Introduction: Bloody Sundays

There is something anachronistic in associating Bataille, a writer who died even before people started to talk about structuralism, with poststructuralism. The connection, however, is justified if one recalls how insistently throughout the sixties etymology was called upon to make a connection—via the Latin verb *struere,* construct—between structuralist inspiration and architecture. The student uprising of May 1968 has often been described as a revolt against the structuralist establishment. There is a desire to loosen the symbolic authority of architectures in poststructuralism, and in retrospect it is possible to see Bataille as the precursor of this critical view of architecture.

A short article published in *Documents* in 1929 served as my point of departure in writing *La Prise de la Concorde* in 1972. In those two pages Bataille denounces architecture as a prison warden—its complicity with authoritarian hierarchies. Architecture is society's authorized superego; there is no architecture that is not the Commendatore's. There have been endless arguments over whether the origin of architecture was the house, the temple, or the tomb, etc. For Bataille it was the prison. "Architecture," says Bataille, "is the expression of every society's very being. . . . [But] only the ideal being of society, the one that issues orders and interdictions with authority, is expressed in architectural compositions in the strict sense of the word. . . . Thus great monuments rise up like levees, opposing the logic of majesty and authority to any confusion: Church and State in the form of cathedrals and palaces speak to the multitudes, or silence them. It is obvious that monuments inspire social good behavior in societies and often even real fear. The storming of the Bastille is sym-

bolic of this state of affairs: it is hard to explain this mass movement other than through the people's animosity (animus) against the monuments that are its real masters."[1]

Foucault's book on prisons, *Surveiller et punir,* also sets out to be a critique of architecture, one that also originates in an analysis of incarcerating institutions. Just as, in *Histoire de la folie,* he put on architecture the responsibility first of the invention and then of the production of madness, in *Surveiller et punir* he describes the invention of criminality through techniques of spatial planning. Nonetheless, the conceptions of architecture implied by these two critiques (to say nothing of their style) are considerably different. Bataille's prison derives from an ostentatious, spectacular architecture, an architecture to be seen; whereas Foucault's prison is the embodiment of an architecture that sees, observes, and spies, a vigilant architecture. Bataille's architecture—convex, frontal, extrovert—an architecture that is externally imposing, shares practically no element with that of Foucault, with its insinuating concavity that surrounds, frames, contains, and confines for therapeutic or disciplinary ends. Both are equally effective, but one works because it draws attention to itself and the other because it does not. One represses (imposes silence); the other expresses (makes one talk). The gap between them is similar to the one at the beginning of *Surveiller et punir* that separates the public executions of the Ancien Regime from disciplinary institutions of modern societies. When Bataille thinks in terms of authoritarian representations, Foucault thinks in terms of spatial planning, institutionalization, and the technology of power. Bentham's panopticon, the central emblem of his book, thus supports Foucault's conception of an "architecture that would be operative in the transformation of individuals":[2] it is not just a simple container, but a place that shapes matter, that has a performative action on whatever inhabits it, that works on its occupant.

Is prison then the generic name designating all architectural production? Is architecture in a position to reply to poststructuralist accusations that reveal and denounce a prison in every monument or building? Is it possible to conceive of an architecture that would not inspire, as in Bataille, social good behavior, or would not produce, as in Foucault's disciplinary factory, madness or criminality in individuals? Architectural devices, according to Foucault, produce subjects; they individualize personal identities. But why would they not work

in reverse, leading against the grain to some space before the constitution of the subject, before the institutionalization of subjectivity? An architecture that, instead of localizing madness, would open up a space anterior to the division between madness and reason; rather than performing the subject, it would perform spacing: a space from before the subject, from before meaning; the asubjective, asemantic space of an unedifying architecture, an architecture that would not allow space for the time needed to become a subject.

A current important project for public spaces in Paris has been presented in terms of just such an architecture, an architecture that Derrida has described as "spaced out" (or "spacy").[3] Bataille's 1929 article interpreted the storming of the Bastille as the revolt of the mob against the monuments. The Parc de la Villette would realize a paradoxical storming of architecture—by itself. A Bastille in no way different from its own storming. "Architecture against itself," Bernard Tschumi, the park's architect, labels it: architecture against architecture.[4] As if a donjuanesque architecture would escape finally from the stiff, punitive order of the Commendatore. It would enter into games and begin to dance. "The program can challenge the very ideology it implied." Such a project calls upon a loss of meaning, to give it a dionysiac dimension: it explicitly takes issue with what Tschumi describes as an essential premise of architecture, "the idea of a meaning immanent in architectural structures"; the park, a postmodern "assault on meaning," claims as its main purpose to "dismantle meaning."

