The danger is that it's just talk. Then again, the danger is that it's not. I believe you can speak things into existence.

Jay-Z, Decoded, 2010

'The Great Roe', Woody Allen tells us, 'is a mythological beast with the head of a lion and the body of a lion, though not the same lion.' In the Great Roe, the fictional and the real combine into a seamless composite. Though radically spliced, the line between myth and biology is invisible — there's no way to tell where one begins and the other ends, which part is myth and which is real. Do its front paws walk on real ground and its rear on mythic landscapes? Or are both front and hindquarters real, with the myth being located in the splice? Other mythological creatures — the half-human, half-animal satyrs, fauns, centaurs and the like — distort reality into crypto-biological arrangements of pure fiction. The Great Roe, though, embodies a strange and absurd condition where the opposite conditions of fiction and reality are contained within the same physical entity. One does not undo the other. Instead, its idea (its mythic fiction) and its form (a real lion) coincide exactly.

In constructing this comedic absurdity, Allen has accidently provided us with a fitting description of the way architecture occupies the world. Because architecture, like the Great Roe, is simultaneously mythical and real. Mythical, in the sense that it is the invention of the society that creates it — the 'will of an epoch made into space', as Mies put it. Real, in the sense that it is the landscape that we inhabit. The perfect registration between these two states provides architecture with its own supernatural power: its prosaic appearance cloaks its mythic, imaginative origins entirely. To begin to understand architecture's Great Roe-ish state we must first think of how architecture mythologises and fictionalises itself, and then examine how it transmutes these fictions into reality.

Like a mythical beast, architecture emerges from the psycho-

cultural landscape of its social, political and economic circumstances. Its body may be an exquisite corpse of (biologically impossible) architectural limbs, torsos, heads and tails, yet it is animated, active and alive — like Frankenstein's monster. At any given moment it projects its historical situation — the great teeming mass of narratives that prefigured its existence — into the contemporary world. And in doing so it fundamentally rewrites that history, splicing and sewing the narratives together to make a radical new proposition for the future.

The representation of history is, of course, highly politicised. As Churchill tells us, history is written by the victors. He suggests that history is at least part fiction, and that its writing is a spoil of war. In its own way, architecture is also a spoil of war, arising out of ideological, aesthetic, economic as well as military conflicts. But in contrast to written history, architecture's victorious narrative manifests itself as reality. It not only represents and illustrates this fictional history but physically embodies it, playing it out through substance, space and programme.

If we trace architecture's history, we can see that this radical re-enactment is a fundamental mode of its development. We might begin a historical survey of architecture's re-enactments with the Egyptian column, which was carved from stone to represent a tree trunk or a bundle of reeds. Right here, in a foundational moment, we see re-enactment as the primary architectural idea. The primitive tree-column returns just as it is being technologically superseded. The original gesture of the tree-column is radically altered through its re-enactment in stone, through its revival as a kind of ritualised symbol that celebrates its own origins.

In Greek architecture too we can read architecture's compulsion to re-enact. Not only is the Egyptian column re-staged in the Doric,

Ionic and Corinthian orders, but re-enactment generates the entire language of classical architecture through the re-staging of primitive timber Greek temples. As with the Egyptian column, stone replaces timber, but here the entire structure is transubstantiated. And in this transformation, architecture represents its own origin just as it becomes something else. We see this in details such as triglyphs, the vertically channelled blocks in a Doric frieze that are understood as stone representations of the original timber end-beams — even though these beams are unnecessary in stone construction. Under them are stone guttae that re-enact the wooden pegs that would have been needed to stabilise a timber post-and-beam structure, but here they are rhetorical. In these examples, we see one construction technology re-enacted in another, creating paradoxes where the image of one intersects with the other's substance. These technological glitches are moments where the status of the re-enactment is made visible — like seeing a Civil War re-enactor on a mobile phone. They act like the splurges of a Warhol silkscreen or the howl of feedback, where the medium itself distorts the subject, where the act of reproduction becomes an active part of re-performance.

Through the unfolding of architectural history we see culturally, technologically or programmatically redundant fragments of architecture re-enacted. In each case, this re-enactment of a pre-existing image is a radical new iteration. Like Churchill's idea of history, architecture's re-enactment presents a partial and fictionalised narrative. What architecture chooses to re-enact, as well as the manner of its re-enactment, constitutes an ideological statement.

