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**Fantastic architecture revisited: Towards a unified approach to
the fantastic in the built environment**

Montarzino, Alicia, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1991

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**FANTASTIC ARCHITECTURE REVISITED:
Towards a Unified Approach to the
Fantastic in the Built Environment**

by

ALICIA MONTARZINO

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the
City University of New York.**

1991

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

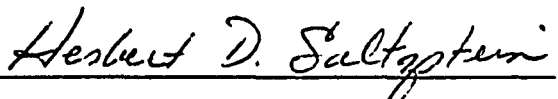
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9/18/91

Date


Executive Officer

Dr. Roger Hart

Dr. Leanne Rivlin

Dr. Susan Saegert

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

Abstract

FANTASTIC ARCHITECTURE REVISITED: Towards a Unified Approach to the Fantastic in the Built Environment

by

Alicia Montarzino

Adviser: Professor Roger Hart

"Fantastic Architecture" is a label used in architectural literature to qualify a number of spaces (buildings as well as gardens) too strange to be considered as part of mainstream architecture and too intriguing to be ignored. However most approaches in the field have been merely speculative when not purely classificatory, and as a consequence the use of the term "fantastic" has never been properly explained or it has simply been assumed to be a quality of an architectural object independently of both its environment and its perceiver.

The present work is an attempt to re-define the issue following the type of unified approach proposed by the field of environmental psychology in which the theoretical aspects of a problem are confronted with the results of empirical research. In this study the main architectural approaches are discussed and a theoretical frame for the "fantastic" in architecture is established through the study of the "fantastic" in literature and art. On that basis six settings (2 castles, 2 gardens and 2 apartment buildings) all located in Europe and consistently labeled "fantastic" in architectural literature are studied by means of

recorded interviews. Twenty people (10 males and 10 females) are interviewed in each site using a standard questionnaire with one or two additional questions for three of the sites.

The analysis of the data is carried out in two steps. In the first step, a general thematic analysis is utilized to provide an overview of the six sites. In the second step each site is analyzed in-depth taking the interviews as whole and then discussed, first in relation to its functional pair and then with the other sites. The results of the analysis are finally confronted to the main issues identified in the theoretical framework.

The results of the study show that a space is not "fantastic" per se but has the potential to be so. Whether that potential is realized or not depends on its environment as well on its perceivers, in particular on the latter's knowledge about the place, on how they came in contact with it and on the type of image that the place evokes in them. Overall the findings show that the perception of "fantastic" places is the result of an active interaction of the perceiver with the place manifested in an affective as well as a reflective response towards the setting in question.

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0 INTRODUCTION

There are, dispersed in the world, a number of "constructions," buildings as well as gardens, and designs, which are so far beyond the range of what even a very comprehensive history of architecture would or could include as examples of an architectural trend or movement, that these started to receive attention, albeit marginally, only after the publication, in 1960, of Conrads and Sperlich's book *Phantastische Architektur*. Off-beat, allegedly irrational, often built by non-architects, it may appear that these "spaces" could hardly be called "architecture" or provoke any interest which would not be more than an eccentricity in its own right. But such an oversimplification is hardly what the subject requires.

In the last decade, the progressive disenchantment with the starkness of modernism, which led to the reassessment of pre-modern forms, has also taken its turn with those spaces. Yet, anyone interested in the subject is likely to find that, since the publication of Conrads and Sperlich's book, varied samples of those spaces, ranging from shops looking like shoes in California to the highly eccentric, Burmese-looking "Ideal Palace" of Ferdinand Cheval in Hauterives (France) have been subjected to scrutiny and labelling from which they have emerged as they entered, i.e., as oddities, with little more in common than a fanciful appearance.

This labelling, which covers a wide span from "fantastic" to "soft," passing through "eccentric," "bizarre," "mannerist" and "follies," may not be accidental but rather the result of three factors:

- the difficulties inherent in a subject composed of elements of such variety that it can be said that their most fundamental common characteristic is not only their difference from the "rest of the world," but also from each other;

- a definite preference by architectural writers for descriptive and classificatory approaches instead of explanatory ones. To this should be added these writers' disregard for the fact that although strange architectural objects are more often than not excluded from architectural history, they do not exist in a vacuum but are part of an environment where they are used, perceived and experienced.
- the tendency of those writers to ignore the work of their predecessors as well as the contributions in other fields of art; this comprises also their apparent reluctance to define and discuss their labels with any regard to previous studies in the field.

Yet, in spite of the above, it emerges that by far the most common label under which this architecture has appeared is that of "fantastic." Why is this so? Although one of the main issues appears to be the fact that architectural writers have failed to define why those "strange spaces" should be called so, a consideration of the term seems a good point of departure.

Firstly, as already mentioned, "fantastic" has been the most common denomination and that may not be purely accidental. Secondly, the "fantastic" exists and has been widely studied in other domains, especially in literature and the visual arts, where a great deal of effort has gone into an attempt to define the term and establish a theory. Thirdly, the fact that some claims have been made on the need for fantasy and dream images in environmental design (Koh, 1982), suggests that the already existing "fantastic" needs a more thorough review. This is so because without a proper understanding of why those strange spaces have received such a variety of labels, why "fantastic" has been the most common yet never acceptably defined and without questioning what the fantastic as a form of architectural creation is and how it is subsequently perceived and experienced, claims like Koh's may be more misleading than illuminating.

Thus it seems quite clear that what the subject needs is the type of unified approach proposed by the field of environmental psychology in which the users/perceivers of a space are considered part of the architectural problem and their points of view and perceptions are not assumed but investigated through empirical research. Thus far, such an approach is still missing. This dissertation proposes to fill this gap.

0.1 Objectives

The objective of this dissertation is to provide an insight into the issues involved in those "strange spaces" which have appeared under different labels, but most often under "fantastic." The aim is to establish, by means of developing a theoretical-empirical approach to the problem, whether the "fantastic" can exist in the built environment.

The aims are:

I. To gain insight into the nature of the term "fantastic" in order to either question, complement or further develop the two contradictory assumptions frequently advanced in architectural literature, i.e. that the "fantastic" is solely a quality inherent in the architectural object and that something as concrete as architecture cannot be "fantastic."

II. To gain insight into the psychological aspects of the fantastic in the built environment, i.e. the creation and to a greater extent the perception of fantastic places in order to test the two assumptions mentioned above. Thus a biographical research on the creators of buildings which have been labelled "fantastic" is followed by empirical research aiming at establishing

1. whether the perception of a "fantastic" place is affected by the perceivers' familiarity with and previous knowledge about the place, including the way they came to know about it;
2. what is the impression the visitors/perceivers have of the place and how does this "real" place compare with the mental image they had before visiting;

3. whether the place evokes in the perceiver images connected with fantastic stories, paintings, etc.; and whether it is associated with feelings of uneasiness or even fear;
4. the role played by the surrounding environment in the perception of the "fantastic" place.

0.2 Development

The approach adopted is circular, i.e. it starts by identifying and discussing the issues at the most concrete, the three-dimensional level of architecture. This is followed by an examination of the more abstract domain of literary and art theories, in order to open new perspectives for the investigation of the "fantastic" in architecture through an empirical study on six places which have been consistently labelled as "fantastic" in architectural literature. Finally the problem is re-composed through a discussion of the theoretical issues in the light of the empirical findings so as to provide an answer to the question whether architecture can be "fantastic."

The work is divided in three parts. Part I (chapters I-IV) is eminently theoretical, dealing with the issues concerning the "fantastic" in architecture and with theories on the subject developed in literature and the visual arts. Chapter I, which covers the architectural aspects, consists of a critical review of the architectural literature on "strange" spaces. The different works are discussed individually and the main issues summarized at the end.

Chapters II and III cover, respectively, the theoretical aspects of the fantastic developed in literature and the visual arts. Chapter II is an attempt to gain insight into the main issues involved in the "fantastic" in literature, since in this field a great deal of effort has gone into establishing a critical theory of the fantastic both as a form of expression and as a literary genre. The review comprises theories developed since the early fifties by the French school of literary criticism ending with present-day theorists, mainly from the American and English schools. The issues identified in this review are used, along

with the ones identified in chapter III, to develop new perspectives for the empirical study of the "fantastic" in architecture. Chapter III consists of a review of the main theories of the fantastic in the visual arts, where theorists have focussed mainly on painting and sculpture, with some side references to architecture.

Chapter IV is an attempt to deal with the multiplicity of labels (most of them related to art, thus not included in chapter I) under which, "strange" architectural objects have been included or dealt with. Those labels are defined and their appropriateness discussed, including a first attempt to establish the semantic adequacy of the term "fantastic" through the knowledge acquired in the previous chapters.

Part II (chapters V-VI), mostly empirical, is devoted to the psycho-environmental aspects of the "fantastic" in architecture, that is to how "fantastic" spaces are created and how they are perceived. Chapter V deals with the issues involved in the creation of "fantastic spaces" through a review of empirical studies and biographical and autobiographical texts. Chapter VI consists of an extensive empirical study of people's perceptions of six places consistently labelled as "fantastic" in architectural literature. The six settings studied, all located in Europe, comprise buildings as well as landscaped spaces (parks or gardens). Two types of buildings and one type of landscaped spaces are studied. For each type two places were selected. The study consists of recorded interviews based on a set of open-ended questions. The results are presented in two parts: A thematic analysis of the six sites provide a panoramic view of the main findings; this is followed by an in-depth analysis of each site. In the discussion each site is compared, when pertinent, with any of the other five.

In Part III, the findings of the empirical research are confronted with the main issues and theories that have emerged from the previous chapters so as to provide an answer to the question whether architecture can or cannot be "fantastic."

PART 1

I FANTASTIC ARCHITECTURE OR FANTASTIC CONFUSION: the architectural approach to spaces which look "different"

1.1 Fantasy in Design

"In a culture where pragmatic and positivistic attitudes prevail, fantasy and dreams are apt to be suppressed and negated, thus causing an unhealthy split in one's psyche and the alienation of people from their own selves." On these premises Koh (1982) developed his argument advocating the use of fantasy and dream images for creativity and symbolism in the environment in a paper presented at the 14th International Conference of the Environmental Design and Research Association.

Following Freud and Jung, Koh considered both fantasy and dreams as being spontaneous happenings of a common psychological process, the unconscious, for it is through this process that we can "compensate" and "complement" the shortcomings of our conscious world, and understand "the totality of the self (p. 37)". The unconscious, according to Koh, reveals itself through images and symbols in dreams and fantasy, thus, when repressed or ignored, as it has been since the breakthrough of the scientific age, it may find expression in our life and in our environment "in a vulgar, destructive and decadent manner" (p. 37), illustrated, according to Koh, by X-rated movies, skin magazines as well as by allegorical and hedonistic designs.

Since designing is, along with fantasy and dreams, a creative process, it can, in Koh's view, rationally produce forms that are fantasy provoking and conducive to the enhancement of mental health, a sense of identity and the release of the desires of the inner self. Thus, design can (and should) "incorporate not only the cultural symbols for function and structure" (p. 37), but also what Koh calls the "natural" symbols from the fantasies and dreams of the unconscious, connecting, in this way, the internal with the external world.

This approach may, according to Koh, prove more fruitful than the semiotic approach and the "so called post-modernism" which exploits historic allusions and cultural motifs from Judeo-Christian culture and the Classical Age. Moreover, the application of Jungian concepts of the collective unconscious and the Archetype "could open significant inroads to the design of natural symbols" (p. 38). But, Koh warns, archetypical images are ambivalent and have both positive and negative, creative and destructive, bright and dark aspects, consequently the images derived from them would basically depend on the individual and the circumstances. Nevertheless, such an approach "may prove to be more powerful in its fantasy provoking impact than were the expressionist and symbolist architecture of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Because it addresses our instincts and collective unconscious, it would, [if] creatively employed, have a far more universal and enduring effect" (p. 44).

In order to make his ideas more concrete, Koh introduces a number of recommendations concerning both how to create dream-like images and how to apply fantasy to the design process. For the first, Koh suggests the use of techniques that have been "consciously or unconsciously employed in fantastic and expressionistic symbolic art and architecture" (p. 43) such as (1) allusions to folklore, fairy tales, festive carnivals and science fiction, (2) exaggerations of perceptual elements (light, color, perspective, scale), (3) creation of distortions, condensation and optical illusion, (4) creation of a sense of freedom by ignoring convention and social laws and, most of all, natural laws such as casual sequences, gravity etc., (5) creation of a sense of nostalgia through historical suggestions or sense of ruins, desolation, loneliness and sadness, (6) creation of morphological puns in humorous ways, juxtaposition of opposites, e.g. organic/inorganic, man/animal, masculine / feminine and (7) use of biomorphic form.

Concerning the use of fantasy in environmental design Koh warns against "the lack of realism" to which fantasy can lead: "Since design and 'true creativity' have to be relevant to the problems of the external world, designers have to employ reasoning order to rigorously exami-

ne the relevance and practicality of their 'fantastic ideas' and to consistently execute them" (p. 44). From this perspective, proposals such as Frank Lloyd Wright's organic city or Soleri's Arcology, to cite only two, were not truly creative but destructive and disruptive.

So, Koh's paper is an appeal to introduce into design dream-like images, and to do it in such a way as to achieve equilibrium between fantasy and reality, to produce well-balanced, polite and civilized designs which could be watched, used and enjoyed by young and old, by virtuous and sinner, by don and philistine alike. Now, the question is: would (or could) the products of that "*bon chic-bon genre*" fantasy, that "fantastic" which has become an every-day event, a commonplace, play a role any different from good, old modern architecture? Or could it be that Koh arrived at those seemingly coherent conclusions because he only brushed the surface of the question? This second alternative seems highly probable, for two reasons. First, although Koh does acknowledge the existence of techniques of "fantastic architecture," its products receive no more attention than a quick and value-loaded judgment on some architectural utopias which certainly cannot be taken as a paradigm of "fantastic." Second, the theories of what "fantasy" has produced in other domains of art have been equally ignored. Thus, a claim for a generalized use of fantasy in the environment based on few psychological concepts more or less coherently assembled, risks being misleading, if it is not confronted with what the architectural field as well as other domains of art have produced and refined in a few decades of interest in the subject.

Yet, Koh's attitude is not an exception, for a recurring characteristic among writers on the environmental fantastic is not only to disregard possible connections with the expression of fantasy in other art forms, but also to overlook any previous contributions within their own field of competence. Thus, while Koh's approach suffers from the lack of grounding that results from ignoring the already built fantastic even as an example, his colleagues' most common attempts to define the environmental fantastic purely as a function of architectural form

rather than in connection with human experience have always stumbled over the diversity and disparity of the buildings that each author considered "fantastic."

This has caused the works on the environmental fantastic to end up in sophisticated catalogues which place more emphasis on fancy pictures than on the nature of the phenomenon. It is not surprising, then, that any attempt to understand the subject in any depth is more likely to find its sources in the existing literature on the fantastic in literature and art than in the architectural field. Moreover, a critical review of the literature on fantastic architecture will not only put Koh's claim in context but also provide both a more accurate picture of the "status" of the fantastic in the field of architecture as well as a means of identifying the issues that need to be addressed to fill the gap between a theoretical claim and a narrowly pragmatic approach.

At this point it is necessary to note that terms like "environmental fantastic," "fantastic architecture," "fantastic landscapes," "fantastic" or "strange" spaces will be used as synonyms, although the term "fantastic architecture" has created some problems for purists, e.g. whether some of the existing "fantastic" spaces were architecture or not. Since the intention here is to discuss the fantastic in the landscape, and not the pertinence or right of belonging to the professional world of architecture, semantic minutiae will be discussed only when considered significant for their content or their underlying assumptions.

1.2 The "fantastic" in architectural literature: a dragon with a hundred heads

In her essay "Why are Americans Afraid of Dragons?" the American science-fiction writer Ursula Le Guin (1979) pointed out that it is not only Americans who are "anti-fantastic" but also almost every high-technology people, with the exception of the British "who love it," and the Germans "who have a great deal." However, when it comes to the attention given to "architectural dragons," matters are not so clear.

The rule still holds for the Germans, for the pioneering "Fantastic Architecture" by Conrads and Sperlich (1963) and the work with the same title by Schuyt & Elffers (1980) are both translations from German originals. However, both the Americans and the French have produced more than the British who have, on the whole, ignored the topic.

Nevertheless, as an evidence of the confusion that seems to exist concerning what fantastic architecture is, how it should be called and why, it is sufficient to look at the labels it has received: "fantastic," "bizarre," "eccentric," "visionary," "grotesque," "architecture of dreams," and still the list could continue. In some cases one label or the other does make a difference, although the differences are seldom made explicit; in other cases the terms are regarded synonymously. And in every case the difficulties in defining the fantastic seem to have been so insurmountable that one starts to suspect that the problem requires something less comfortable and reassuring than the good old dictionary approach. Yet, as one of the main problems when analyzing this type of architecture seems to have been the reluctance of architectural writers to take into account their colleagues' previous contributions to the subject, any study aiming at elucidating what lies behind the apparent confusion has to start with a critical review of the literature in the field.

1.2.1 The acknowledged fantastic: Conrads and Sperlich's and Schuyt and Elffers's *Fantastic Architecture*

Conrads and Sperlich (1963) have, not without irony, pointed out that "fantastic architecture is what has to be discarded in order to arrive at an orderly definition of present architecture," thus implying that its marginality has been more the result of rigid academicism than of its nature. Yet, by systematically avoiding any confrontation with the issues posed by the term "fantastic" they go only slightly further than those who simply discarded it. They quite rightly started by pointing out that where definitions are necessary there is the danger of settling for a cliché. Yet, in order to avoid such a trap they fall into a more elegant but not less dangerous one of concentrating on the descrip-

tion of the formal and structural aspects of the architectural objects collected, and to organize them in a museum-like fashion.

However, the real problem in Conrads and Sperlich's work, not so apparent at first, is the gap that seems to exist between their intellectual intentions and their personal preferences. For they state that their book is an attempt to pay tribute to human imagination, to that "creative fantasy that conveys its message in ... architectonic shapes" which "have been branded as freaks" (p. 8) when, in fact, what they do is to focus on that fantastic architecture in which "a very serious reforming intention is at work" (p. 9), which is, more specifically, the utopian architecture of expressionism. In this respect, the fact that Conrads and Sperlich's translators into English felt compelled to express, in their note to the readers, their hopes that the maturing of studies in the modern period would contribute with more fundamental definitions concerning "expressionism," should not be regarded as accidental.

On the other hand, had Conrads and Sperlich acknowledged their focusing on an "ism" they would have been forced to go beyond the mention of the external circumstances in which that architecture was produced, and perhaps to question, as Whyte (1983) does when writing about Bruno Taut, the ideological premises of such an architecture. But with the simple strategy of including in their book only few examples of the second category, i.e. fantasy of the "harmless" type, as they called cases as Ferdinand Cheval's "Ideal Palace" [Fig. 1], they gave their work an apparently wider scope, relegated the nonprofessional fantastic to the category of harmless playthings, and eluded the difficulty of discussing expressionism in depth. In any case, it should be noted that any harsh criticism of this work based on its emphasis on description is likely to be misleading.

First, it should be noted, Conrads and Sperlich were practically the first to pay attention to the work of the German utopians; as Ragon (1972, vol. II) pointed out, before the publication, in 1960, of their

Phantastische Architektur (published as: *Architecture Fantastique* in the French translation by R. Delpire, (1960); *Architecture of Fantasy* in the 1962 American edition and *Fantastic Architecture* in the 1963 British edition, both with the same translators), most histories of modern architecture had ignored the work of expressionist architects. Secondly, it is not uncommon to find, in a work of this nature directed at a professional audience, some type of conflict when it comes to analyzing or classifying the works of "non-professional," "amateur," or "naive" builders, as men like Cheval are often called. Thirdly, it has to be recognized that up to 1960, when the book was published, the concern for the psychological and experiential aspects of architecture, as it exists today, and which could have provoked an interest in "understanding" the fantastic as such, was far from being widespread.

So, for the purpose of the present discussion, the most relevant point of this work is the already noted distinction between what the authors called the "harmless" and the "reforming" fantastic, for these two categories correspond, respectively, to the fantastic that conveys "dream-like images" and the fantastic of utopia. This distinction is also important, for, in the hands of Collins (1980), who wrote the introductory essay to Schuyt and Elffers' *Fantastic Architecture*, these categories will appear reinterpreted as the difference between low and high art.

Like Conrads and Sperlich's book, Schuyt and Elffers's annotated illustrations and Collins's essay in *Fantastic Architecture* (1980) were intended for a professional audience. In the late 1970's, with Post-Modernism already launched, and the rhetorics of Modernism discredited by Blake's *Form Follows Fiasco*, fantastic architecture could stop being "what had to be discarded" to become "what is strange, exciting and fun (although not necessarily so)" (p. 15). Thus it was not difficult for Collins, who, unlike Conrads and Sperlich, was not afraid of clichés, to attempt to define the fantastic by exposing its double connection with the eccentric and the extravagant, on the one hand, and with the visionary on the other.

According to Collins, the visionary is a mental process of sensual perception of things that are not actually present, representing "a theoretical, speculative and even poetic statement or position that is likely to be considerably ahead of its time and may not even be carried out" (p. 15). It is then prophetic, utopian and, in our century, often technological to the point of being science-fiction. Concerning the "eccentric and extravagant," which roughly corresponds to Conrads and Sperlich's "harmless," the concept is not very clear, for Collins attempts to define this by exclusion, and the problem is that when the exclusion is done, very little is left. To Collins, buildings such as the "Ideal Palace" are neither "folk" (which acknowledges the site), nor vernacular (which is basically rational) and strictly speaking, "nor even architecture" for they have neither been conceived by a professional architect nor built following preconceived plans. Moreover, they are not even art, for they have no "describable or recognizable style" (p. 12).

At this point it is evident that there is one striking similarity between Conrads and Sperlich's work and Collins's monograph: in both cases the authors seem to be torn between their sympathies for one type of architecture and the need to conform to some kind of intellectual requirement. But while for the former the gap was between their penchant for the utopian architecture of expressionism and their desire to present "fantastic architecture" as a wider term, for the latter it was between his sympathy for the fantastic built by non-architects and his need to conform to the elitism of his professional readers. In any case Schuyt and Elffers's book is much more generous than Conrads and Sperlich's in displaying fantastic spaces produced by non-professionals. What is rather surprising is that Collins, having acknowledged the existence Charles Jencks' book *Bizarre Architecture* (1979) did not take more advantage of it, since Jencks, as it will be demonstrated later, clued into some aspects of the experiential that had been neglected by most architectural writers.