—Would Dedalus be happy at losing the meaning of the labyrinth he constructed? What is hiding under this uncanny park that somehow claims to be the official park of the Uncanny? Or really, what would a labyrinth be without a minotaur: a labyrinth without blood? And, since this is all taking place in real space, in a real city, since this performative loosening of space takes place in a precise spot on the map of Paris, namely La Villette, I am going to take a short detour to the butcher's.

The greatest motive for Bataille's aggressivity toward architecture is its anthropomorphism. The article "Architecture" describes it as an essential stage in the process of hominization, as a sort of mirror stage that might be called in a parody of Lacan's title "the architecture stage as formative function of the We, man's social imago." In this sense, even though he seems to denounce the repression exercised over

man by architecture, Bataille is really intervening against the catachresis requiring that man only take form with architecture, that the human form as such, the formation of man, be embedded in architecture. If the prison is the generic form of architecture this is primarily because man's own form is his first prison. In other words, it is not possible simply to oppose the prison to the free man. Nessus's lion skin stuck to the skin of Hercules. In the same manner, man's revolt against prison is a rebellion against his own form, against the human figure. And this is precisely what, in Bataille's view, the mythical figure of Acephalus was intended to show: the only way for man to escape the architectural chain gang is to escape his form, to lose his head. This self-storming of one's own form requires, in fact, an infinitely more underhanded strategy than one of simple destruction or escape. The image of Acephalus, thus, should be seen as a figure of dissemblance, the negative imago of an antimonumental madness involved in the dismemberment of "meaning." The painter André Masson drew this figure and Bataille wrote an aphorism to go with it: "Man will escape his head as a convict escapes his prison."[5]

"Architecture" is not the only entry Bataille wrote for the *Documents* dictionary. Two other contributions, the article "Abattoir" (Slaughterhouse) and the article "Musée," shed some light on the relations between architecture and the unthinking expenditure of *dépense*.

The entry "Abattoir" is accompanied by Elie Lotar's crude photographs of La Villette. *Documents* specialized in this sort of illustrations, ones resolutely turning their back on surrealism's erotic aestheticizing. They remind today's reader that, in fact, not too long ago, there was some bloody meat at the very spot where today architecture is turning against itself. Which is what Bataille's article was precisely about.

Whereas the killing of the Minotaur is usually presented as a humanizing exploit by means of which a hero frees the city from whatever is archaic and monstrous, bringing society out of the labyrinthine age, for Bataille the sacrifice functions in an opposite manner: striking a blow at the organic imago, it opens the labyrinth up again. With his grandiose humor, Bataille—relying on Marcel Mauss's theory of sacrifice as a basis—gives the slaughterhouses of La Villette a religious dimension. But what we have is a deserted, unconscious religion: no one ever attends the sacrifices. "The slaughterhouse relates to religion in the sense that temples of times past . . . had two

purposes, serving simultaneously for prayers and for slaughter. . . . Nowadays the slaughterhouse is cursed and quarantined like a boat with cholera aboard. . . . The victims of this curse are neither the butchers nor the animals, but those fine folk who have reached the point of not being able to stand their own unseemliness, an unseemliness corresponding in fact to a pathological need for cleanliness."[6]

"Abattoir" describes, therefore, a movement of sacred horror, of religious repulsion before the killing of an animal. The second article, "Musée," describes the opposite movement. Attraction follows repulsion. Those who took refuge in their own unconscious unseemliness when faced with the sacrificial butchering, those who opposed their own proper ugliness to the expropriating ugliness of butchering, those who could not bear the image of decomposition reflected to them by the slaughterhouses go to museums to compose themselves again. They flee the unredeeming ugliness of slaughterhouses for the beauty of museums. Bataille writes: "On Sundays at five o'clock, at the exit to the Louvre, it is interesting to admire the stream of visitors visibly animated by the desire to be similar in every way to the heavenly visions still delighting their eyes."[7] "A museum is like the lungs of a great city: the crowd floods into the museum every Sunday like blood and it leaves purified and fresh."