Fast-forwarding through history, we see Greek architectural language stretched around new Roman typologies. We see architecture's classical language resurrected (and re-invented) to

ennoble and legitimise Renaissance culture. We see medieval forms of construction re-enacted by the arts and crafts movement as a means of opposition to the industrial revolution — a visual, material and structural analogue to its proto-socialist politics. And we see modernism's appropriation of the language of industrial buildings, where the grain stores of Buffalo, for example, are cited by Le Corbusier as 'the magnificent first fruits of the new age'. Modernism's re-performing of industrial architecture's logics of mechanisation and efficiency operated as a polemic. First it was a way of undermining the social and political hierarchies that Beaux-Arts architecture represented. Secondly it allowed modernism to lay claim to a pre-existing machine aesthetic, to propose an architecture already embedded in the contemporary condition it described.

In its freewheeling rewriting of the past, architecture uses history as a slingshot into the future. It endlessly re-stages itself, self-consciously folding its own past into its future, rewriting its own myth into its very fabric. At the same time it legitimises its new propositions by embedding them within lineages of existing languages, materials and typologies. The re-enactment's repetition of the existing helps to naturalise the shock of the new, declaring itself an inevitable product of historical circumstance. Architecture, then, mythologises its own creation while making a historical argument for itself and proposing a future world — all within the substance of its own body.

Architecture's preoccupation with re-staging itself is more than a disciplinary in-joke. And unlike, say, a civil war re-enactment, it never packs up and goes home because it is home (or anywhere else we might be). Rather, architecture's re-enactments are deadly serious and entirely real.

We could see architecture's re-enactment of history in the present

as a kind of anachronic radicalism. Here, fragments of history are sucked out of their chronological order, emptied of their historical context, to make them available as devices, strategies, images and forms that can be piped full of other narratives and re-tasked to perform with alternative intent. These re-formed references, at once familiar and made strange, can then be deployed to validate and manifest a version of the present. Through re-enactment, architecture rewrites itself, making fictions a part of the real landscape that surrounds us.

Architecture's strategies of re-enactment remind us of what, in science fiction at least, is a peril of time travel: when you enter the past, you risk radically altering the future. Trample on a single prehistoric butterfly and you could return to an entirely different world. Architecture too possesses this ability to rewrite the present. Using powers of cultural fiction rather than imaginary technology, architecture mobilises the same potential as science fiction: the possibility of manufacturing multiple versions of the future out of the past.

AUTHENTIC REPLICAS

In Dearborn, Michigan, amongst the vast tracts of land owned by the Ford Corporation, stands Greenfield Village. It neighbours Ford's test-track, innovation and research buildings and the Ford River Rouge Complex which was, when completed in 1928, the largest integrated industrial plant in the world, with its six factories, docks dredged into the river, hundred miles of railroad track, power station and ore-processing plant. In the midst of this vast landscape of industrial production are two cultural centres also established by Henry Ford: a museum and a 'village'. The eponymous Henry Ford Museum incorporates into its architectural fabric a replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall, a suggestive signal of what lies in store as we enter this autobiographical autoland where Henry Ford's self-image, Ford's corporate entity and American mythology merge into a military-industrial complex manufacturing cars and ideology in equal measure. This autographic landscape finds its conclusion in Greenfield Village.

To construct Greenfield Village, Ford purchased a series of historic buildings and moved them to the site. Using these dislocated fragments, he developed a technique that might be described as urban bricolage, arranging eighty-three 'authentic, historic structures' to form the image of an archetypal village with a Main Street, a central square, residential areas and so on.

Greenfield is an extreme example of the architectural re-enactment. We can use it here as a device to explore the generic architectural phenomenon of making the imaginary real. Though made out of 'real' things — real buildings relocated brick by brick from their original sites to a field in Dearborn — Greenfield is the manifestation of Ford's imagination. All of its authenticity serves to support this imaginary condition, to make it real.

Greenfield Village embodies Ford's educational philosophy of 'learning by doing', as opposed to academic knowledge (the target of his often quoted phrase, 'history is bunk'). Ford constructed the village as a means of educating students through direct experience. Greenfield, then, is a mechanism to deliver history as a set of experiences that make tangible Ford's vision of America as a nation founded on enterprise. Greenfield's synthetic authenticity reads both as a place and as a fiction through which Henry Ford could write his own version of history.

Entering Greenfield we pass a station, cross the tracks on which an authentic steam train endlessly circles the village, go by a working farm, some paddocks with horses, and turn onto Main Street. Here we find the Wright Brothers' bicycle shop. Their workshop is in the back, with a half-built flying machine and tools laid out as though Orville and Wilbur had just stepped outside for a moment. Opposite is the Heinz house, complete with the basement in which an eight-year-old Henry John Heinz began bottling horseradish sauce. Both now neighbour each other, symbols of American modernity — of flight and ketchup — rearranged into small-town scale. Though the buildings are real, they manufacture a fiction though Ford's collapsing of space and time.