1.2.2 The fantastic questioned: Persitz and Joedicke: a brief plunge in extended waters

The two most serious and thought-provoking attempts to define the fantastic in architectural literature appeared as introductory articles in a 1962 issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* devoted to the subject. Although holding opposite views, the articles could be considered complementary. In the first, Alexandre Persitz asserts the reality of the fantastic in relation to the time of its conception and its imaginative content; in the second, J. Joedicke exalts the use of imagination in architecture but denies the existence of the fantastic as such.

Today, Persitz asks, would the Eiffel tower be an example of "fantastic architecture?" The implicit answer is "no," because the notion of the fantastic is, primarily, a function of time. Taking as a point of departure Claude Roy's definition of the fantastic as "what subverts the admitted order of things ... what is an anguishing rupture with known rules, what is unexpected" (p. 14), the notion of the architectural fantastic is, first of all, attached to the epoch in which it is conceived. What at one moment may appear "utopic" or "monstruous" because it seems to break with "the natural order," or with prevailing habits, may seem commonplace to later generations. Of course, imagination is needed for any piece of architecture since the building exists, *a priori*, only in the architect's mind. What is peculiar about fantastic architecture, then, is that it requires an imagination which rejects the constraints of every-day reality and accepted ideas. This is so because the fantastic, although being the testimony of a singular man's dream, often reflects a part of the subconscious of "mankind itself." Yet, imaginative projects do not achieve the fantastic if the author conceives them only to prove his "originality" instead of as a product of a desire to break from the norm and to create a vision of things to come.

According to Persitz, the architectural fantastic can take at least two aspects: the "formal," in which the rupture with the prevalent forms can well verge on baroque or mannerism, and the "poetical," in which the fantastic acts as an inspirational source for the introduction

of forms which are both more free and better adapted to spiritual needs than the purely functional. So, although Persitz never justifies his assertion, it is obvious that for him (in clear contrast to Jencks, as it will be seen later) the fantastic and the baroque or mannerist are different things, while, like Conrads and Sperlich, he takes the "visionary" and the fantastic as belonging to the same category. Yet, unlike most architectural writers Persitz calls attention to the relationship between the fantastic in architecture and in the other arts by pointing out that most fantastic architects are also painters and sculptors. This observation is certainly not irrelevant, for, as it will appear later in the discussion, a "blurring of limits" in formal as well as in functional terms, is one of the fundamental characteristics of the fantastic. Thus, while the relevance of Persitz' approach is to be found in the questions he poses in order to arrive at an understanding of the subject, that of Joedicke's resides in his remaining sceptic both to the use (and abuse) of the term "imagination" in relation to the "fantastic" and to the emphasis on form in the increasing number of works devoted to the subject.

For Joedicke there seems to exist a contradiction between "fantastic" and "imaginative:" if architecture is an art of volumes and spaces, then an imaginative building is one that shows imagination in its construction and the use of materials, rather than in form, the latter being the focal point in most approaches to fantastic architecture. So in his view a fantastic building is not the product of imagination but a mannerism; therefore he establishes a distinction between "imagination" and "fantastic vision."

Imagination, according to Joedicke, is a gift that allows the artist to assimilate in an original manner experiences and emotions, while a fantastic vision gets carried away and loses all awareness of the impracticability of its conceptions. Hence, for Joedicke the real question is if fantastic architecture exists, and in his view the answer is "no," because when a fantastic idea is materialized it loses its unreal character in the process of being transposed from the domain of the

unconscious to the conscious. Thus the works that today are categorized as fantastic are merely the result of a conscious play with reality. Therefore the term "fantastic architecture," insofar as it is applied to a construction, to a "real" architectural object, is a paradox. Only those sketches which represent the transmutation of a "vision," and do not pretend to set trends in the art of building, can be called "fantastic," since the complexity of current architecture does not admit naive visions of the future born from the unconscious.

The rest of what has been labelled "fantastic" is but a "mannerism" which Joedicke sees as a form of escapism. By curving, piercing and decorating the exterior the architect "tries to escape from the demands of reality towards the enchanted kingdom of imaginary forms" (p. 18). Consequently, for Joedicke there are but two types of architecture: that which has been conceived with imagination, and that which has not, the first type implying the finding not so much of formal but of structural responses to increasingly complex needs. Examples of how relevant structural aspects are in Joedicke's view, and what role they play in his consideration of mannerism as "gratuitous," are to be found in his article about Gaudí, published in the same 1962 issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.

Joedicke starts by pointing out that Gaudí gives an impression of "fantastic" because we often are unfamiliar with Spanish architecture, and in particular with its *mudéjar* influences. But behind the multiple appearances of his buildings, which, besides *mudéjar*, are also gothic, baroque and modern, there is the profound thinker, the rigorous seeker for new structural solutions, as several surviving models of the buildings show. Even the use of broken china, which Gaudí shares with many *fantaisistes*, is attributed by Joedicke to economics. Moreover, in what concerns form, Gaudí, like Louis Sullivan, took nature as a model. But while the latter tried to derive a general rule from the observation of Nature, Gaudí tried to apply those forms directly, and it is to this, rather than to the use of a gratuitous fantasy or an unconscious drive, that the forms that have so often been called fantastic have to be at-

tributed. What Joedicke ultimately sees at work in Gaudí is an imagination which, exerted in a concrete way on a precise problem, demonstrates that the right angle is not the only pattern that a rationalistic and functional solution has to follow.

1.2.3 The semantic approach: Jencks' *Bizarre Architecture* (1979)

As in the case of Conrads and Sperlich, and Schuyt and Elffers, Jencks' point of departure seems to be an arbitrarily selected collection of odd-looking architectural objects which needed a common denominator to be apprehended. But unlike the other authors, Jencks does not struggle with definitions. He starts by pointing out the different directions in which, traditionally, a definition would have been vainly sought, for any definition was likely to be misleading. According to Jencks this is so because bizarre architecture is precisely "what falls between categories and cannot be pigeonholed without losing some of its integral properties, without being domesticated" (p. 8). In addition, the use of the term bizarre gives him an immediate advantage over the proponents of "fantastic", for, by tracking the origin of bizarre back to baroque he avoids confronting the problem of the origin of those structures while providing them with a touch of cultural legitimacy. However, not even Jencks has completely escaped the traps of the "fantastic": qualifying "eclecticism", the term appears as one of the categories of the "bizarre", although its meaning remains obscure, for no definition is provided.

Yet, Jencks must be credited for two relevant insights concerning the perception of this type of architecture: one is his view of the "bizarre" as a Rorschach test, which points, only so much more elegantly, in the same direction as Koh's definition of the ambiguity of archetypes and the multiplicity of interpretations to which the fantastic is subjected. The other is his concern with the destructive action of domestication of what originally caused shock and surprise, for, as he points out, the search for bizarre architecture must be conducted as if to recapture surprise and shock, wherever possible, for otherwise "all that is discovered is the old normal architecture, but

with kinks" (p. 9). Which, unfortunately, is what he does, although it may not be obvious at first sight. For, to all the subtleties displayed in finding the paradoxes that so naturally seem to surround "bizarre" architecture, Jencks opposes an almost shamanistic belief in the power of words. So his strategy for recapturing the surprise and shock which belong to the bizarre is to find "suitable words, metaphors and categories through which the architectural objects can be classified" (p. 9) as if the naming of the category could operate like a rune under whose spell the architecture of "kinks" would find its place in the world.

Unfortunately, instead of operating as runes, the names operate as tautologies, for what does it add to our understanding of the bizarre to learn that the chimneys of Gaudí's "Casa Milá" [Fig. 2] can be classified as "animalorphic?" Little or nothing besides making one suspect that in Jencks' eyes warriors and animals belong to the same species, since it is more the former than the latter that the chimneys resemble. Moreover, a system which pretends to categorize the oddity of a building with a total disregard for its surroundings is likely to be more disorienting than clarifying. For is a building looking like a dinosaur (which Jencks included in the same category as Casa Milá) in the middle of a barren plain in California [Fig. 3] likely to be experienced as "animalorphically" as Gaudí's creation [Fig. 2], visible only to the servants on the terrace in the middle of Barcelona? This we do not know, for such issues are never discussed in Jencks' work.

But perhaps such a discussion was considered unnecessary because in the very particular world of the Jenckian "bizarre" it is believed that by finding the name, one possesses the object; almost like the hands encircling the bison in the Altamira caves, but in the space age. Yet, it is on the basis of his adhesion to categories that Jencks criticizes Arthaud (1970), for what Arthaud did not do, which is "trying to package" this architecture "according to habitual categories" (p. 9). What Arthaud did, and Jencks neglected to do, is to take into account the creators of such buildings and to investigate the possible motivations behind their strange forms. This does not make Jencks' contri-

bution negligible but reveals the limitations of approaches based exclusively on form.

1.2.4 A historical context for "fantastic" buildings: Ragon (1972) and Borne (1969)

Ragon (1972), who valued Conrads and Sperlich's work for pioneering the recognition of "expressionist" architects previously neglected by most architectural historians, appears, at first sight, to have taken a radical step towards the reassessment of "fantastic" architecture. Thus, he not only gives, in his *Histoire mondiale de l'architecture et l'urbanisme modernes* (Universal History of Modern Architecture and Urbanism), a great deal of attention to utopian architects but also discusses, in the context of the dichotomy of the architect-artist vs. the architect-engineer that takes place during the last decades of the 19th century, the work of a non-professional "fantasist" such as Cheval. What makes Ragon's approach unique is not the fact that he considers the work of Cheval as an historical product rather than just a play of fantasy (as would Jencks or Collins), since Borne (1969) and Jouve (1981) have also had similar approaches; nor is Ragon's attitude towards "amateur" builders, as it will be seen later, very different from that of Conrads and Sperlich's. What is rather unusual is that in Ragon's work, the "Ideal Palace" is discussed along with the architecture of "architects," as if, "naive" or not, it had a place and could be discussed as "architecture" without any qualifying adjective.

According to Ragon, the emergence of Cheval's work, which offers a certain parallel with that of Charles Garnier, designer of the Paris Opera, can be better understood if one takes into account that Cheval had started his work the same year that Baron Jenney built, in Chicago, the first Leiter building, and was completed at the time Gropius was finishing the Fagus factory. So, Ragon argues, at a time when architecture was going towards "nudity," towards the integration of everyday life into industrial society, Cheval was "opposing his fabulous vision" to that prevalent "greyness," in the same way that Garnier had opposed his marble facades to the "greyness of Haussmann's Paris" (p. 235).

While modern architects were rejecting historicism, Cheval was carried away by it. "Only that in his case historicism was not that of Vignola or Vitruvius but that of Perrault's stories" (Vol. 1, p. 228). Yet, in Ragon's view, if Cheval appears completely isolated it is because the works of architects such as Gaudí and Guimard (which also were "syntheses of art," and gave predominance to imagination and "decoration") were not "naive" or likely to be associated with fairy tales.

To Ragon, Gaudí is an exponent of the "baroque," this term being used not in the sense of "bizarre" as Jencks (1979) takes it, but more in the sense of the architectural historian Hauteceur, that is, as "decoration," with more emphasis on appearances than on structure, on the "picturesque" rather than on the rational. However, in the case of Gaudí, this is not completely so, for in his architecture structure is so important that it is possible to talk of "a baroque of the structure." Yet, Ragon recognizes that the taste of Gaudí for decoration was such that he even decorated what was not visible, such as the chimneys of the houses he designed. But in spite of seeing Park Güell as "a scenario dreamed by a Hollywood director who wanted to make a film on Martians" (p. 233), and the Sagrada Família as "a little Luna-Park, a little story [out] of the Arabian Nights," Ragon does not call Gaudí's architecture "fantastic." Like Joedicke, Ragon sees, overall, the "functionalism" of this architect who "conceived architecture as a sculptor;" what in his work has been regarded as "fantastic" stems from his interest in nature. A convinced naturalist, "Gaudí has assimilated, probably unconsciously, the fantastic universe of Monserrat" (Vol. 1, p. 235).

In the emphasis put on the technological aspects of the work of Gaudí it is already possible to see that Ragon's inclusion of Cheval in the history of architecture does not imply a reevaluation of this type of "naive" work as a function of its "expressive" qualities, as may appear at first sight. However, how closely Ragon holds the views of Joedicke or Conrads and Sperlich becomes clear only when he discusses fantastic vs. visionary architecture.

In Ragon's view, the terms "visionary," "fantastic" and "prospective" architecture are labels that designate, perhaps a little too haphazardly, works often conceived with opposite intentions. Although it seems impossible to deduce from his work what this difference is (Ragon seems to call "visionary" anyone who has envisaged something very different from the current trends, whether "fantastic" in form and possible to build with present technologies or so highly technological that it could only be built in the future) it is obvious that for him there is a qualitative difference between the merely formal and the technological. In close correspondence with Conrads and Sperlich's "harmless" and "with serious reforming intentions," Ragon labels these two trends respectively "gratuitous" and "prospective." According to Ragon, the "visionaries" of one and the other group are often confused and that confusion is not casual, for it has the objective of "debas-ing" the search of highly technological alternatives for the future by mixing them with purely imaginative (or "gratuitous") works.

The representatives of the "gratuitous architectural fantastic" according to Ragon are numerous, most of them painters (Desiderio, Piranesi, Moreau and Victor Hugo, among others) or builders of structures that are more a *decor* and a sculpture than proper architecture (Cheval's "Ideal Palace" and Rhodia's "Watts Towers" [Fig. 4]). The problem is that in many cases the limits between the two categories are not very clear. The "Watts Towers," for instance, could now be compared with the scientific projects of Frei Otto, while many of the "prospective" designs of Ledoux or Boulée (the two best known "visionaries" of the 18th century) had "gratuitous" elements.

It is to be noted that the confusion existing between "fantastic," "visionary" and "utopian" are not Ragon's patrimony. Random (1977), trying to differentiate the fantastic from the visionary in art, did not arrive at a more enlightened conclusion than stating that "where the fantastic ends the visionary starts," since "to observe that something is fantastic is often to judge the effect rather than the

cause" (p. 20). All of which seems to indicate that this particular topic for these authors remained more obscure than they were willing to admit.

For Borne (1969), both Cheval and his "palace" are definitely products of the end of the 19th century and of its "spirit of universal exhibitions" (p. 3), as moving as they are primitive. At that time American millionaires were reproducing monuments and palaces in their gardens; Wagner was having Bayreuth built for the dreams of Parsifal and Siegfried, Ludwig II of Bavaria his fairy tales castles, "surrendering his madness to the architects before giving himself to death" (p. 6); even public and private gardens got their "trompe l'oeil." In that "mood" Cheval built his Palace, "a *trompe l'oeil* ... a kind of palace that summarized ... all the palaces of fairs and present or future universal exhibitions" (p. 19). Like Ragon, Borne sees that fantasy as the antidote, "as a feeble magic against feeling oneself mediocre and a prisoner." In addition, Cheval himself was truly a man of his time, a spirit of the "Second Republic," imbued with the cult of man and the cult of work, to which the inscriptions of the "Ideal Palace" testify. "It is even said," Borne points out, "that the public visiting the 'Palace' is attracted more by the performance of the worker than by the work of the artist" (p. 18).

Borne finds similarities between Cheval's work and modern music, with its phantasmagoric calls and its sudden screams, with those notes dispersed where the sense of unity presupposes a path. So, Borne does not find it surprising that the "Ideal Palace" was not designed to be inhabited, for in this way it is inhabited forever as it becomes a living being of which Cheval is the heart. The building is the result of what Cheval called "that benevolent genie ... which has taken me from the hand of Nothingness" (p. 9). In Borne's view, both Jules Verne and Cheval "have the nostalgia of a fantastic which cannot be found outside the imaginary" (p. 10). But while Verne offers an escape from this world, Cheval builds. His work cannot be considered an escape: After all any work is social in certain aspects and anti-social in

others. According to Borne, Cheval, while constructing his dream for himself, must have been playing with the idea that he was building for others when he wrote that it was not "in the inaccessible kingdoms of Trébizonde or Kamchatka but in Hauterives" where one could ask if one had not been suddenly transported, "on the wings of a chimerical dream," to a "hemisphere where everything is superhuman" (p. 21).

Through the impulse generated by his narcissism "Cheval constructs his reality within reality, and in this way, internal and external space become one" (p. 11). Thus, Prévost (1981) points out, any dichotomy between dream and reality is annulled in an irreducible poetic dimension which is also timeless. The need to dream and to "materialize" the dream, however, seems to be closely tied with the times and the personal circumstances of the builder. Thiollier (quoted by Jouve et al., 1981), pointed out that Cheval's grottoes responded to the same need of "rêverie" and marvel that created the gardens of the mannerist period in the 17th century, a need which Arthaud (1970) found in the builders of "dream" palaces tied not only to time and personal circumstances, but also to geography.

1.2.5 Built dreams and follies: between reality and madness

Arthaud's *Les Palais du Rêve* ("Dream Palaces") (1970) and Lancaster's *American Follies* (1960) are both lay approaches to many of the architectural objects included in the works discussed above. However, their target audiences are different: Arthaud writes for romantics or nostalgics, flirting with ghosts dear to the European soul; Lancaster for the curious layman trying to communicate his delight as a collector of oddities. But in both cases, their approach allows them to move more freely than would have been possible had they chosen a more scholarly path, and to offer interpretations they need not prove, but which are, nevertheless, quite suggestive.

Arthaud uses the term "dream palaces," not because the images those buildings evoke are dream-like but because they could have originated only in the waking fantasy of eccentrics rich or powerful

enough to convert them into reality. But, as already noted, Jencks was incorrect when he pointed out that Arthaud was doing just "another investigation into historical buildings of the unlikely" and "assuming that we want to domesticate the unusual and package it according to habitual categories" (Jencks, 1979).

To begin with, no categorizations are to be found in Arthaud's work since his distinction between "social" and "personal" dream places can hardly be considered to be one. Secondly, to consider Arthaud's work a "historical investigation" is both an over-statement and a simplification. It is true that, for the most part, Arthaud's buildings belong to the times in which the rich and the powerful built palaces instead of fifty story glass towers in fiscal paradises. It is true also that he attempts to gain some scholarly points when he tries to explain the existence of more dream palaces in Germanic and Saxon countries than in their Latin counterparts, with only the exception of Italy, where they sprung up in the 17th century, as a reaction to the Renaissance. Yet, his main preoccupation has not been to develop an historical theory of built dreams but rather to throw light upon the psychology of his much admired eccentrics. And it is precisely in this terrain that Arthaud's merit resides.

First, his distinction between "social" and "personal" dream places may not be strikingly original, but it has the merit of looking into one of the often neglected issues in architectural literature. In Arthaud's view, there is a considerable difference between one and the other: "Social dream places" are creations which intended to entertain or to shock, and for these Arthaud would prefer the term "follies"; "personal," on the other hand, are the visions of solitary and misanthropic eccentrics, often the victims of wealthy but sad and solitary childhoods, and these are the "dream places" in the strict sense of the word.

Secondly, his explanation of the existence of more dream castles in Germanic and Saxon countries than in the rest of Europe provides

some interesting insights in the social context of eccentrics: According to Arthaud, the existence of dream places in England was a consequence of the puritanism against which the rich and intelligent often revolted, thus becoming social pariahs and eccentrics. In Germany, it was mainly a consequence of the landscape, of the forest, which has the same "dissolving effect" over man's spirit as the fog has in Nordic countries. In Italy, on the other hand, it was an outcome of the cultural attitude of the Renaissance, which, by instituting the cult of classical Antiquity, produced the anti-humanism that gave place to the upsurge of mannerism. And mannerism, by virtue of being "much closer to man's phantoms than to his reason" (p. 34), produced gardens and palaces that neither Spain with its mysticism, nor France with its Cartesian spirit were going to produce.

So Arthaud's work is a nostalgic journey into eccentricity, a desire to understand why costly monstrosities glazed like cakes needed to be built. Taking such an exercise of sentimentality for an historical approach is an over-statement; stating, as Jencks did, that it is an attempt to package it according to habitual categories is simply to try to absolve oneself by attributing one's own sins to another.

Lancaster (1960), on the other hand, wrote mostly about products of "fancy," dwellings or structures conceived following a whim in more democratic surroundings, with neither the power and wealth of Arthaud's dreamers, nor the disturbing influence of forest and fog. And so Lancaster calls the objects of his collection "follies," a term used to indicate "any costly structure considered to have shown folly in the builder," a structure offensive to the "sense of good taste [sic] and restraint" and "out of key with his neighbours in size, style and planning."

Although Lancaster does not pursue this idea any further, it implies an element which can be crucial in defining the fantastic in architecture, and that element is "context." To analyze this issue, the concept of folly is a good point of departure, for it is quite obvious

that many a structure could become a "folly" mainly as a function of the place where it stands. A highly ornamented Arabic palace, for instance, is nothing exceptional in an Arabic country, nor will it seem odd in Spain. But in an Icelandic village it is likely to look like a "folly," without being particularly foolish as a building in itself. The question that remains is: who will see it as a "folly?" Its owner, who probably loves it? The neighbours who see it every day? A stranger who has never seen it before? A tourist who rather expects to see an old viking farm covered with turf? Concerning the latter, would not the unexpected view surprise him to the point of not knowing whether his eyes are playing a trick on him or there is something quite wrong in the world? In this case, would he call the building a "folly" or something else? The answer to these questions is not so imple, and it is clear that it requires more reflection than the architectural literature, Lancaster included, has provided.

1.2.6 The strange as experience: Harbison's *Eccentric Spaces*

Harbison's *Eccentric Spaces* (1977) is like a Piranesi etching but constructed with words. One will not go into it in search of definitions, or, in their absence, of indications of what the spatially eccentric is. For Harbison's book is, if anything, the perfect equivalent of the Wagnerian Nifelheim, a place where what is important has to be dug out in long hours of labor, or to be constructed patiently, link by link, like the magic coat that will give its possessor the power of invisibility. The only difference is that instead of the irate voice of the dwarf Alberich, there is here the dense voice of Harbison disguised as Cardinal Colonna.