Slaughterhouses, along with the museum, make up a system in which the ambivalence defining the sacred nucleus is at work: the slaughterhouses are the negative pole, the generator of repulsion, the centrifuge (they are placed farther and farther away from the center of the city). Museums, the pole of attraction, are centripetal. But within the heart of one the other is hidden. At the heart of beauty lies a murder, a sacrifice, a killing (no beauty without blood). Bataille reminds us that the Louvre is turned into a museum by the Convention when the function of royalty has been put to an end. The museum is what the Terror invented to replace the king, to replace the irreplaceable. "The origin of the modern museum," he comments, "would thus be linked to the development of the guillotine."

The main thing about this system, as it is transcribed into cadastral hieroglyphics, is not, however, the conjunction of these two poles but the space between them. One does not exist without the other, but it does not exist with the other either. The following remarks will be dedicated to analyzing several ideological problems and problems of

city planning connected to this gap, connected to the fact that, although slaughterhouses and museums remain two distinct institutions, museums have a strange way of following in the footsteps of slaughterhouses, like their shadow, as if some strange destiny condemned museums to rise up on the site of abandoned slaughterhouses. *Wo es war . . . soll Museum werden.*

This cultural appropriation, this redressing of the repugnant, can be interpreted in the light of Bataille's theory of *dépense*. This is primarily a theory of the need for loss rather than a theory of loss strictly speaking. It responds to the need to believe that there is a pure loss, that there is a difference between consuming and consummating, that there is lost time and there are waste lands, unproductive expenditures, things one never gets over, sins that cannot be redeemed, garbage that cannot be recycled. The slaughterhouse and the museum (religion and art), from this point of view, are two sorts of enclave within the economic continuum; the sacrificial nature of the first, and the fact that it is on Sunday that one visits museums, connect both to a sabbatical or Sunday rhythm, that is, to how one spends time on the seventh day. (What should one do when work is forbidden?) But one of the ways of spending it is clean and the other one dirty: one attracts and the other repels. The question thus is one of knowing whether a theory of *dépense* can work without the difference between high and low, between dirty and clean; whether a theory of *dépense* is not, first of all, a theory of the difference between two expenditures, a proper, clean one and an improper, dirty one. That is, the difference, when all is said and done, between slaughterhouses and museums. And it is precisely this difference that gets lost with the conversion of slaughterhouse into museum, a conversion that lays money on the hypothesis that an integral appropriation of expenditure is possible—as if it were possible to spend and be spent without getting dirty, as if *dépense* could be thoroughly presentable, spending energy without polluting, shamelessly, nothing repugnant about it, right at home in a public space, with everybody looking.

Put a little differently, how is the project at La Villette any different from the numerous programs thought up by nineteenth-century philanthropy to appropriate and discipline proletarian expenditure, to acknowledge but also to reabsorb nonwork time, particularly Sundays and holidays among the working and dangerous classes? How is it

any different from the attempts from all sides—Catholic and socialist—to put workers into their Sunday best, to train and organize them and make them presentable when they are not actually working, to make presentable the expense of those with nothing to spend: the offal from mechanisms of appropriation who are refused access to property as well as to what is clean and proper. To circumvent a threatening privatization of vacations.

But, perhaps, this is the place to leave Bataille and the latest great cultural projects in Paris.

In 1867, Emile Zola, a young journalist, dedicated one of his articles to the upcoming inauguration of a public space. The piece is entitled "The Squares." It begins: "The gates to the new Parmentier square, built on the site of the former Popincourt slaughterhouse, will soon be opened to the public." Then come two pages of sarcasm directed at the absurdity of urban landscaping, where lawns try to recall nature for consumptive city dwellers. "It looks like a bit of nature that did something wrong and was put in prison."[8] A square is not a museum, but it too is a place for soft expenditure, it is an enclave through whose gates Parisian workers escape the implacable law of labor: they take the air (regenerate their lungs just as do the museum visitors observed by Bataille). For lack of an animal they kill time.