Further on, a stone cottage and a forge relocated from the English Cotswolds sit on a hill above a farmhouse from Connecticut and a windmill from Cape Cod. The forge is active and produces things used to repair the village, so that in Dearborn even maintenance becomes a kind of embedded performance producing authentic-replicas that are gradually replacing the real-authentic building components piece by piece.

Nearby is Noah Webster's home, where the first American dictionary was written, and a house originally built by slaves on the

Hermitage Plantation in Savannah, Georgia. We see the Logan County courthouse where Abraham Lincoln practised law. And, of course, Henry Ford's childhood home, moved here from its original site three miles away.

The village operates as a scenographic backdrop against which epochal events such as the Civil War are re-enacted and costumed interpreters perform period tasks like farming, sewing and cooking. You might meet a jobbing actor performing the role of Edison holding a press conference within his laboratory, casting us as members of the press and overeagerly re-enacting a personality within a real-life, once-removed, authentic-fake environment.

Re-enactment is Greenfield's core mode. It opened on the fiftieth anniversary of Edison's invention of the electric light bulb, and the opening ceremony saw (the real) Edison re-enact this moment in his rebuilt and relocated laboratories. Ford asked Edison to sit on the upper floor of the main workshop. Ford himself was downstairs, waiting for Edison to perform — to shout out with Eurekean glee as he might have done fifty years before. On hearing the cry, Ford rushed upstairs, demanding that the chair Edison had been sitting on be nailed to the floor, to forever fix this re-staged moment.

Driving dizzying circuits of Greenfield's roads are a series of Model T Fords. These are replicas, built to commemorate the centenary of their first production. One pulls up — like a carriage in a theme park ride — and offers a personalised tour of the village. Our driver, Randy, tells us the story of the replica Model Ts. Like all cars — for these fakes are real cars — they break down, even crash into each other. Over time, Randy suggests, all of the parts of all of the cars have been swapped around, replaced or otherwise renewed. These replicas, then, are not even themselves anymore. And in this they rehearse the classical paradox of the ship of Theseus. Plutarch,

writing in 75 AD, describes this philosophical problem. As a memorial, the Greek hero's ship had been preserved in an ocean-ready state by the citizens of Athens. Over time, however, it began to rot and its planks were replaced one by one until none of the originals remained. Yet the ship was still there. This, Plutarch suggests, presents a paradox: is the ship still Theseus's? Or is it entirely new? Does an object or entity remain the same if it is replaced wholesale, piece by piece? Or what happens if the replaced parts are used to build a second version of the object?

This question of identifying the authentic — of trying to point to the real — is key to the idea of the re-enactment. The re-enactment maintains the image of the real. It maintains the Model T as a real object. But it also makes it unreal — a representation of itself. These, then, are real, unreal, authentic replicas tootling around Greenfield. If the object itself is freighted with rival forms of authenticity — actual and representational — both serve to re-enact an idea of the real. Greenfield Village is a carefully curated ideology dressed up in layers of legitimising authenticity. Its architecture literally reconstructs and performs history as a way of naturalising Ford's narrative of American modernity.

Before leaving Greenfield Village we could make one last stop at Edison's resurrected laboratory, where we find an object that can be read as a parable of the reproduction and its ability to manufacture reality. There, on a table, is a display of Edison's electric pen. The pen has an electric motor that drives a needle that perforates a sheet of paper that in turn acts as a stencil, allowing multiple copies of the document to be printed in a press. Initially successful, the device was soon superseded by other forms of copying technology. Edison's electric pen, however, found another use, when it was modified by Samuel O'Reilly in 1891 to become the first electric tattoo needle. In

repurposing Edison's technology, O'Reilly transformed a device intended to produce copies into a way of indelibly marking our own bodies. Instead of producing replicas, the copy machine now etches fictions into the very dermis of the real.

Of course, Greenfield Village is not a village but an island whose idealised fantasy is only made possible by its separation from the world at large. Its edge — like the white-line edge of a sports field — delineates the space within which a particular set of rules and forms of behaviour operate, a rule-set that cannot exist beyond those boundaries. It is a weak form of reality, despite all of its authenticity, its three-dimensional spatiality and its scale. It reflects a theatrical rather than an architectural condition of reality, one where we have to suspend our disbelief to participate — where we are totally immersed in its physicality, but remain separate from it: spectators rather than actors.