Reading this work one gets the uneasy feeling that at the outset the book must have had a set of instructions which were ripped off by the buffoon of the Pope now hiding behind the curtains, delighting in the confusion created by his malicious act. At other times, one comes to thinking that the cue must be in the form rather than in the content, which is not completely erroneous, for in emerging from it one

realizes how close the experience of the book and the experience of eccentric spaces are.

Harbison writes about writers writing about fantastic architecture in fiction. He recognizes that buildings in fiction are more satisfying than actual buildings by showing an architecture more apt to fulfill demands or whims than real buildings could ever do. Yet, this uncompromisingly abstract point of departure serves Harbison as a basis to speculate about the reasons that push people to materialize their dream places, to convert them into "architecture."

"Dreaming the fantastic," Harbison says, "is not enough. It must be lived" (p. 48). Everything is objectified to be forced into the memory and the objects are memory devices, automatic history, as characters are not. Intense fear of loss or forgetting makes the fixing itself a central act. But, like Arthaud, Harbison finds this act hampered by the paradox, the desperate contradiction existing between dream and reality. For, as he points out, "seeing the solidest art [architecture] become pure whimsy, tells us [that] there is no limit to what the mind can impose on the world once it has summoned the courage to do it." Yet, that mind is held by a fear, which is none other than "the fear of seeing it [the dream] too clearly" (p. 42).

What happens once the fixing has been done, when the dream has solidified like the lava of a volcano, Harbison does not say, although a speculative mind is likely to conjecture whether the preceding interpretations would explain why the constructions of "fantastic" builders never seem to end, or, if new additions are not possible, a new construction is started. Yet, at this stage speculations like this have to remain at the level of issues. Arthaud, Lancaster and Harbison have addressed "fantastic" spaces from the standpoint of the "fantastic" builder, which the previous writers neglected. Yet, like the latter, they have been more effective in raising issues than in providing responses. Which means that, for those responses, one must look elsewhere. This is why any attempt to understand fantastic architecture has

to examine fantastic literature and art, for in those two fields the fantastic has been a more common occurrence (from centuries of fairy tales to mannerism), has had a greater impact (symbolism, surrealism), and consequently, theories were more readily developed. Nevertheless, the literature on architecture has raised issues that need to be discussed before reviewing the literary approach to the fantastic.

1.2.7 Finding the "strange" among the "soft": technological rebellion or fairies in the suburbs?

Many of the buildings dealt with by Schuyt and Elffers, particularly those built in the United States by tinkers or "bricoleurs" (Romano Gabriel's, Boyce Luther's, Gully's, Herman Rush's) can be found in the May-June 1975 issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* on *architecture douce* ("Soft Architecture"). In the editor's introductory article soft architecture is defined as any kind of architectural practice that refuses to utilize the production process of "the Other Architecture," and it is proposed as a possibility of poetic expression and of total realization that allows its builder to find his integrity in a non-specialized work. Consequently, it is an imprecise notion which designates practices as different as "savage" and "spontaneous" architecture, self-help building and architectural guidance.

Yet, "soft" architecture should be distinguished from "vernacular," since the latter results from a pre-capitalist and pre-industrial mode of production, usually in a rural milieu, while the former is practiced, usually, by people who claim an idealistic and liberal individualism, a return to nature, a pantheistic or messianic exaltation, and the myth of the man who relies on his own capabilities to do everything. In France, this type of architecture "makes evident the dependence and misery to which most of the people living in the industrial suburbs have been subjected," while in the United States it is more the result of the resurgence of that anti-urban ideology which underlies the American spirit since the times of Thoreau and Emerson.

Although no mention of fantastic architecture is to be found in this article, some speculation in that direction is justified. First, it seems clear that what can be isolated as the main characteristic of "soft" architecture is the use of all kinds of materials (usually non-traditional items such as bottles, newspapers, wood, cardboard, pebbles, broken china) in the selfhelp construction of a building or a landscape. Such a "bricolage" is also a recurrent trait of the so-called "fantastic."

Secondly, concerning the buildings which the article prologues, it is possible to say that while all of them look "different" or obviously "non-traditional," in some of them there is an obvious aesthetic intention, with forms and decorations which give them the "bizarre" aspect for which they have elsewhere been classified as fantastic. Assuming, for the moment, that there exists such a thing as "fantastic architecture," it can be tentatively said that "soft" and "fantastic" are not mutually exclusive, although neither could the one be absorbed into the other. From the standpoint of the *mode of construction* some of the buildings usually labelled as "fantastic" are also "soft" architecture. Concerning their *form* it is possible to say that some "soft" buildings could also be called fantastic; this may indicate that if fantastic architecture is anything, it is primarily an architecture of form, in which "gratuitous" decoration may prove to be one of its fundamental characteristics, hence deserving more attention than it has been given.

But before closing this section it is necessary to add that the customary lack of definition of categories is not absent from this issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. So, while the introductory article, as already mentioned, contains no explicit mention of "fantastic" architecture, in the article which follows, Bernard Lassus tries "to evoke the quality of the dream-world" which most of the gardens created by "bricoleurs", "posses for those who create them" (p. LXV), thus using some of the terms most commonly found in descriptions of the fantastic.

1.2.8 Gaudí, the outsider

Gaudí's buildings [Fig. 5-8], along with Cheval's "Ideal Palace" and the gardens of Bomarzo [Fig. 19-20], have seldom failed to be included in books on "fantastic architecture." However, any search into the literature about Gaudí soon shows that the views on his work are polarized: In one we find the "gaudians" (i.e. Joedicke (1960), Sweeney and Sert (1970), Tarrago (1985)), whose works aimed to preserve or even exalt Gaudí's image of the devoted Catholic and "great innovator" against the anathema of seeing him labelled "fantastic." In the other extreme, stand the "fantasists" like McMullen (1968) who call Gaudí's architecture "fantastic," the quicker to dismiss it for not creating a "school."

Within the first current, Sweeney and Sert (1970) reject any possible association of Gaudí with the fantastic and point out that his approach to architecture as sculpture encompasses instead an integral concept of building, one which brings back to architecture an extra stimulus without disturbing the general conception of the building. Tarrago (1985), on the other hand, ignores fantasy altogether and sees reflected in Gaudí's buildings his family's tradition as potters and his search for the laws of nature. This view is very close to that of Joedicke, (c.f. 1.2.2.) who emphasized the innovative aspects of Gaudí's structural conceptions.

On the other current, McMullen (1968) finds that Gaudí's "menacing and nightmarish shapes have no explanation in the commonly held view that they are three dimensional versions of Art Nouveau curves, or primitive sculpture. ... That he was intent on imitating or metamorphosing nature is all we can say -- at least until the psychologists go to work on the case" (p. 38). Yet, he accepts Gaudí's fantasy only to dismiss his architecture all the more quickly. McMullen seems to agree with the verdict of orthodox modernism by seeing Gaudí as an example "of the folly of attempting to create serious architecture from non-architectural points of departure -- by pushing painting, sculpture and even literature into the realm of structure and practical planning" (p.

41). In addition, McMullen reminds us that in spite of Gaudí's liberal politics and genuine sympathy for the poor, his work does not show much evidence of social conscience, for more than half of it consists of luxurious town houses and apartments. His structural inventiveness is dismissed as a play, since it was accompanied by a romantic rejection of the appropriate materials.

Between these two extremes, Vinca Massini (1976) considers Gaudí endowed with "an ardent fantasy which did not know the inhibitions and accepted all the stimuli, regardless of origin" (p. 5) and recognizes that his work can be seen as endowed with an inexhaustible richness of "fantastic inventions." She does not balk at the fact that certain constants in the work of Gaudí (curved, radial, parabolic and agglutinative forms) are very close to graphic manifestations of mental pathology; but if she does not explicitly consider Gaudí to be a mental case, she certainly suggests that scientific research in the field of psychology could be revealing.

What is of interest to note here are the negative connotations associated with the term "fantastic," particularly when it is applied to an architect's work. On the other hand, as will be shown, the close relationship that often exists between mental pathology and fantastic art may justify the definite anti-fantastic attitude adopted by many an architectural critic concerning the work of a professional architect. In such cases it is quite difficult to separate social conventions from academic considerations, particularly when other labels can be equally justified. What remains is to discover whether Gaudí's architecture can be considered fantastic or not in a less static approach.

1.3 Conclusion. The architectural approach to "fantastic architecture": issues and approaches

Anyone interested in what has been frequently termed "fantastic architecture" is likely to find the existing architectural literature more useful in generating issues than in providing insights. On the one hand, the increasing disenchantment with the alleged monotony of modern

architecture has led authors such as Koh (1983) to advocate the use of fantasy in the environment. This argument has been accompanied by suggestions of how designers can create dream-like and fantastic images, utilizing methods which have been "consciously or unconsciously used in fantastic, expressionistic and symbolic art and architecture." Koh aimed at incorporating in the environment a well balanced and "healthy" fantasy, for the benefit of both the eyes and the unconscious.

On the other hand, there is a body of architectural literature in which attempts to find a place for a number of heterogeneous "constructions" (buildings and gardens) and designs which had been considered too "different" or "unsuitable" to be included in the history of architecture, led to the creation of a number of labels among which "fantastic" has been the most common, the most appealing, and doubtless the most controversial. It has to be noted, however, that the most common characteristic of this body of literature is that efforts to find categories under which to classify a diversity of architectural objects *a priori* considered "fantastic" or "bizarre" have prevailed over attempts to investigate what that architecture is, why it exists, what it expresses, and under which conditions those buildings came into existence. The narrowness of this approach has been aggravated by the apparent reluctance of the writers in the field to take into account the work of their predecessors.

Moreover, those writers who are also architects appear to be of two minds: on the one hand, they seem to feel compelled to tackle the issue, on the other, as members of the *teknos* elite, they find it difficult to defend or to make acceptable on rational grounds what has very often been conceived and built following an intuition or a dream. In fact, it is not the analysis of the designs of expressionist or modern utopians which suffers from this kind of problems since utopias, whether technological or social, are developed on an intellectual basis and for an indeterminate future, so each analyst can approach them without the risk of being stained by the "irrationality" of the object analyzed.

Instead, the real problem has been how to tackle the work of the few professional architects who have produced buildings of strange appearance, and in particular that of the self-made constructors, whose work is often crude and ungainly but seems to provoke more "spatial" upheaval than any other architecture. And this is precisely the point over which architectural critics have stumbled. Nevertheless, the review of the architectural literature has made possible the identification of the main issues concerning "the architecture of fantasy" (including the doubts of its existence), as well as the contribution of different writers in the elucidation of the problem.

1.3.1 Approaches

As was pointed out earlier, the concern for the "architecture of fantasy" or "fantastic architecture" started in the late 1950's and early 1960's with the publication of Conrads and Sperlich's pioneering work *Phantastische Architektur*, published in English first under the title "*The Architecture of Fantasy*", and one year later as "*Fantastic Architecture*." What these authors considered "fantastic" were those buildings and designs "which had to be discarded to arrive to an orderly definition of modern architecture," and consequently their main emphasis was on the German expressionists, although they also included some of the works by Gaudí and the bizarre constructions of two non-architects: Ferdinand Cheval and Simon Rhodia, whom they labelled, with some condescension, "harmless fantastic."

Strictly speaking, then, Conrads and Sperlich's work is about an architecture which, for having been conceived with an excessive or anticipatory type of imagination, ended by being marginal to the architectural mainstream, at least at the time it was conceived. But these authors never address the problem of the fantastic, and in strict justice their book could have been called "marginal architecture" without any change of its structure. Collins, who also adheres to the concept of the fantastic, exposed its connections with the "eccentric, the extravagant and the visionary," without arriving at any definition.

Of all the authors reviewed, the only one to attempt a definition of the fantastic is Persitz, who sees it as that which subverts the admitted order of things. This notion is linked, on the one hand, to the unconscious (the fantastic as a testimony of a dream), and on the other to the notion of time (in the sense that what seems fantastic and monstrous at one time may seem commonplace to later generations; this, however, may apply only to the "visionary" or utopians).

A semantically accurate version of the problem has been provided by Charles Jencks, who, by opting for the term "bizarre," has avoided most of the problems his peers had either to face or to elude. Unfortunately, his label does not help much, for besides his observation that these buildings are like a Rorschach test, the objects emerge from his work almost as they have entered: with little more in common than one or two "animalorphic" labels and the "kinks."

At the same time there have been attempts to deny the existence of fantastic architecture, or to point out its predicament between the desire to see the fantasies materialize and the fear of seeing them vanishing through that very materialization. A point of semantic interest is Joedicke's distinction between "fantastic vision" and "imagination," in which the first is assimilated to the fancy and whimsical, while the second is seen as referring to the imaginative use of experience and emotions in the conception of a new object or idea.

1.3.2 Issues

The first issue to point out is that "fantastic architecture" is, overall, a label which did not originate in an interest in "fantasy" in the environment but in the existence of a number of heterogeneous architectural objects too "strange" to be mainstream architecture and too intriguing to be left alone. As a consequence, the architectural approach to fantastic architecture has consisted mainly of attempts to find categories in which to classify those heterogeneous buildings, accepting in the process the fantastic as a quality inherent in the architectural object i.e. independent of both observer and environment.

The second issue is that the fact that the same artifacts have appeared under labels ranging from "soft" to "grotesque" passing through "eccentric," "bizarre," "mannerist," "follies" and "grotesques," may not be casual but the result of three factors:

a - The difficulties inherent in dealing, without simultaneous attempts of definitions, with a number of marginal elements whose fundamental common characteristic is not only their difference from the "rest of the world," but also from each other. In fact, the range of artifacts covered in the works reviewed is wide; according to the three basic categories "what," "by whom" and "when." These can be summarized as follows:

- what: utopian and futuristic designs; fairytale-looking castles and palaces; buildings looking like something else: as animals, faces, organs, doughnuts, hot-dogs, shoes, columns; as buildings of bygone times but with different functions: castles, pyramids and towers; buildings resulting from all kinds of juxtapositions; gardens including characters from fairytales; and buildings which each writer, for some reason very much his own, considered to be "fantastic;"

- by whom: by professional architects or inventors (most of the utopias); by architects, and, in a greater measure by non-architects, for the "constructions;"

- when: throughout history, although most of them in this century.

b - The already mentioned preference by architectural writers for descriptive and classificatory approaches instead of explanatory ones.

c - The tendency of those writers to belittle or ignore the work of their predecessors as well as the contributions in other fields of art, including their apparent reluctance to define and

discuss their labels with any regard to previous studies in the field.

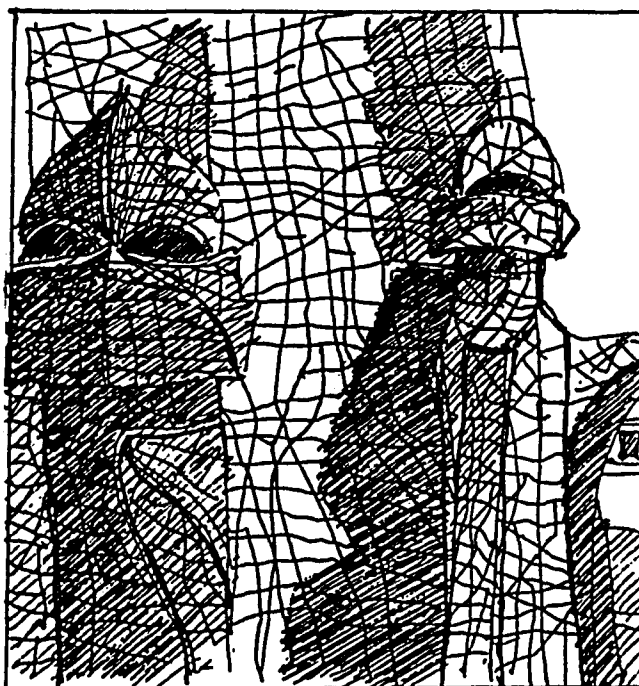
The third issue is the eminently static character of the approaches to the "fantastic" in architecture, this being, as already mentioned, expressed in approaches which considered the "fantastic" as an *a priori* category independent of the observer and the surrounding environment.

The fourth issue is the lack of a unified approach which would question the *a priori* conception of the fantastic as inherent in the architectural object taking into account the theoretical and experiential aspects of the problem.

In summary, the main problem of the architectural literature is the lack of a theoretical approach to the issue of the "fantastic", for this has lead not only to the absence of a much needed definition but also to assuming the "fantastic" as a quality inherent in the architectural object and independent of both its perceiver and its surroundings. However, as the fantastic as a form of creation and as a "genre" has received much attention in literature criticism and in the visual arts, a study of the literature in these two fields could provide the insights needed to produce a more sound (or at least less reductionistic) approach to the problem of the "fantastic" in architecture. In the next two chapters the main issues concerning the "fantastic" in literary criticism and the visual arts will be identified and discussed so that the emerging perspectives could be used in defining a framework for the empirical research that constitute the second part of this study.



Fig. 1 Ferdinand Cheval's "Palais Idéal" (Ideal Palace), Hauterives, France. It took Cheval (who worked on it in his spare time as a postman) twenty years to build, in his garden this structure, today one of the best known examples of "fantastic architecture" built by a layman. Cheval wanted to be buried in it "in the way of the Pharaohs" but the local authorities refused him the permission... (Photo A. Montarzino)



Jenck's "Animalorphisms"

Fig. 2: "Warriors" on the terrace of Gaudí's Casa Milà, Barcelona, Spain (drawing on a photo by Editorial Casa de Oro,

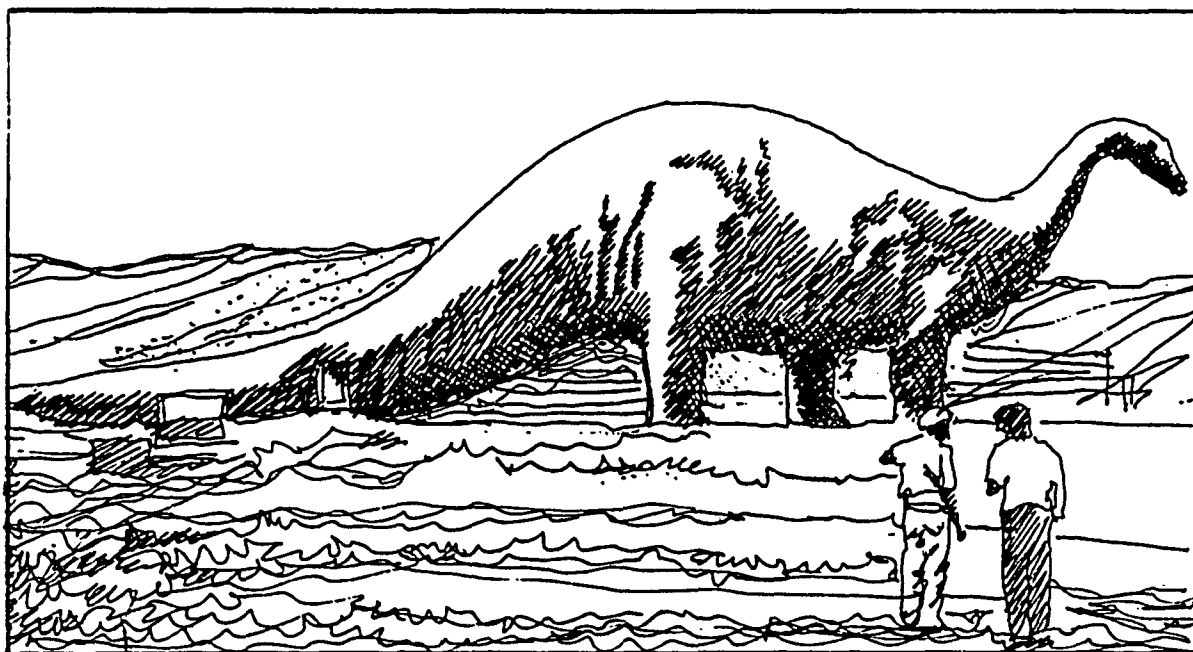
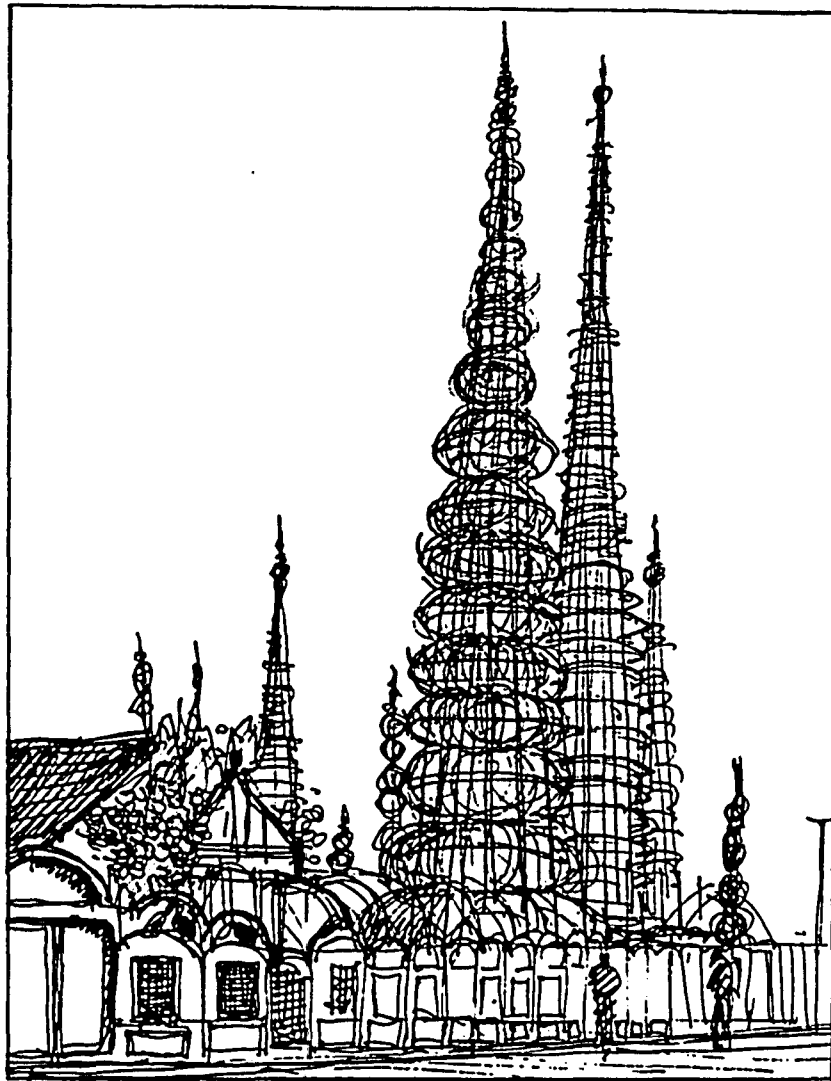


Fig. 3: Curio shop in the form of a dinosaur, Los Angeles, California (Drawing on a photo by Charles Jencks from his book *Bizarre Architecture*, 1979)



GROUND PLAN

1. entrance
2. house
3. domical vault
4. Stalagnites
5. outdoor fireplace
6. major tower
7. medium tower
8. small tower
9. boat

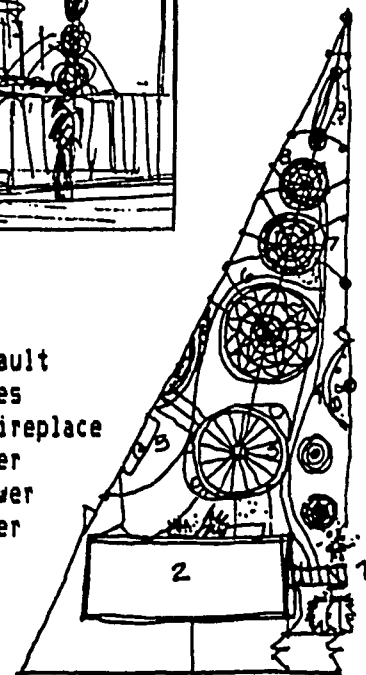
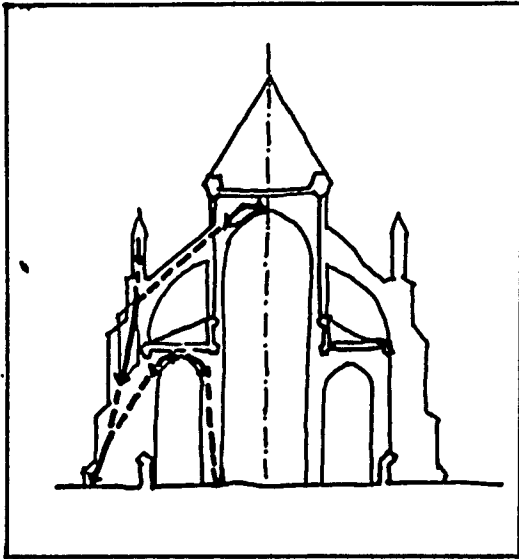


Fig. 4: Simon Rodia's "Watts Towers" near Los Angeles, California, built over a period of thirty-three years (drawing based on photo and plan published in Conrads and Sperlich's *Fantastic Architecture*, 1963).