Today's cultural reconversion of slaughterhouses, the transformation of a harsh expenditure into a soft one, is, therefore, not an absolutely novel phenomenon. This event is programmed in the logic of the modernization of urban space. It has not changed since Haussmann: the Popincourt slaughterhouses, like all slaughterhouses in the various districts of Paris, in the Second Empire were swept along in the concentration of the city's alimentary track that culminated with the simultaneous creation of the central markets of Les Halles and the slaughterhouses of La Villette. The small neighborhood slaughterhouses were recycled into green spaces, urban parks, just as the central slaughterhouses of La Villette are being recycled, a century later, into a park of science and industry. Thanks to this conversion a nice, clean expenditure takes the place of a dirty one and the visitor takes over for the worker. Doing in the slaughterhouses makes room for educational parks, spaces where workers on holiday see demonstrated the meaning of their work. At the park of science and industry they celebrate Labor Day by looking at their work.

Despite his sarcastic remarks about squares, a mere detail in Haussmann's overall plan, Zola is vigorously in favor of the modernization of Paris. Naturalism as he conceived of it was first of all the celebration—aesthetic if not moral—of the Paris created by the Second Empire, with its stations, its department stores, its exhibition halls, and especially its great boulevards. And the first real naturalist manifesto, Zola's 1872 novel *Le Ventre de Paris,* is primarily an anti-*Notre-Dame de Paris* directed against the romantics like Hugo who yearned after the unhealthiness of the old Paris. Claude Lantier sees in the superb sidewalks and the tall houses of the Haussmannian city the harbinger of a new art. Once the Second Empire falls, Zola's admiration for the Seine prefect's city planning is unreserved. He approves of straightening things out in the name of an aesthetic of cleanliness: straight avenues are essential against stagnant humors. Blood is aerated in large arteries. In the modern city, the capital of the world of work, everyone is busy. Everything found there has its function, a physiological justification. For Zola who has always identified laziness with waste, the modern city's beauty comes from its being a space in which whatever has no use has no place. And it is precisely this shiftlessness, this spatial uselessness that makes him condemn the interruption of the active urban fabric by squares. There is nothing as beautiful as a city at work, but also a city is only beautiful when it is at work: Zola is allergic to the squares because the city takes its rest there, or, more precisely, because these idleness preserves are urban. Not that Zola is opposed to stopping work (workers have a right to recreation), but he is opposed to this happening in the city. If one is not working one should leave. Expenditure is uplifted by means of the centripetal motion that carries it out into the islands and undergrowth *extra muros.*

The two chapters in T. J. Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life* that are devoted to how Parisians used to spend their spare time correspond to the two headings Zola used for such spending: go out on the town, or go out of town, to the bar at the Folies-Bergère or to the outskirts of Paris, urban or suburban pleasures, internal or external. Clark analyzes the Impressionists' reaction to the merging of these two brands, when the suburbs become urban under the double pressure of both leisure and industrialization. The evolution of Monet's gardens, which Clark interprets as a nostalgic return to a sort of *hortus conclusus,* would thus be evidence of the painter's quasi-denial of this transformation of the landscape, a way of protecting oneself against

the denaturation of the suburbs by intensifying nature at home, by a sort of inclusion, a confinement of the exterior.[9]

Zola, too, reinforces the line between city and country at the very moment that it was beginning to erode. His landscapes, as well as the Impressionists', deny this contamination: his country outings take place in suburbs that are more pastoral than any of his country places. His resistance, however, unlike that of the Impressionists, does not stem from the urbanization of the outskirts of Paris but from what is happening in Paris itself. It is rooted in the need to sort expenses, to separate good spending, which is rural, and bad spending, which is urban, and results from the need to reserve some exteriority into which the urban fabric will be able to spill, pouring out its idleness: workers must not be allowed to rest in the city.

Clark mentions the famous editorial that Zola published in *La Tribune* of October 18, 1868, on his return from a Sunday spent on the island of Saint-Ouen.[10] In some ways it constitutes a counterpart to the article against the squares. Zola returns with a portrait of an impeccable workerly holiday, blameless and unsullied, spending and consuming. "I stayed until evening in the midst of the people in their Sunday best. Not many cardigans, lots of workshirts: a gay and open crowd of workers, young girls in cloth hats showing their bare fingers covered with needle-pricks, men wearing cotton whose rough hands still bore the imprint of tools. The joy in this crowd was a healthy one; I did not hear a single quarrel, I did not see a single drunk. . . . It was the gaiety of good children, sincere bursts of laughter, pleasures with no shame attached." And he goes on into the famous hymn to the joys of workers: "The joy of the people is a good and beautiful thing. I like to hear the wretched of this world laughing, those who eat their hard bread and sleep in attics. When poor people are having fun poverty vanishes from the earth."[11] Next to the sight of a city at work, there is no more beautiful spectacle for Zola than discharged laborers spending their sabbath, workers relaxing, their after-work release. Real pleasures cannot be bought: reserved for those who have no possessions, these are clean treats that do not pollute; they can be had for nothing extra and are consumed without leaving waste. Zola did not see any drunks at Saint-Ouen, or hear any quarrels. Everything can be taken away from the poor and they will still have free joys, the first of which is spending their own energy. The park at Saint-Ouen