Like raising a vein, the re-enactment exposes architecture's own mechanics of performance and enactment, so that we can see more clearly its methods of manufacturing the imaginary within the real. In the re-enactment, where the fictional and the real are marshalled and negotiated into experience, architecture's ability to make real is expressed in bolder form. The re-enactment, then, despite its often exceptional, out-of-ordinary status, serves us here as a more entrenched, deeper grooved version of architecture's general condition.

We can think of the world, or rather of the world as we have made it, as a composite of both myth and reality. The mythological comprises the ideas and ideologies, the meanings and beliefs that make up our cultural narrative. These are the things we write, draw, say and think. This world is imagined and described through media such as art, literature and philosophy. So, for example, a novel gives us a description of the world that helps us to understand our relationship to the world or to each other. But it does not directly alter the substance of the world. Its force bears solely on our imagination and perception.

The real, on the other hand, is the stuff we can touch, weigh, measure in an empirical manner — the physical facts of our environment. This world might be made using mediums such as science, design and law — things that attempt to manifest the real as indisputable, tangible fact.

These worlds of myth and reality, though existing in close proximity and formed in direct relation to each other, remain distinct from one another. And mostly these distinctions between fact and fiction, between imaginary and real, between stage and street, are clear. There are few things that operate like the Great Roe, that straddle both worlds and exist as both fiction and reality simultaneously. This, however, is architecture's special condition.

It falls to architecture to make the imaginary real. Architecture, real in its physical presence, is at the same time also an imaginary thing. Even the most prosaic piece of the built environment originates first with an idea that might be drawn from the broad spectrum of motivations to build: commercial, symbolic, cultural, social, egotistical, love, sadness and so on. The actualisation of the

imaginary into the real is architecture's fundamental mode, its inescapable condition as a medium. Architecture, we can say, in a manner unique to its discipline, transforms the fictional, the imagined and the ideological into the flesh-and-blood physicality that engulfs us. It takes an idea or ideology and manifests this in built form — not as illustration, not as representation, not as a description, but actually.

For example, a building like Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax Headquarters, with its open, clerestory-lit Great Workroom, demonstrates how the corporation is only made possible by its architecture. Thus the Great Workroom, where desk after clerical desk typed out corporate correspondence, is the manifestation of a particular idea of the corporation as a bureaucratic entity. It makes the idea of the organisation real by spatialising and materialising it. Architecture's built form, then, is simultaneously both the idea and the reality.

By beginning with the imaginary, and transforming this into an everyday reality, architecture reverses the polarity of fiction and reality associated with other forms of creative practice. Novels, movies and plays, for example, fictionalise the real. They use representations of the world as the site for manifesting the imaginary, relying on armatures and apparatuses such as page, screen or stage to create the conditions in which their fictional versions of reality can play out. From our vantage point as spectators we see these spaces as separated from the 'real' world, and have to suspend our disbelief in order to accept their claims to true description. Whatever their content, from the comic to the tragic, and however radical, they remain unreal. The same content performed outside of the narrative frame — on the street rather than the stage — would produce entirely different effects.

All art is, in this sense, abstract — an idea of reality hosted within

a distinct frame. But architecture operates in the realm of the real, in an unmediated manner. We don't have to suspend our disbelief in order for its fiction to be real. It is there, pure fact, all around us, occupying the world in the same way that we do, entirely believable. It needs no frame around it for its reality to exist. Rather, it is the frame within which our realities play out.

The all-too real nature of architecture frames the role of the architect as a professional entity. From the negotiations of permits and code to the production of construction information, to the managing of budgets, consultants and the construction process, the architect is assigned the pragmatic task of bringing a building into physical reality. Tracing the traditional professional role of the architect via, say, the job stages as outlined by a professional institution such as the RIBA, we see the articulation of the imaginary-to-real process of architecture. Beginning with Concept, and ending with Completion, an idea becomes a real part of the world. Following this standard professional procedure, architects take a concept or vision and manage the process though which scale, mass, material and space become part of the world around us.

But architecture itself manufactures reality in a more profound way. By expressing the economic, social and political ideologies of the society that creates it, and by organising these ideas into the spaces that we inhabit, architecture manufactures real worlds out of abstractions. To understand how architecture operates, fulfils this role as the interface between the imaginary forces that it embodies and the real form that it takes, we need to think of the way it performs, the way it enacts ideas into the world.