Gaudí's structural innovations

Fig. 5: In Gothic churches the flying buttresses which transmitted the oblique efforts from the vault to the foundations had to be particularly strong...

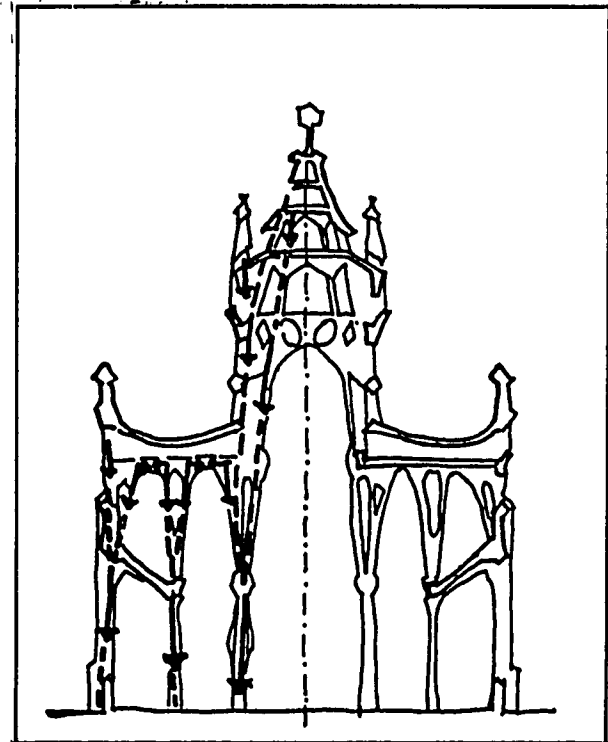


Fig. 6: while in Gaudí's Sagrada Família church the slim posts are placed in the sense of the transmission of the load (drawings on diagrams from J. Joedicke's article "Gaudí", in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, 1962)



Gaudi's visual
flamboyance

Fig. 7: Gaudi's "Casa Batlló,"
Barcelona, Spain (Photo A,
Montarzino)

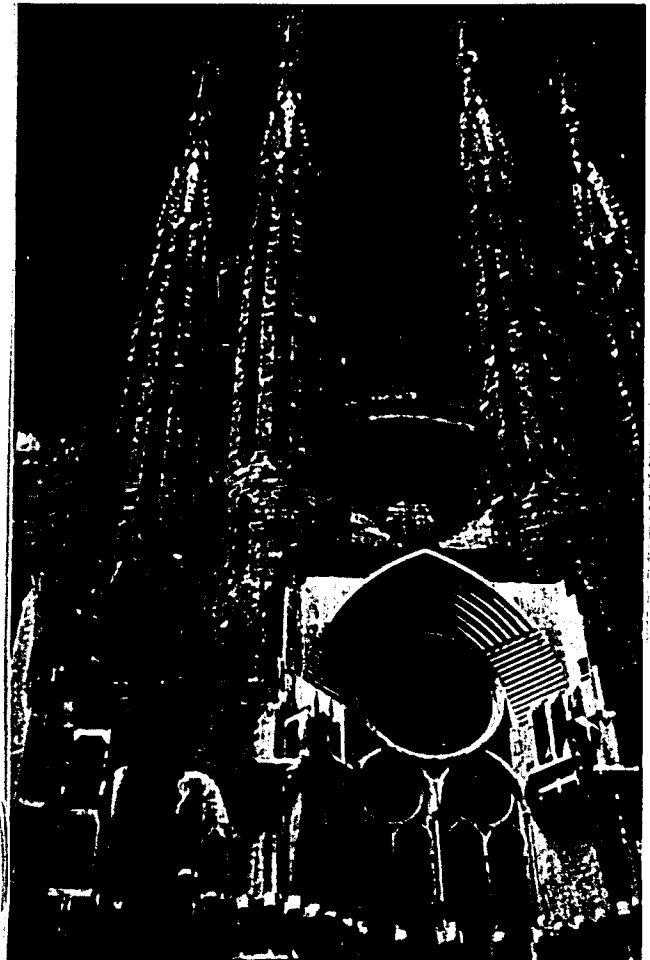


Fig. 8: And Sagrada Família
church, Barcelona, Spain



Fig. 9 and 10: The Sacro Bosco or Holly Wood of the Monsters in Bomarzo, near Viterbo, Italy. In Vax's (1969) view, monsters which only scared poets... (Photo A. Montarzino)



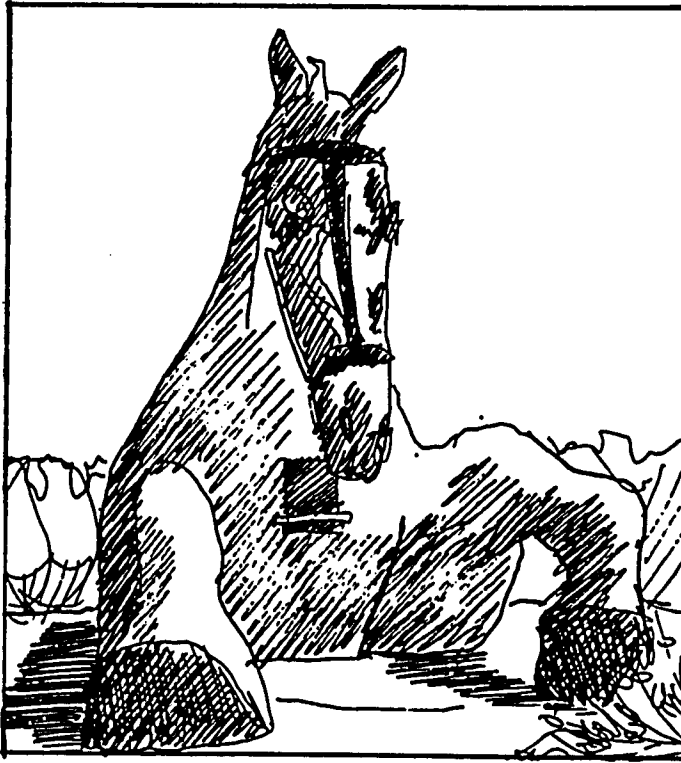
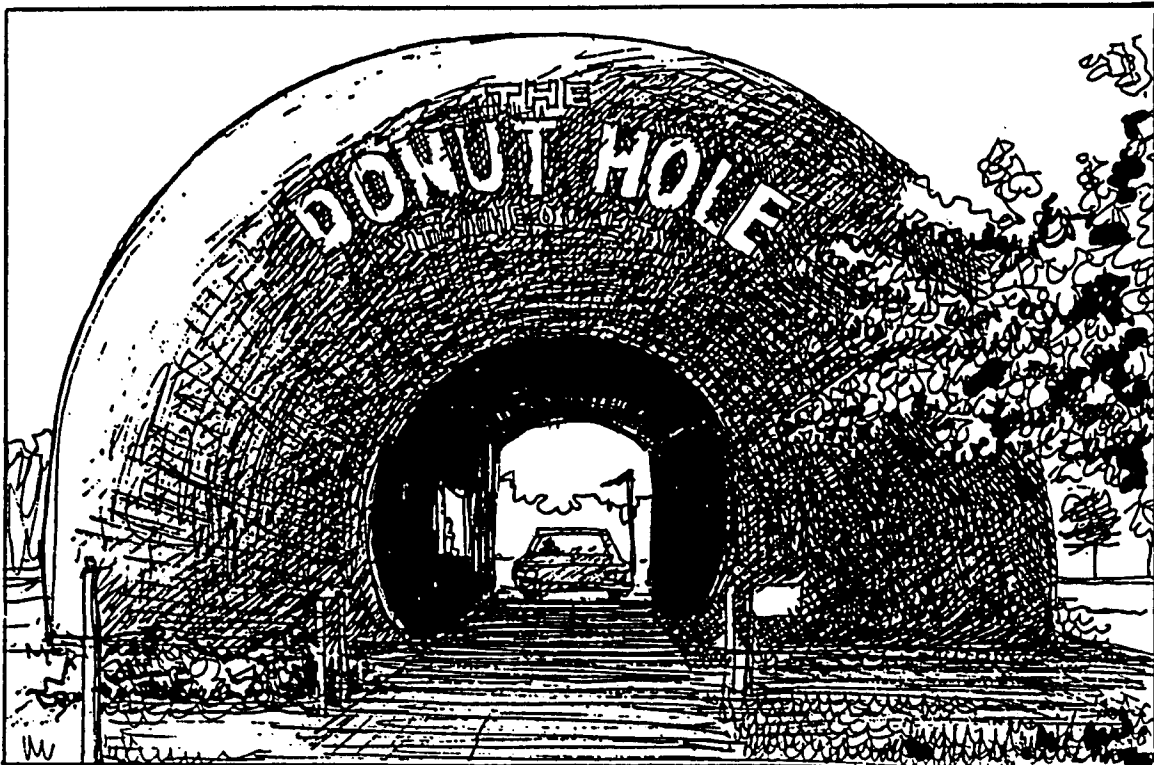


Fig. 11: House in the form of a horse, Gargaliani, Greece (Drawing on a photo from Schuyt and Elffers' *Fantastic Architecture*)

Architecture
can be
"referential"

Fig. 12: A doughnut from a land of giants, La Puente, California (drawing on a photo by Charles Jencks' *Bizarre Architecture*, 1979,



II THE FANTASTIC IN THE MIND: THE LITERARY APPROACH

Just as their colleagues in the field of architecture, writers about the fantastic in literature seem to agree on the point that the first difficulty presented by the subject appears as soon as they try to define it. Yet, whereas the former have tended to avoid the obstacle by substituting it with *ad hoc* classifications (thus leaving the problem not only unsolved but untouched), literary theorists have explored the origin of the difficulties and in this way have produced some relevant insights into the nature of the problem.

2.1 Fantasy and the Fantastic: the sorrows of definitions

According to Rosemary Jackson (1981), perhaps the most widely quoted of the modern theorists in the field, it is "fantasy's association with desire" (p. 1) which makes the fantastic so difficult to define although, paradoxically, its value seems to reside, precisely, in its "resistance to definition, in its free-floating... qualities" (p. 1). With more flair for the poetic, Held (1977) has located the origin of the problem in the fantastic's being "halfway between the real and the unreal, in that intangible zone in the twilight... where the limits of form get mixed with one another, in Victor Hugo's 'other side of the dream', in Carroll's 'other side of the mirror'..." (p. 39). For Thompson (1982), definitions of the fantastic have tended to "a vagueness that obscures as much as it clarifies" (p. 182), because the fantastic as a genre relies upon the contradiction of describing events which violate the rules of our universe, yet bearing an intelligible relationship with it.

It was precisely the discovery of the difficulties of defining the fantastic ontologically which led most of the theorists to attack the problem as a function of the dichotomy between fantasy and reality, or, more specifically, of the role of the former in relation to the latter.

Although this attitude cannot be generalized -- authors such as Bleiver (1948) found the difficulties so overwhelming that he ended by admitting his "ignorance," whereas Swinfen (1984), like his architectural colleagues, settled for approaches focussing on themes -- it has been the most common. Within this approach, the emphasis has varied from fantasy's therapeutic value and ethic problems, to its role in providing new insights into reality. Within the first group, Irwin (1976) sees fantasy as an essentially therapeutic activity of make-believe, disconnected from credence, truth or even moral issues; for Manlove (1982), on the contrary, fantasy tends to be moral in character, depicting the different natures of good and evil, and essentially concerned with viewing conduct in ethic terms. Within the second group, the view-span moves from the limits of fantasy to its significance in political terms. Thus, Zeagles (1985) sees fantasy as an extravagance of the imaginative faculty within the constraints of human nature and world views, while for Hume (1984), fantasy is any departure from consensus reality, an impulse "manifested in innumerable variations, from monster to metaphor" (p.19).

Like Zeagles and Hume, Plank (1985) also recognizes the dependence of fantasy's creation upon the framework provided by the history of ideas or, more precisely, on the perceptions of accepted reality. In this context, the fantastic is a re-statement of the real world, a re-structuration which uses the building blocks of accepted reality. Yet, Plank goes much further by stating that the assignment of validity to the images created by fantasy is the result of a "politics of the intellect" related to the technological, commercial or political power of a culture, since it is the latter which, ultimately, defines what is real and what is fantastic. Power, whether academic, scientific, military or politic, validates itself through its claim to be real, true and right. Thus, in Plank's view, it is not accidental that tyrants claim a monopoly on reality which they try to maintain by the army, the courts, the official science etc., and that the greatest exercise of fantasy in western history, the surrealist movement, "struck at the roots of bourgeois authority and the bourgeois concept of reality" (p. 80). From this perspective, Plank points out, fantasy is not only an attempt to escape

from an unacceptable cultural condition but also a return to a kind of primitive epistemology. In this sense, through the optic of Levy-Strauss, fantasy can be seen as a valid view of the world and as a glimpse into a primordial kind of world organization. It is not surprising, then, that cubism and surrealism, making revolutionary claims, were concerned with "primitive" art.

Even more radical than Plank's is Rosemary Jackson's position, for she not only sees the role of fantasy as unveiling hidden aspects of reality but also its connection with the unconscious. In her view, as mentioned, fantastic literature is a "literature of desire, which seeks what is experienced as absence and loss" (p. 45). In this way, the fantastic, by opening up to disorder, illegality, what lies outside the law and the dominant system of values, contributes to unveiling the basis on which the prevailing cultural order rests. Thus the fantastic "traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent" (Jackson, 1984, p. 4). Moreover, this role is furthered by fantasy's constant dealing with unconscious material, since "it is precisely in the unconscious that social structures and 'norms' are reproduced and sustained within us, and only by re-directing attention to this area can we begin to perceive ways in which the relations between society and the individual are fixed" (p. 5).

Between these two trends it is possible to identify a third, which emphasizes the role played by fantasy and fantastic artistic creation in relation to the unconscious. Within this group, Schlobin (1982) considers fantasy works as the most creative of "imaginative acts; for fantasy's reliance on the impossible and the empirically unknown requires less imitation than mimetic art;" by transcending the limits of both the naturally possible and the morally acceptable, it is the form of art which comes closest to creation *ex-nihilo*.

According to Schlobin, J.C. Jung identifies fantasy in its psychological inception and its descent into artistic media as a "self-

justifying biological function" that is the "natural life of the psyche" (Schlobin, 1982, p. xiv). Singer (1976) considers that fantasy makes available insights that go beyond possible experience. Wolfe (1982), following Freud and Bachelard, considers fantasy to be "closer to day-dreaming or reveries than to cognitive thought" (p. 30). Yet, this "un-reality function," being, as it were, socially constructed, gains some of its power from socially determined structures.

Le Guin (1975), following Jungian theory, points out that fantasy, myths and tales are like dreams: they speak from the unconscious to the unconscious and in the language of the unconscious, through symbols and archetypes. Although in literature they are expressed in words, they work the way music does: they short-circuit verbal reasoning and go straight to the thoughts that lie too deep for us to be aware of them. The fact that they cannot be translated fully into the language of reason should not be taken as a lack of meaning: independently of language they are "profoundly meaningful, and usable -- practical -- in terms of ethic, of insight, of growth" (p. 62).

2.2 The fantastic as experience

If the fantastic is so difficult to define ontologically, most literary theorists seem to ask, is it not because it is primarily an "experience"? Otherwise, where does the sense of fantastic come from? If the function of fantasy is to unveil reality, to reveal what is behind consensus reality, then what is the fantastic? A "state?" Or a "situation?"

"What is this that gets inside me and hits my heart without hurting it? On the one hand I remain petrified; on the other I burn; I am petrified in the measure in which I am different from the unknown; I burn in the measure I am like it"

It is in this way that Saint Augustine describes the religious feeling; but, asks Schneider (1974), affinities and discrepancies aside, does not this description apply also to the fantastic? For the fantastic

too comes from our anxieties and in spite of that we feel pleasure in it, replaying our fears. This is so, according to Schneider, because the fantastic allows us to express ourselves completely, yet it surpasses us by going beyond the limits of our senses or reason. This transgression can take place by means of terror, humor, dreams or the marvellous; but always the fantastic takes us from the known to the unknown, from the familiar to what we see for the first time. But if it can do that it is because something within us has already accepted it, and this is precisely the part of us that artists and writers address. For they do not care too much about being "understood" but wish to be "believed." If their spell works, the world for us will change: We will see the reverse of things, the dark side of the moon. So Schneider, following Georges Sand, sees the world of the fantastic as one which is not outside or up or down but at the bottom of everyone and, ultimately, the soul of all reality. Consequently, the fantastic is "the art of transcending anguish, hallucination and fixed ideas" (p. 36).

The themes of the fantastic come from the beginnings of time but they are always "humanity," for dreams join together every man who imagines and desires, make familiar forbidden lands and lost civilizations. Thus, from the experiential standpoint, the world of the fantastic, is, in Schneider's view, transcendental; being "the liturgy of the ephemeral, like what cannot be said" (p. 20), it makes us trespass the limits of our world and enter into an order which has affinities with the metaphysical and the sacred. Schneider goes so far as to affirm that the fantastic is the form which the sense of the sacred takes in times of scepticism. Yet, if the fantastic does not establish a science, a philosophy or a moral it is because it shocks the practical as well as the speculative reasoning; if it exists, it is ultimately because we hold beliefs that reason cannot destroy, and which the unconscious keeps as images and symbols.

In an era in which the eye of the camera has replaced our eyes to the point of turning the world into a phantasmagoric place, the fantastic is needed to keep our sanity. This is so because, like poetry, to

which it is akin, the fantastic connects us with the unconscious and the dark sources of life. For Schneider the fantastic is not completely different from realism. Both develop around the same point: man with his passions, his fears and his dreams.

But if Schneider has been among the most poetic and the most extreme of the writers about the experience of the fantastic, he is not the only one. In fact, the "experience" of the fantastic very often has been in the crucial element in the search for a definition. Thus, for Schlobin (1979), "experience" is at the very root of the fantastic, from the root of fantasy itself, since the latter springs "from the insights of an individual loyal to his own experience of value" (p. xxvi). In this sense the fantastic represents an effort to make sense of areas of experience which have not been lived directly, but which we feel to be meaningful beyond rational understanding.

Yet, it is perhaps for Todorov (1973), one of the first theorists of the subject, that the relevance of experience reaches the highest point, for he puts more emphasis on the subject who experiences than in the object of the experience. In Todorov's view, the fantastic occupies the duration of the uncertainty or "hesitation" between feeling that one is being the victim of an illusion of the senses or else that reality is suddenly controlled by laws unknown to our familiar world; yet this hesitation occurs in a world that is our world. This distinction is important, for it leads to one of the most common themes in the literature, i.e. the "spatialization" of the fantastic reflected in the antinomy "our world-other worlds," also crucial to experience.