is the scene of a secular miracle. Those who have nothing still have themselves to spend.

The contrast between this out-of-town fair and the city squares is emphasized by two fantasies that act as foils to the idyll. Each has as its object those ways of spending Sunday that are unhealthy precisely because they are urban. The first takes place in the Bois de Boulogne, another urban park, that is to say, another mistake—on a larger scale than the squares—by Haussmannian city planning as far as leisure is concerned: that is where all the idle of the capital parade on Sunday, all the little deadbeats and prostitutes. "The workers," says Zola, "must stay away from these too clean groves . . . they could easily become seriously angry and question why they earn so little when these rascals steal so much."[12] The second phobic description is set in "the cramped, muddy sections" of the inner suburbs, the Parisian faubourgs such as Mouffetard, where the workers wallow. "When Sunday comes around, not knowing where to go to breathe a bit of clean air, they settle down at back tables in the cabarets; it is fatally downhill from there, work requires recreation and when there is no money, when the horizon goes nowhere, one takes whatever pleasure is at hand." *L'Assommoir,* we recall, the novel of alcoholism, is precisely the only one of Zola's Parisian novels that has no country outing, no Sunday out of doors. Class opposition is secondary in this geography of leisure; it is just as unhealthy for the privileged people in the Bois de Boulogne as for the wretched inhabitants of Mouffetard not to get out of the city on Sunday.

In this article T. J. Clark sees the expression of Zola's opposition to Haussmann's politics of popular leisure. And Zola, in fact, clearly states: "I know that Haussmann does not like popular festivities." But this politics of leisure has two sides to it. It has a negative aspect, the prohibition of the fairs that traditionally were held in communes annexed by the Second Empire. It also has a positive aspect: the opening up of leisure spaces inside the city, such as the squares and the Bois de Boulogne. And if Haussmann, according to Zola, does not like popular festivities, Zola himself only likes them from a distance: this city dweller does not want them to be urban. The institutionalization of idleness *intra muros* awakes old anxieties in him. One of his first stories, "Celle qui m'aime," was set in one of those urban carnivals of the faubourgs before Haussmann forbade them. With its back-

ground of alcohol and prostitution, with its nocturnal setting, there is nothing in it to evoke the hygienic fresh air of the proletariat at Saint-Ouen. The narrator feels uncomfortable, worried, and anxious from being in contact with the people idle in their Sunday best. "I have never been in a large crowd of people without feeling a vague uneasiness."[13] The intense agoraphobia of Zola, the bourgeois, provides a great deal of the energy in his campaign to provide leisure spaces for the proletariat outside the city. "Open up the horizon, call the people outside the walls, give them outdoor celebrations and you will see them bit by bit leave the cabaret benches behind for carpets of green grass." But, in many ways, the Pied Piper of Hamlin who musically rid the town of rats is the model for this call to clear out: the centrifugal movement of the purification of spending is also an expulsion, a protection against its expansiveness. Expenditure is only clean from a distance, it is only clean at large. Zola, who is myopic, always thought it was inappropriate to get too close to it. And perhaps this is because in every act of spending he sensed the threat of an undisciplined, uncontrollable energy, because there is a nonresolvable ambivalence in expenditure and in nonwork, because there is no expenditure, whether in the country or in the city, that does not end up threatening to turn into something dirty.

