diagramming.

This type of diagramming requires that the end be kept in sight and that all that is the case, including all conceivable scales of action, be made ever present.

In a variety of ways, architectural procedures help biotopologists achieve exactitude in their diagramming.

Architectural procedures guide biotopologists to leave appropriately blank that which cannot be readily identified or explained. Check out the TENTATIVENESS CRADLING PROCEDURE. This architectural procedure insists blank smack right into the middle of the flesh-colored swarm (of who knows what) that acts as a person, gives her a better liking for blank, urges her to have enough confidence in blanks that come upon her to let them subsist long enough to have their say, reintroduces her to her tentativeness, the generating basis of her thoughts and actions, her abundant blank source (composed of constituting procedures, as we see it these days), and, all in all, prods her not to be so damn sure of herself. The humility factor.

In diagramming the world preparatory to diagramming it still further, we note the abounding of landing sites within landing sites. Here and there we make a few suggestions as to the dynamic composition of a landing site, but we do not know what goes on as a landing site – it is merely a heuristic posit — and thus must mark this issue as, at least at this point in history, not decidable. To further this end in sight, that of discovering the dynamic composition of a landing site, we have introduced the Landing Site As-If Palpating Procedure.

Forming the basis of procedural architecture, architectural procedures are, simply put, what works of procedural architecture consist of, what they have had embedded into them; and because biotopological diagramming, the constituting procedure we are about to introduce into the human modus operandi, can only be pursued within the context of a work of procedural architecture, it too must be seen as totally dependent on architectural procedures of all stripes.

MER

How does this new style of cognition become implicated in your uncompromisingly idealistic stance toward the sustaining of life with respect to mortality? How does one define this new style of cognition, as symptomized by the emergence of an array of biotopological procedures, and what does embodiment have to do with it?

Arakawa and Gins

This new style of cognition, this thinking on your feet, this body-wide diagrammatic thinking, can avoid and expel long-standing inaccuracies. We die of the imprecise. The poorly recognized and the shoddily named do us in. Too often what embodying has had to say has been pointlessly overridden. Embodying can whisper incredible information in our ears – nothing or nobody else but it does.

The embodying effort itself has been, for no purpose or for poor ones, terribly split. Mostly not recognized as the pernicious dualism it is, the split between person and world multiplies the number of unknowns in the equation (and, for that matter, the number of equations), as all dualisms do, and hopelessly complicates the task of comprehending the nature of embodiment. All actions – making or looking at art; writing, reading, or listening to poetry; philosophical musing – occur within the context of architectural embodying. To comprehend what goes on as an organism that persons, we must observe her architectural embodying wholly and fully and not have other pesky tasks run interference with it. Some artists and poets who have been influenced by us speak of an environmental poetics. This is promising but it falls far short of biotopological diagramming. If a person consists of the landing sites she disperses, it behooves her to learn how to disperse them coherently and in a to-the-point way, according to the end in sight that is the achieving of the longest life possible for the one doing the dispersing. Constructing/preserving life – invention needs to be directed toward that.

Embodying that comes forth needs to be sufficiently guided, supported, and then dimensionally-going on nine dimensions – questioned.

We maintain that if someone can control, to a good extent, whether she will be able to wake up tomorrow morning, she should, through appropriately positioning what

needs to be positioned, be able to control, to a good extent, the number of times she can manage to do that, how many days long her life will be. Biotopological diagramming, the constituting procedure we are about to introduce into the human modus operandi, the constituting procedure that importantly requires and enlists high-powered trouble-shooting across all scales of action, will be the one through which our species will learn to escape mortality, the one by means of which organisms that person will be able to modulate and prolong their own embodiments.

MER

What is the relationship between “reversing destiny” and “making dying illegal” from the point of view of adopting this or that style of cognition? Or, are these expressions absurdist word games to induce conceptual “tentativeness” in your audience?

Arakawa and Gins

The usual downhill course of human life ought to be able to be reversed through architecturally guided and supported communal action.

Embodiment needs to get the hang of embodiment. Do everything within your power to augment the longevity of your embodiment. Anyone who has given the matter even a little thought will agree that a closely argued built-discourse far surpasses as a dwelling place an inert structure. Together, procedural architecture and biotopology, the art science of viability or “continuability,” proffer to organisms that person the firm basis for, the structural accoutrements of, a closely argued built-discourse.

Why adopt a defeatist attitude in the face of (supposed) mortality at a time when it has yet to be discovered what animates life or embodiment?!

The good news is that we have discovered that architecture can be used to combat mortality itself. We claim that works of procedural architecture can help organisms that person achieve reversible destiny, a reversing of the usual downhill course of things. Those living within procedural architecture will pursue a whole new way of being embodied. Getting reversible destiny to happen will be a costly endeavor. A great deal of intellectual labor will need to be expended for producing the well-reasoned and closely argued procedural forethought to be constructed into the material setting of a built environment. It occurred to us that the best way to get people to shell out money to stay alive would be to make dying outrageously expensive or to make it illegal. To rally others to agree to live in an entirely new way for the sake of being able to live far longer than their usual allotted number of days, we signaled the direness of the emergency at hand by titling the sequel to *Architectural Body, Making Dying Illegal*. It mattered little to us that the idea is totally absurd.