Pricket (1980) values the fantastic creation of "other worlds" for providing an area of internal space, whether for escape or for renewal, and in this sense the fantastic becomes "a place," a Xanadu, from where one re-emerges "other" or "enlightened." Like Pricket, Yarrow (1985) sees the fantastic as having an enlightening function, but it seems far less gentle than Pricket had suggested. In Yarrow's view, the entrance to "other worlds" proposed by the fantastic rather appears as a

threat or a challenge, just by the fact of being "other." However, in spite of their appearance, those worlds are an analogy for, or a mirror image or a revelation of, the everyday one. Hence, they offer an opportunity to use one's imagination, which means sidestepping habitual frames of reference and seeing what else there is, perhaps a new perspective or a change in the functioning of consciousness. In this sense the fantastic could be seen as yielding "the very idea of freedom" for "it brings us closer to being agents constituting a world as opposed to being mere empirical recorders of it" (p. 86).

In the same line of thought, Pierce (1980) and Milner (1982) focus on the dialectical nature of the fantastic. Pierce, following Lovecraft, sees the contradiction in our attraction and repulsion of the fantastic. We are fascinated for the same reasons that we are terrified by it: because of its unknown quality. We are afraid, yet we want to know what it is, because by knowing we may come to terms with it. Milner sees the fantastic as originating in two poles: the desire to bypass the limits that circumscribe human existence and the anguish of entering a universe whose dynamics "does not have the same limitations and the same regulations of real life" (p. 139).

On the other hand, Rosemary Jackson, like Todorov (1973), sees in the fantastic a certain fusion of the mental-physical duality. In their view, what the fantastic does is to apply to the physical world the relationships which we are able to establish mentally among objects, and in doing so the division between the mental and the physical becomes blurred. But they warn us, this collapse of the limits between matter and mind is not without danger, for it is also found to be one of the characteristics of schizophrenia, the drug experience, the world of infants and the world-view of the mystic. These distinctions are relevant not only because they relate psychological and contextual aspects of the fantastic (an approach largely neglected in architectural literature), but also because, by pointing out the importance of experience in determining the existence of the fantastic, it opens the way to new forms of looking upon the problem from the architectural standpoint. The

close association that seems to exist between the fantastic and pathological or extreme realms of experience, however, has received more attention from theorists in the visual arts, so it will be discussed in more detail in chapter III.

Summarizing, it can be said that the "experience" of the fantastic may have at least two fundamental implications for understanding the fantastic itself. One is immediately related to the "existence" of the fantastic through the experience of the fantastic as a "world of its own" while the other refers to the function of the experience of the fantastic in relation to the experience of our own world. Concerning the first, it is possible to say that if one accepts Todorov's point of view, the "existence" of the fantastic is a function of whether or not a "hesitation" is experienced. This may imply also that the fantastic is "temporary," that it lasts only as long as its subject "hesitates" between one world or another.

The second implication could be seen simply as a corollary of the first. If the fantastic has taken place, its world, no matter how temporary or short-lived, could provide us with new ways of seeing our own everyday world. The experience of the fantastic, however, may not be an easy one. It may imply fear, and the discovery of aspects of ourselves that we prefer to ignore; only that it may not be very easy for us to escape, for we can feel repelled as much as we can feel attracted to it. In any case, it is not likely to leave us untouched, and this may well be what we fear most.

2.3 Fantasy and meaning

"Finite provinces of meaning" is what Berger and Luckman (1966) call the alternative realities of art, religion and myth, and according to Wolfe (1982), the term may also be applied in a more limited sense to describe the impossible worlds of artistic fantasy. For Wolfe meaning is an essential factor of the "irreality function" of fantasy; it is what sustains our interest in the impossible, long after our cognitive apprehension of impossibility has passed, long after we have resolved

the "momentaneous hesitation" that Todorov called "the fantastic." Yet, for Wolfe this meaning is based on the relationship between the "irreality function" of fantasy and a reality as a social construct from which the former gains some of its power by appealing to the "affective sense of the impossible" (p. 6).

This "appeal" has been explicitly addressed by Lesser (1957), who pointed out that, consciously or unconsciously, we ferret out stories that shed light on our external problems or give form to our internal ones, providing an "objective correlative" for certain feelings. These "analogizing" fantasies seldom become conscious, for they are not only "inherently, perhaps inescapably symbolic" (p. 23), but also "plastic," and the same episode may produce quite different experiences. Furthermore, this "plasticity" also applies to the two agents of fiction, reader and writer, for the two psychic organizations never coincide completely. This gap may even be widened by some deficiency in skill in the writer or by some idiosyncrasy in the reader, or some factor in his immediate situation. In spite of this, "our participation in the fiction we enjoy is nearly always broader than we realize" (p. 240).

The search for meaning is also one of the central arguments in Hume's dismissal of realism in modern literature. According to Hume (1984), science has freed man from one kind of insignificance only to precipitate him into a far more complete state of aimlessness: the immensity of macrocosms and the complexity of subatomic microcosms alike make man aware of his pitiful finitude. So modern man craves for a meaningful relationship with a universe which, thus de-mythologized, shorn of both the divine and the demonic, "is not true of human experience" (p. 43). Given that we recognize meaning as internal to ourselves (and not as an external fixture) we can see why realism cannot be expected to supply that sense of meaning anymore. Insofar as realism concentrates on quasi-scientific objectivity, on the "what is there", on the "real" world, it cannot validly express value judgements, these being conditioned by human likes and dislikes. Hence neither science nor

realistic literature can give man that sense of meaning without which he is "ill equipped" to live.

But modern writers, by relying on both/and instead of on either/or, could refuse to label their fantasies as merely symbolic. "We are far too ignorant of right brain functions and of our unconscious to be able to prove that there is only one kind of truth, the scientific" (p. 50). According to Hume, it is difficult to say whether meaning is going to be found in a new sense of wonder, in a new human scale to measure and admire the infinite, as proposed by writers like Italo Calvino, or from a supernatural perspective, as proposed by Doris Lessing. Yet the challenge is here, awaiting the response of fantastic writers.

The apparent antinomy of Wolfe's and Hume's views deserves some discussion: both authors identify "meaning" as internal, but while in Wolfe it operates uni-directionally, i.e. from the individual's experiencing the affective value of the impossible towards reality (thus leaving reality unchanged), in Hume the search for meaning would take a step further: the inability of science to provide meaning would lead affects towards fantasy, hence to questioning the validity of reality as consensus. Yet, for a broad definition of fantasy both perspectives could be seen as extremes of the same spectrum, for the following reasons. First, as Timmerman (1983) has pointed out, "in fantasy, meaning is appropriated by the reader rather than given by the author" (p. 9). As in myths, it operates as a master key: you set it in the door you like. Second, as Le Guin points out, fantasy is "a journey." It is a journey into the subconscious mind, just as is psychoanalysis. Only, as psychoanalysis, "It can be dangerous; and it will change you." Third, if one accepts Todorov's idea of the 19th century's conception of the fantastic, i.e. that the fantastic is the uneasy conscience of the prevailing positivism, then it is this negative rationality which constitutes the modern meaning of the fantastic. In relation to the latter, Jackson (1981) prefers to use the term "non-signification," which refers to the impossibility of the fantastic to fix a definite meaning since it tends towards

the non-conceptual, or rather the pre-conceptual. This is why she, following Todorov, maintains that the fantastic cannot be placed alongside allegory or poetry, for it resists the conceptualization of the first as well as the metaphorical structures of the second. So Jackson's non-signification is not different from Lesser's plasticity or Hume's characterization as "internal to ourselves."

2.4 The fantastic as "object" and "place"

Perhaps one of the most frequent references to be found in writings about fantastic literature is to the "the other worlds" it creates. These worlds have two aspects which have monopolized the attention: one is their function as "revealers" of the hidden aspects of our "real" world; the other concerns the mechanisms by which they are created. For what makes a world "fantastic"? What are its "constituting elements?"

Plank (1970), studying the metaphysical fantasies in Jorge Luis Borges' work, sees fantasy as "the absence of a logical and empirical hierarchy or order of things which makes the world of objects appear 'bizarre,' 'a labyrinth,' a 'fantastic place.' Thus, what produces the fantastic is the fascination provoked by the existence of objects separated from the rigid control of a general intellectual construct or a disciplined empirical order" (p. 54). Similarly, Yarrow (1980) maintains that the creation of the fantastic involves the production of non-existent objects or actual objects presenting improbable relationships or combinations. Symonds (1980), who links the fantastic with the grotesque, also sees the fantastic as implying "a certain exaggeration or distortion of nature. What we call fantastic in art results from an exercise of the capricious fancy, playing with things which it combines into arbitrary, non-existent forms" (p. 243).

Landow (1979), on the other hand, when considering techniques to achieve the fantastic, points out that, as Tennyson and Ruskin well knew, "rendering objects in more precise detail than they are normally perceived, can produce an hallucinatory effect, for such a precision changes

our relationship with our world" (p. 35). Thus, in Landow's view "it is the transforming of usual perception and not the detail itself which is crucial" (p. 31). For this reason, the artist "can surround a more or less precisely outlined object by hazy forms and thus produce a powerful suggestion of strange, unnatural movement" (p. 32).

Conversely, Lovecraft (quoted in Todorov, 1963, pp. 34-5) argues that what renders the fantastic authentic, lays not so much in the author's intentions or the mechanisms of the plot but in the creation of an "atmosphere," of a specific impression which has to provoke fear.

Taking most of the previous concepts one step further, Jackson (1981) adheres to the Freudian view that human imagination is quite incapable of inventing anything and can, at best, combine components which are strange to one another. In this context, then, fantasy is seen as an act of re-combination of the real, for "fantasy is not to do with inventing another non-human world: it is not transcendental. It has to do with inverting elements of this world, re-combining its constituting features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently new, 'other' and 'different'" (p. 8). Thus Jackson does not negate that fantastic literature creates "other worlds," as common belief maintains; what she insists on is the profoundly and basically "human" character of those worlds, whether they are concerned with gods (myths) or talking beasts (fables and fairy tales), for it is precisely from these worlds of reversed realities that we can see the "veiled" aspects of our own.

Furthermore, as was pointed out when discussing the experience of the fantastic, Jackson maintains that the fantastic tends to dissolve structures, moving towards that ideal of "undifferentiation" between the self and the other which corresponds to the stage of magical and animistic thought typical of primitive man and the young child. On a more abstract level, Coleridge (1817) had also emphasized the dissolving quality embedded in that "re-creating the real" which is the fantastic as

a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and place, and blended and modified by choice.

Yet, that "blurring" of limits does not seem to be limited only to a psychological experience. As was pointed out in chapter I, Arthaud (1970), when discussing "dream palaces," emphasized the role played by the forest and the fog in "dissolving" the rational and leading to the creation of dwellings or places closer to dream images than to everyday reality. Spatially, the effect of both fog and forest is similar since they tend to blur the angles and straighten the lines of buildings, thus blending architecture and environment. When neither of these two elements is present it is often the builder who, through the use of pebbles, shells or pieces of broken china attempts to fuse architecture with its surroundings. Thus, the external appearance of a fantastic world is achieved with elements which are common to ours; only that in the fantastic, the scale as well as the laws of combinations have been changed: limits have lost precision, and with it the identity of the object and our certitude when faced with it; it may respond to laws we do not know and the implicit uncertainty may border on fear. The world of the fantastic is a world on the frontier of our knowledge, and we enter it at our own risk. But what is for us more perplexing is that we cannot even count on what we consider the supreme faculty in our world: our own intelligence.

In fairy tales, it is often the naive, or even the downright stupid, who gets away with the treasure and the princess. Like primitive man confronted with the forces of nature, we are at the mercy of the unknown; we have to trust the heart, the naked soul, as *dépourvue* as an infant, while our reason, as trained and well armored as a knight, may prove to be not only a useless but also dangerous companion; and it is in that contradiction that we collapse: having lost the "grace" of the infant, we seldom have the power to oblige reason to go beyond itself. This may explain why we tend to dismiss the fantastic *a priori*, and even scorn those who venture into it. "Other worlds," "frontier spaces" are

not easy places; but then our loss may be the knowledge that awaits us in them.

2.5 The fantastic and the sorrows of classification

Just as their architectural colleagues, critics of the fantastic in literature have tried to classify the literary products which they considered as belonging to their domain. Yet, despite the advantage that a considerable body of theoretical work gave them over their architectural peers, the task did not prove to be an easy one. The existence of different theories made it more difficult to identify the range, or more precisely, the limits, of the "fantastic." However, in terms of its contributions to other fields, the search for a classification could prove to be one of the richest, for not only does it introduce some precision in an otherwise nebulous field but it also shows how defining the genre can lead to new insights.

Todorov, as already mentioned, is inclined to adopt a rather narrow range based upon experience, restricting it to the duration of a certain "hesitation" in which the reader decides whether or not what he perceives is derived or not from reality. As soon as this hesitation is superseded we can go in two directions: towards the uncanny or towards the marvellous. In the uncanny, the events do not contradict the laws of nature but are extraordinary, shocking, singular and disturbing: summarily, the exceptional. But the uncanny fulfils only one condition of the fantastic: the provocation of certain reactions. In the marvellous (which, like the uncanny, does not have definite boundaries), the supernatural elements do not provoke a particular reaction neither in the characters (of the narrative) nor in the reader. In the marvellous Todorov includes the "instrumental marvellous" which refers to gadgets and technological developments not yet achieved in the period described but perhaps plausible (hence the inclusion of science-fiction in this group).

It is necessary to note that, as the fantastic has the duration of a "hesitation," it leads "a life full of dangers and may evaporate at any

moment" (p. 44), and this so much so that it seems to be in a zone located at the border between the marvellous and the uncanny, rather than constituting a genre in itself. So, Todorov adds:

We may ask how valid a definition of genre may be if it permits a work to change genre by a simple sentence like "At that moment he awakened and saw the walls of his room..." But there is no reason not to think it as an evanescent genre. Such a category, moreover, has nothing exceptional about it. The classic definition of the present, for example, describes it as a pure limit between past and future. The comparison is not gratuitous. The marvellous corresponds to an unknown phenomenon, never seen yet, still to come -- hence to a future; in the uncanny, on the other hand, we refer the inexplicable to known facts, to a previous experience and thereby the past. As for the fantastic itself, the hesitation which characterizes it cannot be situated but in the present (p. 41).

Rabkin's classification, (Rabkin, 1979) on the other hand, is much more vague than Todorov's, but also based on "experience." For Rabkin, a text "may seem more or less fantastic to different readers or even to the same reader at different times or during different readings of the same text" (p. 161). Furthermore, in Rabkin's view, the fantastic is a continuum between fantasy and reality; a world which offers a complete alternative to our world (like the world of fairy tales) is less fantastic than one in which the two worlds interpenetrate.

Like Rabkin, Timmermann (1983) also admits the "plasticity" of the field, but instead of setting up a criterion of classification he adopts the thematic approach of the early French school and distinguishes between pairs of closely related concepts, some of which may provide some useful insights for the study of fantastic landscapes. The first relevant distinction concerns allegory and myth. According to Timmerman, allegory suggests specific meanings, which are deliberately patterned by the author. Into an allegory man puts what he already knows. Into a myth, on the contrary, he puts what he does not yet know and could not come to know in any other way. The second distinction is between fantasy and science-fiction. Fantasy involves "another world" to which we are

transported *via* a magic device; in sci-fi the arrival to that "other world" (which can be good (utopia) or bad (dystopia)) depends on a technical device.

Zahorski and Boyer (1982), referring to an earlier work by Bikien, classify fantastic works according to their setting or, in other words, according to the type of "other worlds" in which the action takes place. Thus they distinguish between two main categories: primary or low fantasy, and secondary or high fantasy worlds. "Low fantasy" works are those set in a conventional here and now; they contain non-rational phenomena, i.e. creatures and events that cannot be explained scientifically or rationally according to our norms of what is real. In the secondary worlds, or high fantasy, there are explanations which are plausible, albeit only in those other world settings, and which can point to a magical (fairy tales) or supernatural (myth-based) causality.

Crossley (1982) included in the latter "utopias," since, like "secondary worlds," utopias also project an alternative reality meant to be distinct from that of primary worlds. A Utopia too has its internal rules and laws which give it completeness and self-sufficiency. This is a world which the mind can enter but it demands not only the "suspension of disbelief" but also the activation of desire. Crossley, however, makes a basic distinction between Fairy and Utopia: Both are situated in a "wistful landscape," though Fairy is more likely to be represented as a nostalgically authoritarian kingdom of desire, and Utopia — in principle if not always in execution — a more egalitarian community. In Crossley's view, the pure fantasy story does not alter our primary world; it simply changes the way in which we see ordinary reality. Utopian fiction affects us differently: "We visit a more rational, more humane society and return to our own world troubled and distressed with things as they are" (p. 182), and we want to change what we see.

Lawler (1978), writing about science-fiction, almost equates "utopia" with "fantasy" and presents Eden as the original Utopia and Fairy as the foremost, although the latter is, by no means, a perfect or safe

world for mortals to live in. Related to fairy are the "pastoral utopias," worlds of leisure, rural courtship and the simple virtues associated with country life. Among utopias, Lawler mentions the utopian lands of "lotto-eaters" (drug-world), the philosophical (Plato's republic), social (More's, Wright's) and the scientific, created by the application of scientific principles to overcome human imperfections. However, Lawler notes, "misapplied, the very forces that are employed in the hope of making an earthly paradise, also can make a hell" (p. 423). These "hells" are the "dystopia" and the "anti-utopia," which are often used as synonyms, although they are different. Anti-utopia is a world of disorder, repression and the like. Dystopia is the world of decayed utopia, what a society may become, not so much from absence of societal planning as from the very success of such planning though conceived on the basis of false views of man.

This lengthy presentation shows clearly the difficulties of finding appropriate definitions for the "fantastic." Yet it has introduced distinctions which, along with Todorov's concept of the "fleeting fantastic" may prove to be useful in the analysis of the "fantastic" in architecture.

2.6 Fantasy and fear

The association of the fantastic with fear is one of the constant themes in the theories about the subject and one of the main causes to which its marginality is attributed. Theorists on the fantastic have distinguished two types of fear: one is fear as a component of the experience of the fantastic, or rather as a "condition" for the existence of the fantastic. This is the fear of the unknown that we experience in the fantastic world, in its "atmosphere," to use Lovecraft's terminology. Since this type of fear has received the greatest attention from theorists in the visual arts, it will be discussed in next chapter. The other type is the fear of fantasy as an activity, the origin of the "anti-fantastic" feelings that Le Guin attributes to high-technology societies. Given its con-

nection with the marginality of the fantastic, this has been more commonly addressed by literary theorists.

According to Lesser (1957), empirical studies have shown that this fear originates from two sources: firstly, fantasies are feared because of their wistful nature. The "wished" may be feared on its own account because it arouses ideas of punishment and retaliation. Secondly, there is the fear of confusing fiction with reality, fiction with truth. "Although we come to take it for granted, the ability to discriminate between fantasy and fact is one of the most significant of all psychic achievements" (p. 6). However, the extent to which people fear fantasy varies enormously. People with weak egos or who doubt about their ability to control instinctual drives are likely to have a deep dread of it. Even people who believe that they are immune to fantasy may under special circumstances -- e.g. a nightmare -- experience fear. However, the extent to which fantasy is feared is likely to vary through different periods and cultures.

A common reason for people's fear of fantasy lies, in Lesser's view, in fantasy's connection with what he calls "the principle of pleasure." If fantasy is seen as "the successor of play," then the fantasizing activity of an adult runs the risk of being taken as a regression. A child does not need to conceal his play, and while play may be solitary, it is just as frequently social. In contrast, adults tend to hide their fantasies from others. They believe that they have no business daydreaming, that they are supposed to be concerning themselves with the "important things of life," such as earning a living, and so they are ashamed of their fantasies (often fulfilling egotistic or erotic wishes) because "either intuitively or as a result of experience they know that their fantasies will please no one but themselves" (p. 11).

Lesser, however, fails to establish a contextual nexus for his psychological insights. This might be due to his reluctance to connect, as Jackson, Schneider and Plank have done, the reactions towards fantasy from politics or repressive aspects of culture. Unfortunately, how the sense of guilt created by fantasizing could be a successor of that "bondage of the

mind" (Pevsner, quoted in Hocke, 1957, p. 54) which, created by the Counter-Reformation and Calvinism, gave place to Mannerism in the 16th century, does not seem to be one of Lesser's concerns. The problem is that by adopting this attitude, he implicitly accepts the stigmatization of fantasy in a society that promotes individualism but punishes with guilt an individualistic activity like fantasizing for being outside the economic circuit.

A less profound but more contextual perspective is provided by Le Guin (1979), who bluntly accepts fantasy as a game but one played for very high stakes, because it employs archetypes which, as Jung warned us, are "dangerous things." So, fantasy, "which in the psychological sense is a universal and essential faculty of the human mind [should not be confounded with infantilism and pathological regression" (p. 69) as tend to do those who "seem to think that shadows are something we can simply do away with, if we can only turn on enough electric lights" (p. 69). For this reason Le Guin concludes that dragons are more dangerous and a good deal more common than bears, and that "those who refuse to listen to dragons are probably doomed to spend their lives acting out the nightmares of the politicians...[for] we like to think that we live in daylight but half of the world is always dark; and fantasy, like poetry, speaks the language of the night" (p. 84).

2.7 The Fantastic and marginality

In spite of a fairly common acknowledgement of the "universality of fantasy, [of] its pervasiveness in human culture" (Rabkin, 1985, p. 3), the marginality of the fantastic in literature has been recognized and in some cases even considered a positive feature. As pointed out earlier, the marginality of the fantastic has partially been attributed to the fear that fantasy inspires in us. According to Lesser (1957) this marginality may be further encouraged by our greater willingness to study matters connected with the physical environment and our physical abilities than with our psychic and affective life.

Schneider (1974), on the other hand, has emphasized the positive value of fantasy's marginality. "If the fantastic were a recognized value, it would lose all its magic. It needs to inspire hostility, contempt, to gain its advantage ... It never succeeds more than in times when everything seems to announce its death" (p. 24). The more it contradicts rationalism, the more it creates apprehension and uneasiness. It is precisely when the dominating power condemns it as subversive that it haunts the greatest number of consciences. But, according to Schneider, even in liberal countries the situation of the fantastic is a precarious one and it needs to disguise itself in the form of nursery tales or superstition to find its way to the spirits. But it always does; as Schneider poetically puts it: "we were not sure that the fantastic was alive, and there it is, hidden in the ship: the clandestine passenger of literature" (p. 30).