For in Zola's work itself the idealized country setting of Saint-Ouen, for example, is no absolute guarantee against the dangers of improper expenditure. The article in *La Tribune* is not the first account by him of an October Sunday on the suburban island. Several months before addressing his proletarian pastorale to Haussmann, he had used the same setting as a backdrop for a far more sinister episode. Chapter 11 of *Thérèse Raquin* is an account of a sunny October Sunday in this Impressionist landscape. There, in the midst of the healthy rejoicing of the people who are spending the day, Laurent, one of the numerous failed painters in Zola, murders the husband of his mistress. Stain in Paradise. Blood, meat, sacrifice, and slaughterhouse, all leave their mark at the heart of this recreational space. *Thérèse Raquin* was published in December 1867. But by October 1868 any trace of crime had disappeared. Less than a year after *Thérèse Raquin* Zola describes the worker's Sundays as paradise. Where is the blood? Camille's blood has disappeared without a trace in this portrait of clean spending.

One can connect this amnesty, this erasure of a murder by a holiday, to another scene in Zola that figures more than forty years later, in 1901, in one of his last novels, the socialist gospel entitled *Travail* (Work). This symphonic poem, more symbolist than realist, describes the triumph of social justice in an industrial world that has finally recognized that work is the source of all happiness, all beauty, everything good, all wealth, all of existence. "There is nothing that can stand still in idleness."[14] Being is being at work, in labor. As in Fourier's socialism every passion performs a task, has a social purpose. In this socialist city where no passion is outlawed, only one crime remains, only one sin, one single unnatural vice: idleness. So the figures of the Ancien Regime, where the idle had pride of place, one after another will disappear. The final episode of this elimination of parasites is the collapse of the church, the temple of an immobile god, the only useless space remaining in this beehive, which falls down on Father Marle holding services before empty pews. No one destroys it: it falls down by itself, wrecked by disaffection, swept off by the energy of unstoppable life cutting a swath through whatever opposes its path. "And nothing remained in the bright sunlight but a huge pile of rubble, in which even Father Marle's body could not be found, his flesh apparently eaten by the dust of the flattened altar which also drank his blood. . . . And later, when the debris had been cleared away, a garden was put there with beautiful trees and shady paths through fragrant lawns. . . . After a happy working day roses in full bloom sprung from every bush. And, in this delightful garden where the dust of a religion of poverty and death was sleeping, now human happiness grew, the exuberant flowering of life."[15] The next chapter tells about the celebration of labor that takes place on June 21, the summer solstice; on the seventh day the industrious people stop, look back to contemplate their work, and find it good.

The anti-Catholicism in Zola's last novels depends on good taste for much of its argument. Zola, after having disgusted an entire generation of readers, suddenly plays the disgusted role in the presence of the ticky-tacky religiosity of the iconography surrounding fin-de-siècle neo-Catholicism, a flayed Christ and his martyrs showing off their saintly bruises: "What a butcher's stall," he writes in *Paris*, "with guts, muscles, blood."[16] Zola, like Bataille, in fact, comes to associate religion and slaughterhouses. But, whereas Bataille condemns a religion that refuses to accept its kinship with butchering, Zola condemns

a religion that puts it on display. In this sense, his replacement of the church by a public park prefigures the replacement of the slaughterhouses of La Villette with a park of science and industry. The vocabulary used by Zola in describing the death of Father Marle emphasizes this homology. It is a vocabulary combining the registers of communion and butchering: the dust of the altar, he says, ate his body and drank his blood. But where did they go? There is nothing left of them. Just as the crime committed by Laurent at Saint-Ouen is sublimated after *Thérèse Raquin* into the hymn to the people's spending Sunday in trickless treats, the body of Father Marle disappears, in turn, into an uncanny holocaust, a pure consumption with no remains, no trace, a total sacrifice, bloody but with a blood that does not stain, that leaves no memory. Bloody Sunday, bloodless Sunday.

What is architecture? According to Adolf Loos: "When walking through a wood, you find a rise in the ground, six foot long and three foot wide, heaped up in a rough pyramid shape, then you turn serious, and something inside you says: someone lies buried here. *That is architecture.*" In this definition architecture is recognized first by the affect it produces, an affect that has nothing in common with those one seeks out on playgrounds or in Luna Parks: you turn serious, hearing the telltale notes of a sort of *Et in Arcadia ego* that makes one think something invisible is present, or rather that one perceives an absence, evoking someone not living here, or rather someone here, not living. As if there were a house not made to be lived in, nobody's house, a house for nobody. Architecture, for Loos, begins with a dwelling that lacks an address.