Enactment has two distinct definitions. First, it describes the theatrical acting out of a part or character, the dramatic representation of narrative through the performance of language,

action and gesture. Secondly, it is the moment a law is passed into effect by a legislative body. We could understand architecture through these two definitions of enactment.

First, architecture performs through its representational, scenographic and symbolic qualities, which dramatise and communicate its narrative. Architecture's own languages are the gestures through which it acts out its role. Architecture's performance might be seen in the way it expresses itself — communicates its concerns through surface decoration, through massing and through its organisation. So, the Villa Savoye acts out the idea of the machine aesthetic by looking like industrial architecture, by performing a visual vocabulary as though it were a script and a costume. The rhetoric of the building is its fiction, the thing that is being acted; it gets all robed up, just like an actor, gesturing to its audience, speaking its lines. The villa also shows us how architecture acts to create a narrative arc, modulating the building's performance from scene to scene through the way it modulates movement through the spaces it creates. Architecture's organisation of signs and symbols in space generate readable meanings, dramatic effects and narrative, but its enactment does not happen on a stage. Architecture's act happens here in the same world that we live in. Its performance places the fictional (the imaginary, the idea) into the real space of the city. It is the real space of the city.

To enact is also to pass a law. It is the process of creating something that impacts on the possibilities or the prohibitions of the world within its jurisdiction. We know that in a practical sense architecture is subject to law. Building code, for example, sets out parameters that must legally be met. Permits and permissions direct and modify the construction process. Even the use of the term architect is controlled by law. But the argument here is not about the

legal control of architecture; it's about the control that architecture exerts, its own legislative qualities, how architecture makes political will real in the world.

Intentionally or not, architecture is the physical manifestation of societal will, an enactment of the intentions of government, policy, capital, social convention and so on. It articulates this social, political and economic vision into the environmental frame within which society operates — the spaces in which we live. In the most direct sense, architecture permits and prevents the ways in which we use space. It defines what is acceptable and what is not. 'Love in the cathedral', as Bernard Tschumi once told us, 'differs from love in the street'. It differs because architecture makes the distinction between the two different types of space, setting out what is permitted or prohibited in either. Architecture organises space into discrete categories, distinct uses, particular forms of ownership. Its practical arrangement of programme into adjacencies and hierarchies at the scale of city and building arrange the ways in which we occupy these spaces. We sleep in bedrooms in arrangements of commonly agreed units, in spaces of a certain size, with particular relationships to our neighbours that are set out by architectural convention. In all of these ways, architecture both fulfils and enforces particular ways of occupying space. To quote Churchill again, 'we shape our buildings and our buildings shape us'. In highly specific ways buildings embed socio-political codes into space. A classroom spatially articulates the roles of teacher and pupil, defining the relationships between one and the other, both enabling and prescribing what each can or cannot do. It is in this sense that architecture acts as a form of law, governing behaviour within its jurisdiction. We are subject to architecture in the same way that we are subject to law.

B S Johnson's novel Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry lays out

the base prohibition of architecture. The protagonist, Malry, is engaged in an exercise of tallying the debts that society owes him. He logs every perceived 'debit' — every hurt, injustice and unfairness — and against these notes his own form of 'credit', his personal revenge on the impositions that the world places on him. He makes one such entry after crossing Hammersmith Bridge and finding his desired route blocked by a building in his path. The debit is entered: 'May 1 — Restriction of Movement due to Edwardian Office Block — 0.05'. He explains the injustice of his situation: 'Who made me walk this way? Who decided I should not be walking seven feet farther that side, or three points west of nor-nor-east, to use the marine abbreviation? Anyone? No one? Someone must have decided. It was a conscious decision, as well. That is, they said (he said, she said), I will build here. But I think whoever it was did not also add, So Christie Malry shall not walk here, but shall walk there.' And he reclaims the debt accrued 'for standing this building in my way, too, limiting my freedom of movement, dictating to me where I may or may not walk in this street' with this credit: 'May 1 — Scratch on Facade of Edwardian Office Block: 0.05'. Malry's (hyper-paranoid) sensitivity demonstrates that every architectural decision is both a permission — in this case a programme and piece of urban fabric that allows certain things to happen — and a prohibition — the curtailing of any other possibilities of that site.

While buildings assume particular formulations, setting out within their boundary their permissions and their prohibitions, architecture as a discipline assumes an authority that is sovereign and uncontrollable, because it is impossible to escape. Architecture physically contains us whilst it, in the broad sense of the environment, cannot be contained. Architecture then assumes the role of the law-making process itself. It is the mechanism of