Yet, it is in Rosemary Jackson's work (1981) that the notion of marginality acquires particular importance through the "subversive role" that the author attributes to the fantastic. In Jackson's view, the fact that throughout history fantasy has been locked away as something inadmissible and shameful is due to dominant "notions of reality." As she puts it: "Any social structure tends to exclude as 'evil' anything radically different from itself or which threatens it with destruction, and this conceptualization, this naming of difference as evil, is a significant sociological gesture" (p. 52). This not only applies to objects but also to individuals: "A stranger, an outsider, a social deviant, anyone speaking in an unfamiliar language or acting in unfamiliar ways, anyone whose origins are unknown or who has extraordinary powers, tends to be set apart, as other, as evil" (ib.). Furthermore "strangeness precedes the naming of it as evil: the other is defined as evil precisely because of his/her difference and a possible power to disturb the familiar and the known" (pp. 52-3).

According to Jackson, this ideological gesture is not dissimilar to "culture's silencing [of] unreason" (p. 55) or what Foucault calls "transgressions," and this is so because the concept of evil is relative and changes with shifts in cultural fears and values. It is then in the frame

of "culture" and "reality" that fantasy has a subversive function consisting of questioning nominal unities of time, space and character as well as the possibility and honesty of fictional representation of those unities. "Like the grotesque, with which it overlaps, the fantastic can be seen as an art of estrangement, resisting closure, opening structures which categorize experience in the name of a 'human reality'" (p. 175). By drawing attention to the relative nature of these categories the fantastic "moves towards a dismantling on the 'real', most particularly of the concept of 'character' and its ideological assumptions, mocking and parodying a blind faith in psychological coherence ..." (pp. 175-6). Thus, the fantastic, existing on either side of the dominant cultural axis, "hollows out the real, revealing its absence, its great 'Other', its unspoken and its unseen" (p. 176).

2.8 The Fantastic and domestication

Devoid of its marginality and of the fear it can inspire, having achieved the "equilibrium" that Koh advocated, is there any fantastic left? Although this issue has not captured the attention of literary theorists as much as the problem of marginality, it has not been completely neglected.

Ziegler (1985) sees the process of "sanitization" of the fantastic as a "neutralizer." In his view, before the brothers Grimm "dreamed up" (sic) the German folk tales and turned them into children's stories, the forest and its creatures (including humans) were dangerous and frightening. "Now that Walt Disney has sanitized them, the stage is set for a new breakthrough" (p. 105). This assertion may be a little exaggerated, since Disney did not "sanitize" the whole fantastic but rather established well fenced "worlds" of the sanitized type. So, if there is anything in need of a "breakthrough" it would rather be research aiming at finding out why there is such a demand for this kind of make-believe worlds.

Yarrow (1985) expresses a similar concern: a "sanitized fantastic" will not provoke the violence which is sometimes needed to shake us out of habits dulled by subtle forms of persuasion. As Timmermann (1983) points

out, reflecting on Clarke's end of childhood: "Having become mere pawns, stripped of childhood wonder, imaginations and stories, reduced to tamed domesticity, do we have any humankind at all?" (p. 91).

2.9 Conclusion. Dragons Are Not Meant To Be House Dogs

The aim of this chapter has been to identify and to gain insight into the main issues of the "fantastic" by reviewing the literature in the field in which it has perhaps reached the highest theoretical development. Like architectural writers, literary theorists have found the "fantastic" very difficult to define, yet by exploring the origin of the difficulties they have shed some light on the nature of the problem.

The first issue concerning the fantastic is its "borderline" character, "half-way between the real and the unreal," where the "limits of form get mixed with one another". Yet it is clear that the fantastic constitutes a literary genre as well as a form of experience, two aspects which are closely related.

As a literary genre, the fantastic is characterized either by the creation of "other worlds" or by the introduction, in a world that is ours, of an event which contradicts the natural laws, and in which we experience a "hesitation," a "momentaneous suspension of disbelief". Yet, there is no consensus among authors concerning this issue. Some theorists would consider "fantastic" any world which is different from ours; thus the world of the fairy or the "marvellous," for instance, which represents a world "completely other," which defies all the laws of our world but is coherent in itself, is part of the "fantastic" realm; yet, for others, the truly fantastic only occurs when there is a disruption in the laws governing the world, when both the character in the story and the reader experience a "hesitation" about the "reality" of the instant. For the latter, the fairy world, the world of fable and allegories are not "fantastic". We expect the marvellous, the impossible, to occur in those

worlds. They are "fantasy" worlds, but they are not "fantastic". Still the gradations are rather subtle.

Cinderella's world is the world of marvels. Rip van Winkle's, so familiar, is less clear: when he returns to his village and cannot recognize anyone, is it because the marvellous (the world of fairy) has irrupted in the real world? Or is it that the laws that govern the passing of time have been suspended, so that while a few hours on the hill where Rip slept corresponds to decades elsewhere? In both alternatives there is a disruption: if Rip has really been abducted by the fairies, it means that the world of the "marvellous" can irrupt into our real world, creating confusion and disorder; if, on the other hand, he only dreamt the fairies, then the time on the hill was passing unbelievably slower than in the rest of the land; in both cases there is a hesitation, a doubt whether what is seen is "real" or a "vision," a mirage, the "impossible" turned into its opposite.

Most authors seem to favor the view that the "truly" fantastic implies a disruption of nature's laws; those who include the marvellous as part of the fantastic generally set a category for the "pure" fantastic, defined as above. As we have seen, authors such as Todorov have limited the fantastic to the duration of this "hesitation," of the "momentaneous suspension of disbelief" which we experience when faced with what we cannot explain. This, in turn, has lead to one of the most daring perspectives of the fantastic, namely its conception as a "relative" or "changing," "temporal" genre (c.f. 2.6): a story may be fantastic at one moment and then become realistic. In this sense, as Todorov pointed out, "the fantastic, as a literary genre, leads a life full of dangers". And this is so because the fantastic is basically "experience."

The fantastic as "experience" also has two aspects: one, as mentioned, involves the hesitation we experience or feel in the act of living the fantastic. The other is the experience the fantastic offers of seeing ourselves and our world in the perspective of "other worlds," and from this angle the ultimate experience of the fantastic is the question-

ing of "reality," what it is, how it is defined and by whom. In this sense the role played by the fantastic is a subversive one.

As will be seen in chapter III, this position is more commonly and strongly held by visual arts theorists, perhaps by virtue of the more definite "representational" character of painting, and by their stronger emphasis on fear as one of the basic elements in the experience of the fantastic. Yet, for both literary and art theorists, the questioning of reality is seen as one of the fundamental aspects of the fantastic. By showing the "other side of it," by dealing on the margins, the fantastic places us at a distance from where to question the validity of what we take for granted or accepted. It lets us experience to which point reality is the result of "consensus" rather than that of entelechy. By questioning reality, the fantastic becomes "subversive:" if what we take as reality is what culture and power systems define as such, then we may question those systems by situating ourselves "outside" them.

That is why most authors seem to object to the frequent imputation of "escapist literature" attributed to the fantastic: fantastic literature is not "escapist" in the sense of refusing to see the problems of our reality. The reader may appear to be "indulging" in "another world," while in fact he is taken there to see his own more clearly; to gain a "distance" that allows him to do so; to see the forest, instead of only the trees. Yet, this is not the only reason why the label of escapist has been attributed to the fantastic.

In our society, "fantasies" are often seen as childish and shameful. It is true that any literary work is the result of "fantasy," since it has to be imagined in order to "be". Yet, the degree of "seriousness" attributed to it seems to be a direct function of the measure in which the work in question utilizes the language of reason. A writer may receive due respect for creating characters and events and placing them in situations ranging from the realistic to the allegorical (when an "impossible" situation evidently serves to illustrate a real problem). But beyond this point, the work may lead a hazardous life, and the more so

the less it uses the language of reason to the advantage of the language of the unconscious, which most of the writers reviewed see as the language of the fantastic. Yet, in spite of the atmosphere of unreality that seems to surround the subject, it can be maintained said that the "worlds" of the fantastic are made with elements from our reality, only that they are arranged according to different laws or on an altered scale. The worlds thus created are usually "border places," i.e. places in which the limits between one world and another, between reality and dream, or reality and unreality, are hazy. The world of the fantastic is seldom an "orderly" world, and when it is, as in the worlds of utopia or dystopia, it is orderly only in appearance, for that order is often maintained at the cost of repression, torture, brain-washing or other forms of power abuse.

Because it contradicts rationalism, creating apprehension and uneasiness and haunting consciousness, the fantastic has been and continues to be a marginal genre, and this marginality is seen as positive: were it to become mainstream or commonplace, its disruptive, subversive power would disappear; domesticated, sanitized, dulled by habit, it would pass through us, as innocuous and irrelevant as muzak. In any case, the notion of marginality seems to be concomitant with the fantastic. Deprived of its marginality, well balanced and sanitized *à la* Koh, it may proliferate happily and become as loved and demanded in yuppie markets as a designer's rhododendron, but it will leave us in need of a new means to see the other side of our world.

This analysis opens several questions concerning the fantastic in architecture. First, as we have seen in chapter I, the fantastic in architecture has been treated as a fixed trait, i.e. that an object either is "fantastic" or it is not. Yet, could it not be that, as Todorov has suggested for literature, the architectural "fantastic" is also "temporary," and resides mainly in the observer's experience? If so, this may at least partially explain the diversity of the architectural objects which different authors have considered as to be "fantastic." The fantastic can, indeed, be a "flickering" genre, and the sense of the fantastic

mainly rooted in experience. Could this not be so in architecture as well?

Second, it seems obvious that if Koh (1983, c.f. 1.1.) proposed to introduce "fantasy" in architecture as a "mode," it is because he did not go beyond seeing a "need," without any ulterior consideration. For it may well be that, deprived of its marginality, the fantastic will become the companion of the plaster flamingo, blushing with domesticity in respectable front yards, and little by little losing, through familiarity, its shocking language and its subversive qualities. Qualities, it is necessary to remark, which neither Koh nor the other writers, seem to suspect existed. However, a discussion aiming to understand the fantastic in three dimensions can only be completed through the discussion of the fantastic in plastic art.

III THE "MATERIALIZED" FANTASTIC: the psychology of transformation of the "envisioned" into the "visible."

3.1 The fantastic and the visual arts

"Works of art are not mirrors but they share with mirrors the elusive magic of transformation which is so hard to put into words" Gombrich (1960) points out in his *Art and Illusion* (p. 12). So far, we have dealt with that realm of art which practices this "transformation" through the word. Non-dimensional building blocks, words, can create for us worlds in which the fantastic, that "hesitation," can be triggered by a gesture, by words pronounced by a character in a moment of abandon, of weakness, of despair: "I cannot understand you, there is nothing human in me," by a happening that is uncanny only in the context of a story.

Fantastic writers can create worlds which we "see" with our minds. But: can we see the "fantastic" with our eyes? Or does the process of transformation (from "visible into "visual," or from "visible" into "object"), as Joedicke (1962) maintained have a particular effect upon it?

3.1.1 Reason and fear

As was discussed in chapter II, writers in the literary field have emphasized the fantastic as a genre characterized by the creation of "other worlds," whereas writers in the field of art arrived at definitions in which the fantastic seems to be much closer to our everyday experience, as if it were only one step behind or ahead of our real world.

Brion (1961) sees the fantastic as an "amplification of the real in the way that surrealism is an amplification of the oneiric." Ragon (1967) connects it with the unusual, the uncommon or unexpected (*l'inso-*
lité). As soon as a touch of strangeness shows up in our life, the fantastic is not far away; that is why, from the beginnings of civilization, artists have tried to unlatch the fantastic through the unusual. In

Ragon's view, fantastic art is dominated by fear. As art, the fantastic is the result of interior visions, and "what seduces us is to see fixed on a canvas, paper or stone, the images of our obsessions, of our nightmares and our complexes" (p. 70). This is why, for Ragon, the fantastic cannot be "a school," but only the result of exacerbated individualities; it cannot be but the exception. For having ignored this fact, André Breton had gathered around him "no more than illustrators of poets" (p. 71). For Caillouis (1965), who, like Brion (1961) strictly calls fantastic those works which convey a sense of strangeness in every-day objects, the fantastic is primarily "anxiety (*inquiétude*) and rupture." Likewise, Roy (1960) sees the fantastic as a rupture with the natural order, with the logical development of facts or with our habits, with our unfounded anticipations, and in this sense its distinctive trait is that of being "the sudden emergence of the unusual, an anguishing tear in the recognized rules -- an Apparition."

Yet, the interest of Roy's perspective lies in his observations of the process of rational differentiation through which the fantastic can take place, in his emphasis on fear, in the "vindication" he sees implied in the arts, and in his introduction of the notion of "limits." In his view, the notion of the fantastic presupposes, first of all, a rational judgement. For young children everything is marvellous and nothing is fantastic: The difference between the marvellous and the fantastic is a difference *a posteriori*. Mankind first attempted to explain existence in terms of the marvellous, which is a logical explanation that nevertheless does not correspond to the reality of the sequence of the events. The fantastic, on the other hand, appears when there is a rupture in what reason, through the knowledge of the laws of nature, expects. But, as Roy notes, the categories of the fantastic and the marvellous are relative and changing: the fantastic of yesterday can be the reality of tomorrow. Yet, the fantastic cannot be confounded with magic: magic is a doctrine based on correspondences, while the fantastic is an occurrence whose result depends more on the perception of the observer than on the observed.

In Roy's view the frontiers between the fantastic and the bizarre are also uncertain: the bizarre is surprise, while the fantastic also implies "fear." The insistence on fear as a component of the fantastic is even more common among art writers than among their literary peers. The fear need not be a product of something "visible:" the "apparition" can be suspended in time; yet it is there, and the observer knows that. As Roy puts it, "until de Chirico, the fantastic was 'the apparition,' the monsters of Goya or Bosch. With de Chirico, we are at the instance 'before,' on the threshold of the irruption of the fantastic, on the frontiers of the menace" (p. 45). Thus the menace need not be real: if it is suggested, if the imagination captures it, then we are on the verge of the fantastic. But what ultimately makes that "menace" stand is none other than the notion of evil. In Roy's view, the only working hypothesis that explains the existence of the fantastic is that of the existence of evil and of that duplicity of the mind which led Freud to say that psychoanalysis had confirmed the old maxim of Plato: that the kind contend themselves with dreaming what the unkind do in reality. It is in this sense that, in Roy's view, the fantastic is linked with what is seen as forbidden, thus implying the idea of limit, because the forces of the fantastic are those which can transgress those limits.

Within this framework, fantastic arts are an attempt to channel or divert our attraction from evil. Moreover, being art, that part of human activity given to the useless, it is consequently the one that reveals what is hidden and what is important. This is also why mental patients (and often their art) allow us to become aware of the contingencies and the constants hidden in the spirit.

3.1.2 Restless spaces

Among the writers on the fantastic in art reviewed, only Vax (1963) and Brion (1961) allude to fantastic architecture. Vax, like most of the writers discussed above, considers both reason and fear to be the primordial elements of the fantastic. In Vax's view the fantastic consists in introducing imaginary terrors in the midsts of a world subjected to reason: to appear, the fantastic needs only that one of the certain-

ties of man be contradicted, whether by a fact or a delusion makes no difference. According to Vax, "the instant of the fantastic is that in which imagination is completely absorbed in undermining the real, in making it rot. Then we have the impression of a subversion, of a monstrous parody" (p. 30). So, the "shudder of strangeness" which characterizes the fantastic can be conveyed by all the arts, including architecture. In "*churrigueresque*" architecture in Spain, for instance, stone does not appear totally as a material of construction, but acquires an ambiguous existence, between a mineral and a live substance, and this could be seen as a form of fantastic. Yet, for Vax, authentic fantastic architecture can only exist in paintings.

Since in his view the fantastic is allusive, i.e. it refers to something different from itself, architecture, like music, cannot convey the pure fantastic. Architecture, according to Vax, does not refer to anything but itself: it cannot be fantastic because it is real, because it cannot be in contradiction with itself. For analogous reasons music cannot be fantastic. A symphony is made of sounds and a building of stones, so they cannot refer to something completely alien to themselves. However, in Vax's opinion, sculpture can be fantastic: the hybrid monsters of the Middle Ages, and even the sculptures of Bomarzo Gardens [Figs. 20-22] are examples; but by putting the sculptures into a garden, into "reality," what has been created is "an enchanted forest which haunted only the imagination of poets" (p. 56).

Summarily, according to Vax, literature and paintings realize the pure fantastic, sculpture is somewhere in between, and architecture and music, would, at most, dwell in the "spurious" because of their inability to refer to anything but themselves.

Although Vax is one of the few authors to admit that architecture can "realize" the fantastic, even if only of a spurious type, there is in his conception at least one contradiction worth mentioning, namely that architecture, like music, cannot be referential. Program music could not possibly be stripped of its references without becoming "absolute music,"

which is the label created precisely for instrumental music having an intellectual and affective content that depends solely on its rhythmic, melodic and contrapuntal structure, while the former embodies the episodes of a well known story or describes a landscape, e.g. Groffé's "Grand Canyon Suite." Now, if program music cannot refer to something more than itself, as Vax maintains, then the only music worth the name would be one which, as if by magic, could "materialize" the world it is describing with sounds. And this would be very "fantastic" indeed, although a little risky for floods, if the orchestra, instead of some bucolic *Claire de lune*, happened to play Debussy's *La mer*.

The same can be said for the architecture labelled "fantastic." A house which looks like a shoe in which gnomes dwell in classical children's stories can certainly be viewed as referring to something other than the-typical-neighborhood-house. The case of a doughnut-shop shaped like a doughnut [Fig. 9] is even more blatant, for in this case to say that a building which mimics what is produced inside refers to itself is untenable. A building always refers to something, at least to the "function" it serves. A world of completely non-referential architecture, in which the functions of dwelling, worshipping, killing the cattle and judging the offenders are carried out in buildings which cannot be told apart except for their dimensions, may prove to be not only confusing but also damaging to one's health.

The above does not imply that "fantastic" architecture "exists," nor that shoe or horse-shaped houses [Fig. 10] and doughnut-shaped shops should be considered "fantastic architecture:" it simply aimed to demonstrate *ad absurdum* that architecture can be referential. Moreover, regarding architecture's alleged impossibility to be "fantastic" by virtue of its "reality," it is difficult to understand why sculpture can be "fantastic," and architecture cannot since both are three-dimensional, hence part of a "spurious" reality. Since this point is crucial in defining the fantastic and as such closely related to other issues, they will be discussed in detail in chapter IV. There are, however, other aspects of

fantastic architecture in art that need to be addressed, specifically those dealing with this subject in paintings.

Brion (1961) has singled out the elements which account for the fantastic aspect of architecture in painting, aspects with a strong bearing on some of the arguments developed by writers on fantastic literature. The main subject of his analysis is Desiderio, a 17th century French painter renowned for his paintings of haunted architecture (and considered quintessentially mannerist by Hocke (1967)). According to Brion, in Desiderio's paintings, buildings appear as if suspended, made of parts or sculptures much heavier than what their substructure could support, and it is the eminence or the presentiment of a catastrophe which accounts for the feeling of uneasiness experienced. But this feeling also comes from the juxtaposition of elements, Gothic vaults, renaissance porticoes, and Russian domes, which make those awkward structures appear as if conceived by a capricious, demented being.

It is precisely in its ambiguity, in its not being definitely anything, in its "hybrid character," as Solier (1961) pointed out, that uneasiness starts. This, however, does not mean that a representation of an ambiguous building or one provoking fear or uneasiness will necessarily fall in the category of "fantastic." This is the case of the works of the 18th century Italian architect Piranesi and of the contemporary Dutch artist Escher. At first sight their work seems to be quintessentially fantastic but the fact that they are not frequently included in works dealing with fantastic art may not be casual. Their interest from the architectural standpoint lies in the fact that while the first has depicted architecture that could be build, the latter delighted in the drawing of "impossible" spaces and structures. However, if they are discussed in this section and only briefly, it is because they are not "fantastic" architects but artists: neither Piranesi nor Escher represented an "architectural idea", or architectural "visions" in the way of the utopians; like Desiderio, they simply have taken architecture as a subject of their work.

3.2.3. Piranesi and Escher: on architectural "visions"

Piranesi (1720-78), author of numerous etchings of Rome, is perhaps best known for a series of drawings of imaginary spaces published under the title of *Prisons*. But these "prisons," inspired by the ruins of his beloved Rome, were not architectural propositions or designs: they were instead, as Yourcenar (1978) has pointed out, drawings depicting subjective architecture. Curiously enough the fantastic quality of these *Prisons* seems to be born from an excess of rationalism, of measure and of the presence of machines, which in reality were common artifacts used in construction at the time, but which the somber atmosphere of the architecture transforms in the eyes of the viewer into torture instruments. Yourcenar, who calls the *Prisons* "those sumptuous architectural phantoms," notes that those spaces combine the main characteristics of the oneiric state: negation of time, rupture of space, suggested levitation, and overcoming the impossible. However, our bewilderment in front of the world of Piranesi's *Prisons* is not due to a lack of geometry, but to the multiplicity of calculations which seem to be exact but translated into proportions which are wrong. The spaces portrayed in the "*Prisons*" have little to do with real prisons in Piranesi's days; according to Yourcenar they are instead the result of an obsession with incarceration and torment that took possession of the spirits during the last decades of the 18th century, as well as with the Italian preoccupation with Hell and the Final Judgement. So, Yourcenar points out, the terror that those "*Prisons*" inspire is a terror close to ecstasy.

This view of Piranesi's work suggests that the *Prisons* are closer to the set of aesthetical theories known as the "Sublime" than to the fantastic. Although the germ of the "sublime" is to be found in Aristotle's *Poetics*, the development of the concept reached maturity in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. According to Assunto (1967) the concept of the sublime, which includes the monstrous, the awesome and the sacred, is connected with that feeling of ambivalent pleasure -- of attraction and fear -- which the reader and the observer

derive from works whose form transcends the proportions of human measures and circumstances.