On Zola's playground, however, nobody turns serious. And this is all the more astonishing because Luc, the builder of the socialist town in *Travail,* is an architect by profession.[17] But utopia ignores waste, waste lands, anything absent. No cemetery appears on the urban inventory. A religion is dead, but no one is in mourning. This death has not been followed by melancholic identification. So the festivities in full swing are beating time on a ground that no archaeologist has probed to see if it sounded a little hollow in spots.

Here the difference between Zola's Sundays and Bataille's becomes clear. The title *La Prise de la Concorde* referred to the importance of a Parisian square, the Place de la Concorde, and to the hold it had on Bataille's imagination. In many respects this place is comparable, in

its origins and history, to the park where the Crêcherie church stood. Both were laid out where some major form of the system of the irreplaceable collapsed: where the Terror guillotined the king and where the last mass was said. But they are different. On its fairgrounds, Zola's "city of concord and peace" celebrates the Sunday of life. No emptiness remains. But there is no loss. Nothing is lacking after lack and nothing have been eliminated. There is nothing that would make you notice that nothing is missing. Lack is abolished and leaves no mementos. There is no madman to disturb the secular harmony with Nietzsche's message that God is dead. Bataille's Place de la Concorde, on the contrary, is the place where loss is incarnate—embodied in a man who identifies himself by his lack. The headless man, Acephalus, rises up where the guillotine let in the freezing gales of empty space.

For the first half of the nineteenth century, this esplanade was a source of uneasiness for developers and city planners. Should it be made into a place of memory and expiation or one of laughter and forgetting? How should one walk, with what sort of tread, where blood—including the king's—had run? Taking advantage of this indecision fairs and festivals temporarily set themselves up on this quasi-wasteland. But even a monarchist like Chateaubriand would see nothing wrong in this merry turnaround. "When they go to dance on the Champs-Élysées, when they shoot off firecrackers on the place sprinkled with the blood of the Just, they will have to remember the Martyr-King's scaffold."[18] Victor Hugo is less optimistic. He does not believe in festive commemorations: the people forget when they have fun. A poem in *Les Rayons et les ombres* depicts him, the only pensive one, in the midst of a public celebration taking place on the Place de la Concorde.[19] This is not the festival conscious of its sacrificial origins that Chateaubriand had in mind, it is closer to Zola's celebration: no one remembers. No one in the crowd thinks about what is absent, no one thinks of the dead on whose blood they are dancing. But whereas Zola looks kindly on this thoughtlessness, Hugo turns serious. He misses lack, and the task of his poem is, precisely, to reintroduce a false note—lack, loss, blood—into the popular plenitude.

Bataille's Place de la Concorde, in contrast to Chateaubriand's and Hugo's, is not the site of spring festivals. Louis XVI was executed in January and Carnival is a winter celebration. This conjunction interested Bataille enough so that, when he was involved in the College of Sociology, he had a project for a book on the carnival origins of de-

mocracy. [20] However, Bataille's carnival has not much in common with the one Bakhtin was celebrating almost simultaneously in his 1940 book on Rabelais. "Carnival," according to a recent book on Bakhtin, "is not time wasted but time filled with profound and rich experience."[21] There is no *Et in Arcadia ego* to be heard, but this is above all because there is no one to say "I" anymore in Bakhtin's carnival, because the first person has disappeared, a joyful purge has swept subjects away in the great anonymous, or dialogic, sewer: the grammar of the irreplaceable has been excluded from the festivities. Bataille's carnival, on the contrary, is the moment in which the I lives its loss, lives itself as loss. This is not a time of plenitude, it is, on the contrary, the time when time's emptiness is experienced. This is not innocence rediscovered, but bottomless guilt. If carnival is a "gap" in the fabric of society, if it is a celebration of the "gaps and holes" in both the individual and the social body, does one celebrate these holes by filling them in, by plugging them up?—Can the celebration of a gap as gap result in plenitude? Bataille's Acephalus does not merely represent a grotesque celebration of upside downs and bottoms up, but the more abysmal image of a topless bottom. The concept of heterology, a neologism invented by Bataille, does not simply indicate a warm, euphoric relationship to otherness. Otherness, in other words, is not simply a matter of pleasure and enjoyment. There is no carnival without loss. No Luna Park without a slaughterhouse.