From this definition it is evident that there is a difference between the sublime and the fantastic. Fear, in the sublime, is the concomitant of pain, and both are explicitly part of an aesthetic emotion. Furthermore, in the sublime fear or terror are frequently derived from or associated with religious ideas. For theorists of the "sublime" such as Berkeley, Burke and Hartman (all cited in Assunto, 1967), the sublime in architecture derived from monumentality and bareness, from the contrast between light and shadow, rather than from the presence of gilding, mosaics and statues. Thus, Greek and Roman architecture, with their classical rigor, and monumental buildings like palaces, churches and city walls, have been considered to realize the "sublime." Schopenhauer (1788-1860), on the other hand, maintained that neither painting nor sculpture could convey the "sublime," but this point of view was not shared by most theorists.

Within this framework it is clear that although thematically and chronologically Piranesi belongs to "mannerism," formally his work corresponds to the principles of the "sublime," and this may explain the influence that, according to Yourcenar, he had in England. This does not mean that Piranesi's work is non-fantastic; it simply means that what McDonald (1979) calls "Piranesi's saturnine genius," is closer to "mannerism" and to the "sublime" than to the fantastic.

Escher's graphics, on the other hand, fall into a different category. There is little doubt that some of his graphics, in particular those dealing with the metamorphosis of living creatures into objects, or with worlds on both sides of mirrors could be considered fantastic in the sense that they represent the irruption of "another world" in a world governed by natural laws. However, this cannot be said of most of those of his works which have architecture as a subject, since what these depict are paradoxes, impossible spaces, optical illusions, and the viewer knows that he is being tricked. Escher's architectural artifacts are the crea-

tions of a mathematical mind, not representations of subjective spaces. Their attraction is based on the same paroxysm of paradoxical reasoning as that found in the Moebius band which, not gratuitously, is one of Escher's favorite subjects. What we have in Escher is what Bool (1982) has called "the illusion of space," and Escher's vision is overall that of a mathematician. As Bool points out: "in contrast with the irrationality of the surrealists, Escher's context is strictly rational; every illusion that is created is the result of a totally reasoned construction" (p. 19). Concerning Escher's representations of architecture it is possible to say that reason has been pushed to the borders of the fantastic but without trespassing. Goya's excess of reason engenders monsters; Escher's, instead, proves that reason can enjoy playing dangerously.

3.3 Conclusion. The "fantastic" in literature and art: reason, ambiguity and fear

Literary fantastic worlds realize the perfect fantastic (or are the paradigm of a fantastic world). In them, any type of manipulation is possible, the limits set only by the author's imagination. Visually speaking, they are paradoxical. Behind the physical eyes, where they are created and "visualized," their multi-dimensionality is such that it is the reader who gives them their ultimate form; yet, to the physical eyes, they are non-dimensional. It is true that the written word has two dimensions, but visually they are to their content even less than what a box of colors is to a Botticelli painting.

Thus literature is where the "fantastic" has the highest possibilities of being accomplished, but perhaps also the one which requires most time to be mastered, for as followers of Saint Thomas, who needed to see, we tend to accept as closer to reality what we can experience through our physical eyes. In that sense, the fantastic has posed special problems to the visual arts, problems which draw it closer to those posed by architecture.

One of the relevant issues in fantastic art is the rendering of its peculiar "atmosphere" in which fear plays a relevant role. Con-

cerning this point it can be said that the "actual" fear in literature is shifted to "virtual" fear in the visual arts. In literature, the fantastic is seen more often as triggered by a happening contradicting the laws of nature and more rarely as an "atmosphere". In the visual arts, on the other hand, and perhaps due to the great appeal of Piranesi's etchings and the influence of de Chirico's paintings, there has been a greater tendency to see the fantastic as originating in "imaginary" terrors in the midst of an otherwise perfectly reasonable world.

In more instances than in literature, art theorists seem to conceive the "truly" fantastic as occurring only in the ordinary world, for that is where the painter uses the evocative power of the image and of "suspended time;" in the "visual fantastic" the menacing element need not be visible; its "apparition" can be suspended in time, yet be more menacing than the explicit monsters of Goya or Bosch. This explains why, as pointed out in Chapter II, the notion of fear is more central to the conception of the fantastic in the visual arts than in literature. This fantastic is also associated with the idea of evil, and this may explain why the source of its seduction is, as Roy (1960) pointed out "to see fixed on canvas, paper or stone, the images of our obsessions, of our nightmares and our complexes." (p. 62)

Two other notions are relevant to this conception: reason and ambiguity. The fantastic, we are constantly reminded, is a rupture within a reasonable world, and as such it *presupposes* the existence of reason. For a young child there is no such thing as "fantastic": everything may be marvellous but not fantastic, since a child is not conscious of the process of rational differentiation. Ambiguity, on the other hand, is what menaces reason through the figure of the hybrid. Something which is the result of juxtaposition, which is several things and is not definitely anything, presents a double menace: from instability and from transformation. We can see its state only as temporary or unstable, because we believe that in order to exist, to "be there," it has to fit into the non-hybrid categories, and in order to fit, it has to change. But by changing, it can only become more unstable, for this "changing" means

that the object has the power of transforming itself, of becoming an object with its own life, and that fills us with terror.

It is no accident, then, that horror literature is full of stories in which objects assume their own life, and it is no accident either that the fear is even more accentuated when the object in question is a building. A building is something which gets us "inside," where we could get trapped forever if it proves to be something different, or to hide something sinister, if its hybrid form is not just form, but a sign we cannot read.

The obvious question at this point is whether these concepts apply to "architecture." Although it could be tempting to conclude that, given its visual dimension, the "fantastic" in painting is closer to architecture than to literature, such an assumption could be dangerously premature. Since the art model relies so much on the concept of fear, only empirical research can provide some evidence in this respect. The problem which remains is to investigate the labels under which "fantastic" architectural objects have been discussed in the field of art since this will make possible, with the knowledge gained in the two chapters on theories of the "fantastic," to discuss the semantic adequacy of the term "fantastic." This problem is the subject of Chapter IV.

IV THE "FANTASTIC" AND LABELS

4.0 Labelling the "fantastic" in architecture: only a semantic problem?

"'Fantastic' architecture? And why not 'surrealistic' architecture? Those buildings certainly look odd enough." This question is far from being gratuitous, for terms such as "bizarre," "follies," "soft architecture" discussed in chapter I are just a few of those under which any informed person would be tempted to think that the strange architectural objects called "fantastic" could also be classified. And if not "surrealistic," why not "expressionistic," as Conrads and Sperlich's American translators suggested? Or "visionary," as Ragon and Hélène Roseneau (1970) had called some of the projects which also were included in Conrads and Sperlich's work? Or "mannerist," in the way of Joedicke (1962) and Hocke (1967)? Or "bizarre," as Jencks (1982) chose to call it? And what about "art brut," under which Thevoz includes Cheval's palace? Or grotesque? Or, why not, sublime?

This plurality of terminology, which at first sight may appear as a purely semantic problem, needs to be analyzed, for only by dispelling possible confusions, and by attempting to provide a tentative definition of the fantastic with the insights gained in the two previous chapters will it be possible to clarify, among other issues identified in chapter I, why the term "fantastic" has been used and criticized, but never conveniently explained. Although the conclusions and definitions at which we can arrive at this point are no more than tentative, they will provide the synthesis needed at this point to set up the empirical research.

Some of the terms used in the discussion at the end of this section, i.e. bizarre, "follies", "soft architecture," were already presented in chapter I, as part of architectural literature. The terms discussed in the present chapter are those more readily associated with the visual arts, e.g. surrealism, expressionism, mannerism, grotesque and *art brut*. Although these terms designate complex movements, their presen-

tation will be highly simplified, since our interest does not lay in the movements themselves but in avoiding doubts about their possible kinship with fantastic architecture. The only exception will be *art brut*, which, for its proximity with our problem, requires a more detailed discussion.

4.1 *Art Brut*

After appearing in so many disguises, fantastic architecture "classics," such as Cheval's "Palace Idéal" and Simon Rodia's "Watts Towers," have also appeared in Michel Thevoz's work on *art brut* (1976). This term, which could be translated as "raw art" was, according to Thevoz, coined by Dubuffet to describe "works of every kind ... presenting a spontaneous, highly inventive character, as little subservient as possible to the ordinary run of art or to cultural conventions, the makers of them being obscure persons alien to professional circles" (p. 38) In this type of work "imitation -- contrary to what occurs among intellectuals -- has little or no part" (p. 40).

According to Thevoz three essential features of "art brut" can be singled out. First, its makers are outsiders, mentally and/or socially. Second, the work is conceived without any regard for the usual recipients of works of art. Third, subjects, techniques and figuration have little in common with those handed down by tradition. To this can be added a fourth, "subversive energy" (p. 38). This does not mean that the individual has escaped from a certain visual conditioning, for this is almost impossible. But what sets art brut apart is that its maker uses signs or means of expression in ways contrary to "common sense." "He does not reject the established language of art ... but he systematically misuses it, he pervades it with a subtle form of meaninglessness which perverts or subverts it. He appears like a 'satanic do-it-yourself' man who, intent on his tinkering, diverts forms and signs from their conventional use and inserts them in explosive combinations of his own" (pp. 60-2). His work is a misfit in the world of art, and a highly expressive one; it lurches away from the established language of communication and in doing so brings to light what the language was designed to conceal. Another aspect can be added to the preceding, namely the use of materials in a

way that captures or follows its nature or that "inspired misuse" known as "tinkering" (*bricolage*). The artist takes familiar things (shells, stones, broken china) and combines them in unusual ways, or even starts his work inspired by them; the sense of strangeness is then more haunting, precisely because it is achieved through familiar elements.

It is important to note that most of the creators of "art brut" were or are loners like Cheval or Rodia, or people interned in psychiatric asylums. However, although Thevoz rejects the notion of illness as applied to the makers of "art brut," he does not reject the term "madness" as opposed to normality. This is so because he sees normality as a product of repression, denial, splitting and other destructive actions or experiences. So madness is viewed as a successful attempt to adapt oneself to social pseudo-realities, an "inner voyage" that is a natural way of healing the appalling state of alienation called "normality." And it is precisely in this "denial" of normalcy or reality values that Dubuffet (quoted by Thevoz) sees the origin of art creation. Because "creation implies that one is not satisfied with what already is and others are satisfied with; it calls for a position of rebellion and conflict. The work ... will be all the more creative as the position grows worse" (p. 84).

It is not surprising, then, that "art brut" originates in those places where modern society has relaxed its cultural hold or where it has relegated those from which it cannot draw much profit, such as psychiatric institutions, old peoples' homes, or as in many other cases (reported by Bernard Lassus, 1982), in the back or front yards of retired blue-collar workers. Besides, the isolation of these individuals from the common social world "removes" them from the "system" and puts them in a state of contemplative passivity, in which "the most ordinary things lose their practical and social meaning and betray their innate symbolism" (p. 92). Thus Thevoz sees that the art of drawing or assembling materials plays a revealing role in releasing "all the phantasmagoria" hidden under their familiar aspect.

Thematically, the works presented in Thevoz's book may not differ from what someone else would present in a work about "fantastic" art. However, Thevoz's neglecting of the term fantastic does not seem to come so much from his disdain of its content ("a hold-all notion which can be made to fit the widest grouping and most incongruous medleys," p. 15), as from his adhesion to art brut's "exemption from meaning." Nevertheless, his description of Cheval's palace as an architecture that "narrowly missed remaining a purely mental construction" belonging to an "in-between world ... on the borderline dividing the real from the imaginary, so much so ... [that] its actual materialization appears incidental" (p. 94) sounds so amazingly close to the definition of fantastic worlds discussed in the previous chapters that it is almost difficult to think we are not still discussing fantastic literature.

To this should be added that in Thevoz's linking of the Palace to dream and reality, the similarity becomes even more striking. For, as he puts it, "the Ideal Palace stands like a dream unaccountably embodied in stone by some arbitrary, supernatural decision" and through a process that is the reverse of common architectural processes: the latter starts as a "place" that can be converted into a dream. Cheval's is a dream converted into a place; it is "an imaginary object that has assumed the shape of reality." That might be why the work of people like Cheval and Rodia "transport us into the mental space and confuse our sense of reality" (p. 102). Yet Thevoz sees these builders' ignorance of architecture and cultural tradition as being "too insidious and subversive for it to be put down to autism, to absorption in a mental world of fantasy," so one gets the suspicion that his final rejection of the term is made on the basis of his implicit equation of "fantasy" with "escapism." This is hardly surprising, for, as already pointed out, theories about fantastic literature abound in references of this type as well as in cases pinpointing the subversive value of fantasy.

Thus, whatever its appropriateness in designating some of works often labelled as "fantastic," it is rather clear that the term "art brut" could neither include the work of professional architects nor suit

places conceived by a layman but ultimately designed by an architect i. e. Neuschwanstein or Bomarzo. Of all the terms analyzed this far, it is the most accurate to label the works of "suburban artists" or "bricoleurs," indicating that they do not belong to the world of official art, that their creators are not artists with skills acquired through training or schooling. But at the same time this term has the disadvantage of "ghettoing" the work from the start, given the term strong associations with the work of the alienated, which is not necessarily the case with this type of builder.

4.2 Expressionism

According to the Encyclopedia Americana, expressionism proclaims the primacy of emotions in all the arts. An expressionist, whether a painter, a sculptor or even an architect, subordinates formal and technical considerations to the communication of intense feelings. For Ragon (1966), expressionism is not a group of artists or a school, but a tendency, since its greatest artists not only were not grouped but isolated.

Although in Ragon's view expressionism, just as baroque, romanticism and realism, has always existed in "homoeopathic doses," two things can be said to introduce some precision into the term. The first is that expressionism appeared and remained a great Germanic or Nordic current; there is nothing of the Mediterranean character in it. It can be said that from 1905 to 1923, painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and theatre have been expressionistic, particularly in Germany, where expressionism corresponded to a collective state, linked back to the golden age of German painting: the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The second is that only in 1912, according to Ragon, was the term expressionism correctly used for the first time, that is to say for a movement specifically German, namely at the occasion of the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition.

In Ragon's view, the spirit of expressionism, with its atmosphere of terror and hope, of revolt, of questioning our civilization, of thrusting into the most brutal realism, of conceptions falsified by an

excessive idealism, was more fascinating than the paintings themselves. Expressionism is the opposite of "L'art pour l'art:" in expressionism human problems are always more important than aesthetic issues. In that climate architectural utopias flourished.

According to Pehnt (1985), what distinguished utopian expressionists from their Art Nouveau predecessors was, precisely, their social commitment. In architecture this commitment found its expression in drawings "done without any hope of practical realization" (p. 27) and imbued with utopian idealism, predicated the emergence of a new audience: "a populace reconciled with art" (p. 29). Whyte (1982), however, writing about Bruno Taut and other expressionist architects (also cited in Conrads and Sperlich's book), considers their approach to be "revisionistic" rather than revolutionary.

For Whyte, the core of expressionist architecture was the collective symbol which appeared in the various guises of *Kristallhaus* and *Volkhaus* or *Tempel*, whose function was to unify the warring factions in society and to elevate them above mean subjectivism and individualism. The revolution thus accomplished would be a spiritual rather than an economic or a social one. The problem was that the values of the activist élite were not the values of the proletariat but rather the traditional values of the liberal bourgeoisie: good taste, aesthetic delight, appreciation of beauty and respect for creative genius. The movement not only claimed the status of objective truths for these values, but also held out as objectivity what was, in fact, an exaggerated subjectivity which proved impossible to overcome.

Thus it is quite evident that the term "expressionist" could only be applied to a reduced number of those buildings commonly labelled "fantastic," even if at first sight it seems suitable to use the term for any architectural object conceived more with feelings than with reason. This is so because as an "ism" it is historically bound, and any attempt to stretch it to cover a type of architecture which is rather "atemporal" could only be distorting. This may explain why Conrads and Sperlich did

not use the term "expressionist" in their book. As they themselves stressed, they wanted to pay homage to an architecture which did not fit into the history of "architecture" and which included works of "bricoleurs" like Ferdinand Cheval and Simon Rhodia. Those cases can, neither historically nor in terms of the creators' intentions, be said to belong to an expressionist movement. What they could be is "expressionistic" in the etymological sense of the word. If so, then the term could be used as a category within the "fantastic" rather than as an all-embracing term.

4.3 Grotesque

The word grotesque derives from the Italian *grottesca*, *grottesco* and these from *grotta*, cave. The term was first used at the beginning of the 15th century, when excavations unearthed the Rome of the beginnings of the Christian era. According to Kayser (1963) the grotesque is "the estranged world" and not very different from that of the Renaissance, in which the "grottesco" was "playfully gay and fantastic but also ominous and sinister in the face of a world totally different from the known one" (p. 184). This world terrifies us because "it is our world which ceases to be reliable and we feel that we would be unable to live in this estranged world" (p. 184): the grotesque instils fear of life instead of fear of death.

From the formal standpoint, what characterises the grotesque is the fusion of realms which we know to be separate and the (apparent) abolition of the laws of statics, the loss of identity, the distortion of "natural" size and shape, and the suspension of the habitual categorization of objects. The grotesque is "odd, unnatural, bizarre, strange, funny, caricatural" (p. 28) and also "supernatural, absurd and contradicting the very laws that govern our world" (p. 30). "The grotesque -- says Kayser -- is an attempt to invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world" (p. 31); it may start as a game, but in the end it will carry the players away, depriving them of their freedom and making them afraid of the ghosts which they so ingeniously invoked; and no-one will come to their rescue.

Kayser sees a strong similarity between humor and the grotesque: both destroy reality by inventing the most unlikely things, by yoking together widely separated eras and objects, alienating the existing world and revealing the immensity of the void. But grotesque is also applicable to surrealism: de Chirico, Ernst, Tanguy, among others, constantly pose the question of the grotesque, for this type of painting is not primarily based on a distinct view of man but rather on a new view of the world, or more precisely of the world of inanimate objects.

If the "sublime" is close to the notion of "fantastic" the grotesque is even closer; but it is a notion that can constitute a category of the fantastic rather than being an equivalent. Although in the wide sense of "grotesque" Kayser includes the "surrealistic", as Hocke extended Mannerism for several periods, in the more strict sense the grotesque leans towards the caricature, the deform, that is to say, towards the bizarre under its monstrous aspect. The gardens at Bomarzo are as Mannerist as the monsters which fill it are examples of grotesque. But the castle of King Ludwig II in Bavaria could not be included here: the king's taste may be kitsch, and some may well use the adjective "grotesque" to describe his castle, but "grotesque" as an adjective is different from "grotesque" as a category, as an aesthetic school. Gaudí's warriors on the terrace at the Casa Milà may be as "animalorphic" as Jencks wishes to call them, but they are forms, not de-formations as the monsters at Bomarzo.

4.4 Mannerism

Hocke (1967), in a book with the suggestive title of *Labyrinthes de l'art fantastique* (Labyrinths of Fantastic Art), labels the fantastic "mannerist." Etymologically the term comes from "manus," or what is made with human hands, and from "mania," rage, fury, a kind of mental disease; it is the poet inflamed with inspiration, with the fury of creation, it is Odilon Redon's "my intuition is ... madness" (quoted in Hocke, 1967, p. 6). Originally, the notion of "mannerism" (*maniera*) was used by Vasary in the 16th century to characterize the last works of Michelangelo works far removed from the classical notion of harmony. Following previous

writers, in particular E. R. Curtius, Hocke opts for an enlarged version of the term, thus seeing mannerism as "the complementary of classicism in all epochs" (p. 12), a phenomenon which appears "each time that the political and religious order becomes problematic," for in the words of Paul Klee "only a happy world gives birth to art oriented towards the real."

Like Curtius, Hocke maintains that to a great extent what he calls "mannerism" is nowadays called "baroque." Yet the term "mannerism" has two advantages over "baroque": First, "baroque" has too many equivocal connotations; and secondly, it has more historical associations than "mannerism." According to Hocke it is possible to distinguish six mannerist periods: Alexandria (between 350 and 150 B.C.); Rome (14-139 A.D.); the beginning and end of the Middle Ages; the "conscious" mannerism that flourished in Italy between 1520 and 1650 ("Mannerism" in the strict sense of the word); the end of Romanticism (1800-1830); and the period between 1880 and 1950.

However, more important than this distinction, is the identification of the dialectic classicism-mannerism, which has the merit of allowing transitions. In Hocke's view, all mannerism is a tributary of classicism, but it ends by emancipating and becoming "deformant," i.e. surrealist and abstract. In mannerism there is no clear limit between the real and the imaginary. The soul is "the rival of God" (p. 35), hence the exhilaration of trying new experiences and the desire to emphasize the value of the subjective world linked to a metaphysical absolute in opposition to the objective world of nature and prevalent social conceptions.

In mannerism all which opposes "good taste" is considered legitimate, while good taste is considered aristocratic, bourgeois and pseudo-classical. The intention is to develop an art that gives priority to imagination and elevates psychic phenomena and emotions above everyday reality. The delineation between life and dream disappears. The magic landscape appears and with it the world as the inexhaustible source of the marvellous.

There is in mannerism a fascination with the grotesque, monsters, spatial illusion, anything which shocks or produces surprise or horror. Here the monster becomes the symbol of the artist, "the dialectical opponent of God, of love, of what is hidden in each one" (p. 54). As Jones-Davies (1980) states, the fear produced by the monster is the increasing anguish of man asking himself: but the monster, isn't it I? In the artist's desire to create a monster there is the desire of operating, both in himself and in the spectator, a catharsis that can help to reduce the anguish. (p. 27).

In Hocke's view the Bomarzo Gardens are a paradigm of mannerism, because in mannerism "beauty has to be without pity, terrifying, diabolically bewildering" (p. 35), and this is precisely what the gardens are: the realization of an idea of nature where beauty is mixed with horror. It is true that the creator of Bomarzo was trying to produce a shock for the pleasure of doing so, but there was also the intention to "represent a mystery" (p. 64), the disturbance that comes from the unusual, the contradictory and the sudden harmony of the absurd. But Bomarzo is also Tasso's "enchanted forest," which the hero has to cross, overcoming terror and temptation, to arrive at the temple of glory, for myths are not strange to mannerism. For the mannerists of the 16th and 17th centuries, myths are illustrations of the unusual, for the surrealist of the 20th century they are manifestations of the unconscious; in both cases they are warehouses of images of which the unconscious take command. Their value resides precisely in their being a metaphor susceptible to different contents, a view that, as we recall, many literary writers have seen as a quality of the fantastic.

Yet, the sense of the "fantastic" is not discussed in Hocke's work. The term "fantastic" appears here and there, but as a vein, a streak meandering in the mannerist universe. The mannerist artist borders on madness, creates with his "saturnine" nature, rejects immediate "reality" as a given, and showing its other side, the monster, the distorted side of the world. Yet, rebellious or anticonformist, mannerism becomes "official" art. Its artists may be vituperated or scorned at the outset

beginning, but sooner or later they find their patrons and their niche in "recognized" art.

C. Ray Smith (1977), a contemporary of Hocke, has also used the term **mannerism** to refer to the architectural products of incipient post-modernism. However, considering that these products exhibit an augmented version of the principle of scale alteration and re-ordering of surface detail which characterizes the 16th and 17th century **mannerism**, he coined for them the term "**Supermannerism**." But unlike Hocke (and so much like Jencks) Smith is concerned first with form and second with the immediately visible social aspects of **mannerism**. Neither dark nor tormented or saturnine souls are to be found in **Supermannerism**. At its extreme "marginality" it is Op, Pop, or any other kind of urban imagery absorbed and rendered domestic by the sophisticated or simply snobbish sector of the upwardly mobile and affluent middle-classes. **Supermannerism** is an advocacy of form with one eye on marketing and the other on the impact of "image" in the age of mass-communication. Of "**mannerism**" then, **Supermannerism** has only the form.

Although at first sight **mannerism** seems to be a flexible term which can be extended beyond the limits of historical **Mannerism**, it has at least two considerable drawbacks. First, neither the work of the utopians nor those of the "bricoleurs" would fit into it. Strictly speaking, if the files of what has been considered "fantastic" were dismantled and its members placed under existing labels, the obvious result would be the placing of the utopians under visionary art, the bricoleurs under "art brut" and professional architects such as Gaudí under "**mannerism**". Second, even applied to professional architects "**mannerism**" is ambiguous. Any label that can be used to designate too many periods always ends up by being used as a second-rate qualifier. Thus Ray Smith's proposed "**Supermannerism**" lasted only as a transition term until the less ambiguous "**post-modernism**" took its place. In short, the term can be used properly as a qualifier of an individual architect but not as a label for a whole group or trend.

4.5 The Sublime

According to Monk (1960) the sublime, which includes the monstrous, the awesome and the sacred, is connected with the feeling of ambivalent pleasure of attraction and fear which one derives from works whose form transcends the proportions of human measures and circumstances. This effect is achieved by images and scenes that are unreal or deliberately awe-inspiring. In architecture a structure may be characterized as sublime if, through its vastness or its violent contrasts of light and shadow, it sparks off a sense of foreboding and tension while at the same time generating aesthetic pleasure.

Although the idea of the sublime is present in the art and criticism of all periods, its conceptual determination and definition are found only in certain phases of the history of art and aesthetics. At the most general level it can be said that it has coincided with the knowledge and appreciation of awe-inspiring phenomena artistically represented, viz. the gigantic or the ornamental, with the purpose of haunting, amazing and forcing the spirit of the viewer beyond rationally intelligible experience. In a more restricted sense it coincides with the deliberate effort in the field of aesthetics to define the sublime as an aesthetic category which is distinct from the simply "beautiful" (conceived as clear, balanced and harmonious forms which give the viewer a sense of spiritual serenity).

According to Assunto (1967) the history of the implicit theories of the sublime began with Aristotle's *Poetics* (4th century B.C.), although the explicit theorization did not start until the first century A.D. with an anonymous treatise, supposedly edited by a Greek of Hebrew origin. However, it was in 18th century England that it received its first theoretical formulations with applications both to poetry and to the figurative arts. Joseph Addison, in an essay published in 1712, defined the sublime as the spiritual calm derived from contemplating vastness, in particular boundless panoramas; in architecture the sublime consisted of the grandeur derived from the building's bulk or from its style.

Edmund Burke (Assunto, 1967), on the other hand, in a treatise published in 1756, defined the sublime as that which inspires gloom and terror, while the beautiful inspires feelings of tenderness or affection. Vastness in dimensions, inherent menace, artificial infinity and well ordered magnificence are attributes of the sublime. In architecture, the relationship between light and darkness must should be considered a further factor of sublimity. All edifices calculated to produce an idea of the sublime ought to be dark and gloomy as well as almost completely bare: gilding, mosaics, painting and statues rather detract from architectural sublimity.

Kant, in a work published in 1764 (Assunto, 1967), distinguished between the *mathematical* and the *dynamic* sublime; the first terrifies and dismays through its immeasurable vastness; in the dynamic sublime the terror is aroused by the contemplation of certain scenes (storms, overwhelming rocks, etc), when the observer is safe and the danger is merely possible, for it reveals man's superiority over natural forces. According to Kant (Monk, 1960) the beautiful is associated with quality, the sublime with quantity. Pleasure in the beautiful is due to arises from "a feeling of the furtherance of life"; the feeling of the sublime is brought about by a momentary check of the vital forces, followed at once by a discharge all the more powerful for having been restrained.

J. G. von Herder (Assunto, 1967), in a treatise on aesthetics published in 1800, criticized Kant's distinction between the beautiful and the sublime: for von Herder the sublime is always united with the beautiful in its highest expressions; in Greek architecture, the stronger the impression of unity, the more sublime it appears to us. Simplicity gives form to the image and shapes a vigorous unity: this is the sublime. In the 20th century, Heinrich Wölfflin has founded his theory on the dualism of the beautiful and sublime whereas Benedetto Croce has rejected it (Assunto, 1967).

Victor Hugo (Monk, 1960) based his ideas of the sublime on Kant's, but added the "terrible sublime" with emphasis the macabre and the mon-

struous. Schopenhauer (Assunto, 1967), who also accepts Kant's distinction between the mathematical and the dynamic, though stripped of any moral connotations, considers that the feeling of the sublime originates when we contemplate objects whose significant form shows a hostile attitude towards human will. As an example of the mathematical sublime in architecture Schopenhauer indicates the interior of Saint Peter in Rome and Saint Paul's in London. These interiors, although small in comparison with the Universe, give an impression of size which dwarfs the proportions of the human body. But to Schopenhauer neither sculpture nor painting can convey the sublime.

According to Assunto although the term sublime has not returned to the 20th century language of aesthetic and criticism, it has not completely disappeared. Thus the modern German philosopher Nicolai Hartmann (1953) has elaborated a genuine theory of the sublime as distinct from the beautiful. From Hartmann's point of view the sublimity of works of art is characterized by the obscure, the undetermined, the mysterious and the abysmal. Formally, however, the sublime still derives from monumentality: palaces, churches, the temples of antiquity and the towers and walls of cities may be considered sublime; weight is also a source of the sublime in architecture. A pure example of the architectural sublime is to be found in the Doric Temple, where the appearance of depth is given by the counterplay of the entablature.

In short, and despite some contrasting views, the sublime can be characterized as based on strong emotions, generating awe, surprise, or terror, and as being "aesthetic" rather than beautiful, thus generating a mixture of pleasure and pain. Formally, the "sublime" object is characterized by mystery, indetermination, strong contrasts, and might. So characterized, the sublime appears to be very close to the "fantastic" since, as pointed out under the discussion of Piranesi's works, both encompass the notion of fear and both include the monstrous and the awesome. But in the sublime these notions are connected with the sacred, and their specific purpose is to transcend human measures and circumstances in order to provoke an aesthetic pleasure mixed with pain. So the

sublime implies primarily an "aesthetic experience," instead of a "momentaneous suspension of disbelief" or an association with "other worlds" (even if only fleetingly) which characterizes (without exhausting it) the fantastic. Moreover, concerning architecture, theorists of the sublime have been inclined to find it in monumental classical buildings, which is not precisely the usual style of the buildings frequently listed under "fantastic." If the "fantastic" is in part experience, then the sublime cannot *a priori* be excluded, but the "fantastic" can neither be equated with nor considered a category within the sublime.

4.6 Surrealism

According to Chipp (1968), surrealism was an artistic movement, organized by André Breton, which attempted to fuse the real and the irrational into, "a sort of absolute reality, a surreality" (p. 32). Surrealist painters freely explored the unconscious, yet in 1939 Freud called them "complete fools" (p. 85). Their standard method was to place familiar objects in a new or illogical relationship to stress the superficiality of conventional visions of reality. By 1930 painters were becoming predominant in this movement which was started in literary circles, but due to dissension with Breton, who demanded firm doctrinal allegiance, the movement ceased to enjoy the authority of an organized movement around 1940.

It therefore is obvious that, whatever the similarity in content, in interest and in form, the term "surrealist" used instead of "fantastic" applied to architecture would be misleading or add to the confusion already existing. Strictly speaking, the term could only be applied to the followers of Breton, and art critics have run into difficulties when trying to classify the work of independent painters such as de Chirico, despite the "surrealist" appearance of his paintings and his sporadic contacts with Breton's group. In fact, as was pointed out in chapter III, it is not unusual to see de Chirico's work labelled as "fantastic" by art theorists and this is due to the latent "menace" present in his paintings. If this is so for painting, it is even more so for the architecture labelled "fantastic", which was built either before

the apparition of surrealism or with no claims of following any of the surrealist's doctrines. This is valid even for cases such as Cheval's palace, which was a sort of icon for the surrealists, for Cheval had not only been dead for many years when surrealism appeared, but as a rural postman he could not possibly have belonged to Breton's *entourage* of cultivated artists.

4.7 Visionary art

Quite often we are presented, in works about "fantastic architecture," with examples that seemed "fantastic" when they were conceived and became commonplace afterwards. As already pointed out, one of the questions asked by Persitz (1962) was whether the Eiffel tower would be fantastic today. But this question opens a new set of questions: was the tower "fantastic" in 1889 or was it rather "visionary"? And again: was it "visionary" or rather "utopian"?

As mentioned in chapter II, the distinction between the "fantastic" and the "visionary" is not always clear in art literature. Not only have both terms been used rather loosely, but it is not infrequent to find inconsistencies within works by the same author. In a book published in 1967 about fantastic art, Ragon maintained that fantastic art is the result of interior visions, and so much so that what scares us in the fantastic is to see, fixed on paper, on canvas or in stone, the images of our obsessions, of our nightmares and our complexes. Yet, in two other publications about architecture (1972 and the other without date) Ragon uses the term "fantastic" when discussing visionary architecture, only that in this case he omits both its psychological and its experiential connotations.

Although, as mentioned, Ragon's definition of visionary is not clear he seems inclined to make the "authentic" visionary analogous with the "technological fantastic." But a new source of confusion emerges when he tries to define "utopia." According to Ragon (1972) three forms of

utopias have appeared in this century: the technological, more or less "humanized"; the "ecological", using non-traditional energy sources, self-help construction, autonomous habitat; and the "plebeian", "bungalow art" and "bungalow landscapers." Since, in Ragon's terms a utopia is always the attempt of a minority to imagine, on a small scale, a new social order, utopias are "counter-cultural" images. It is in this sense that of "bungalow" landscapers are included in this group: they react against society and its "official" architecture, thus creating images of a utopian counter-culture" (p.26, v. III). In the same way, since 1851, universal exhibitions (of which the construction of Eiffel Tower was part) "have been some kind of ephemeral utopian societies which appear in our daily life as possibly marvellous" (p. 27). So what we have here is most of the "fantastic" architecture, including Ragon's own "technological fantastic," now labelled "utopian."

Roseneau (1970), when discussing the "social purpose" of architecture, establishes a difference between "utopias" and "ideal visions," although that difference is not strictly established. In Roseneau's view, the latter are more difficult to define than the former; both share the concern for a better life, but "ideal visions" do not express a desire to impose a view or to make converts. Ideal visions "evoke images of serenity," while Utopias, which usually represent their authors' country improved by social reform, "seem out of date after a relatively short period of time and to an astonishing degree fail to bring about radical political and social change" (p. 120).

Conrads and Sperlich (1960) have pointed out that utopias assume inadequacies in the present state of affairs, and their aim is to correct these by means of architecture. Utopias seldom lack a theoretical basis or a rigidly established program. In this context a structural utopia "is an unconventional *tour de force* which for the time being can be carried out theoretically and which is always positively constructive and logically consistent within itself" (pp. 19-20); it presumes that the present limits will be surpassed.

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the difference between fantastic, on the one hand, and visionary and utopian on the other was never clearly established. Yet there is a tendency to see the latter pair as an appeal for social as well as technological change, a view which coincides with that of literary theoreticians. In a strict sense, then, Ragon's "plebeian utopians" could not be included in this group; they may be "counter-culture," and they may have some conducting principle or philosophy, but they do not have "visions" of a desirable future. Expressionist architecture, on the other hand, with its emphasis on supra-architectural goals, could be considered a category within both "visionary" and "utopian", although not all the architecture labelled "expressionist" would necessarily be one or the other. Nor would many of the buildings labelled "fantastic."

As pointed out above, the works of the "bricoleurs" cannot be included here; and neither can, for the obvious reason of belonging to other eras or not being "visionary," the gardens at Bomarzo, or the castle of Neuschwanstein. According to a guide conducting tours in the castle, King Ludwig was a visionary, since now the state of Bavaria can maintain all its castles with the revenues coming from his castles alone (Cable, 1961). But there is little doubt that this is not the kind of vision discussed here. "Fantastic" cannot be equated with "visionary" or "utopian"; one does not exclude the other, but they are clearly different. Moreover, in the "visionary," and in particularly in the "technological visionary," time is a crucial factor: What was visionary yesterday could be commonplace today, and if art and literature theorists are correct, "habit" and "common-placeness" are the anti-fantastic qualities *par excellence*. Joedicke (cf. 1.2.2.) has noted this particularity of the "visionary" and settled for the term "fantastic", although without discussing it. So, at this point, it could perhaps be said that just as expressionist and mannerist or any other architecture with "potential" features, the visionary "can" be fantastic, but also that it may lose its potential as time converts the "vision" into something common in the present. However, as in the other cases, this is, at this stage, a mere speculation.

4.8 The "fantastic," etymology and architecture

As was pointed out in chapter III, authors such as Vax, and especially Joedicke, have rejected the notion of "fantastic architecture." The latter, in particular, has argued that "fantastic architecture" cannot exist: when a fantastic idea is materialized it loses its unreal character by the very process of transposition from the domain of the unconscious to the conscious. This explains his rejection of the term fantastic in favor of "mannerism."

The first point to be noted is that Joedicke can arrive at such a conclusion, which appears perfectly logical, by equating the "fantastic" with both "unreal," and "immaterial," which is questionable because of its restrictiveness, not only in relation to the multiple aspects of the fantastic identified by literary and art theorists, but also because of the traditional definition of the term. This, it should be noted, refers to a "fantastic" much closer to the "marvellous" than modern literary theorists would admit; if it is considered in the first place, it is because it is the definition most likely to be found in a dictionary.

Etymologically the term "fantastic" derives from the Latin *phantasticus*, "which concerns imagination," from the Greek *φανταστικός* "able to produce the appearance of," from *φαντασσειν*, "to make visible." Now the problem is that from those origins the fantastic ends up by having two main connotations, not necessarily compatible or coherent. On the one hand, the term fantastic designates "beings or objects which have been created by imagination; unreal, supernatural, fabulous"; and on the other it means "bizarre in form or conception, strange, wondrous," namely so strange that it could have been created only by imagination, in opposition to the nature's creations. In this sense the word also means "unbelievable," "amazing," "what is set apart from the rules." In visual arts and literature the fantastic is a genre which includes literary or artistic works which transgress reality by making references to dreams, the supernatural, magic, terror or science-fiction. Thus stated, the term has two levels: one abstract, which refers to that which has been created by imagination, and the other, more concrete, refers to what has attained

certain qualities. Taking visual arts and literature into account it has a third level: the referential, linked to "rupture" with reality.

Using this definition of the fantastic it is possible to demonstrate that Joedicke's proposition only deals with the abstract side of it taken in its narrowest sense; it eliminates from the "fantastic" not only architecture but sculpture and painting as well; and it cannot sustain a confrontation with the argument that assuming that architecture cannot "be" fantastic, it can, at least, "look" fantastic.

To demonstrate this point let us assume (as Joedicke seems to have done) that "fantastic," in spite of deriving from *phantazein*, meaning "make visible," means only, "contradicting reality," and is limited to the imaginary level, i.e. precluding any kind of mediation which will make it physically "visible." Obviously, with these criteria, only literature can *be* fantastic, and the contradictions underlying such a conclusion can be uncovered using one of the classical dictionary examples: "*the unicorn is a fantastic animal*". When a writer describes a unicorn, the words used to describe it are "real" but the creature described can only be seen through one's imagination. But what happens when the unicorn appears in a painting? Here it is made "visible" in the physical sense, it has "materialized." As a thin layer of paint, it is true, but thin or not, it has an undeniable physical existence. Yet the existence of "fantastic painting" does not seem to raise questions. Does this mean that only upon acquiring a certain thickness the "representation" becomes "material," losing in the process its "fantastic" quality? Does this mean that the sculpted unicorn that crowns the frontispiece of Prince Borromini's garden in "Isola Bella" is less fantastic than the unicorns depicted in the tapestries displayed inside the palace?

It can be argued that, in a painting, one can see the creature more clearly in its imaginary realm, while to the extent that it solidifies in our reality it loses that distance, that "impossible" quality which accounts for its charm. But if a sculpted unicorn is not "fantastic," does that mean that it is "real," as "real" as a bust of

Theodore Roosevelt with which it shares only three-dimensionality? Like the unicorn in the painting, the sculpted one is a representation of an imaginary being; neither of them is, obviously, the being itself, so in this sense there is not much difference between one and the other. Yet there is a difference, and from this basis another argument can be developed. Any figurative painting can be seen as the "fixed moment" of a story, and we can imagine an infinite variety of "befores" and "afters"; in a way the frame of the painting can be seen as the window through which we look at another world, a world far beyond reality; we can imagine being in it, but we cannot get in.

With a sculpture the immediacy (we are in the same environment and, sometimes, on the same scale) may destroy the spell, unless the creature looks particularly menacing or strange, in which case a shudder of apprehension, recollected perhaps from childhood stories, lingers on with the suspicion that the creature may be something else, that there is more there than what meets the eye. Here part of the spell of the "fantastic" painting is recaptured, but then we are dealing with the problem from a different angle: we are looking at it from "experience," which is precisely the point that literary theorists have emphasized as a component of the fantastic. But before examining this issue in chapter V, from the previous discussion we can conclude the following:

First, we cannot dismiss the use of the term "fantastic" applied to architecture solely on the basis of the apparent contradiction between "fantastic" and "material" reality. If architecture cannot be "fantastic" then neither can sculpture, nor even painting.

Second, Joedicke seems to have other reasons, much weightier than alleged "unreality," to reject "fantastic" in favor of gratuitous "mannerism." The first is his high concept of "architectural imagination," concomitant with a strictly Vitruvian conception of architecture: *Utilitas, Firmitas, Venustas* (commodity, firmness, delight). Symbolic values, at least those which deviated from those of mainstream architecture, seem to be quite irrelevant to Joedicke, and that is obvious in his

analysis of Gaudí's work. From the way he emphasizes Gaudí's structural achievements it is difficult not to suspect that Joedicke is trying to absolve him from his formal exuberance. The second, which is but the corollary of the first, is Joedicke's view of the "fantastic" as a vacuous formalism disconnected from the real problems of present architecture.

Yet, as sound as these judgements may be, they pertain to another domain, which is the social function of architecture. Yet, in order to have a social function, fantastic architecture has first to "exist", that is to exist both physically (which it does, at least in the form of "potential" fantastic) and "in the mind" (of the observer, which we do not know yet). Thus, to tackle this issue we have to go back to the problem of the perceptual fantastic. Here what remains to be stressed is that Joedicke's postulates about the term "mannerism" have more to do with the reasons exposed above than with its appropriateness to dispel the alleged antinomy fantastic-material reality. Mannerism, in its broad sense, includes surrealism. And if "surrealistic" sculpture can exist, it is difficult to see why "fantastic" sculpture cannot. By definition, both are supposed to be beyond reality, so the same measuring rod should be applied to both.

Third, it can be argued that denying the existence of the "fantastic" on the basis of its contradiction with "reality" does not eliminate the problem. Because, if a painting depicting a fantastic scene cannot be fantastic by virtue of its "materiality," it cannot be denied that, by virtue of its thematic references, it "looks" fantastic. And this applies also to architecture. As was pointed out under the discussion of Vax's concept of fantastic architecture, architecture can be referential, or at least the kind of architecture called "fantastic" can be.

In fact, if there is one characteristic shared by most of the heterogeneous buildings, gardens and designs which through the years have been labelled "fantastic," it is their "referentiality" to something

else, be it objects, animals or places belonging to "other worlds." This is not to say that all the architecture which has been presented as "fantastic" *looks* so. A doughnut shop looking like a doughnut does not look "fantastic," or could do so only to the extent that it appears as an object fallen from a world of giants; but a castle which is the living image of a fairy tale, in an isolated place, certainly *looks* so. Yet, whether architecture *looking* fantastic could be perceived as such is an issue to be investigated in chapters V and VI.

But before concluding this discussion there is a point which needs to be discussed as it can create some confusion. In the art and literature texts reviewed in chapters II and III, the terms "fantasy" and "imagination" are often used indiscriminately, but, as pointed out in 1.2.2, Joedicke distinguished between "imagination" and "fantasy." Although Joedicke's ultimate purpose in making this distinction was to dismiss the "fantastic" in architecture, there is little doubt that his postulate deserves some attention.

According to the definition provided by the Encyclopedia of Psychology (1972), "imagination" is the ability to call to mind or picture forth situations, processes, individuals or objects which are not present; in creative stages those elements are also combined into novel unities. "Fantasy," on the other hand, appears to be a free running subjective imagining, a primary process that can provide a certain amount of gratification when external reality does not. Thus, it is clear that while any work of art is the result of an act of imagination, a work of "fantasy" is the result of a special type of imagination. Hence the need to make a distinction between the two terms.

4.9 Conclusion: the fantastic and labels

At this point it seems clear that most of the terms analyzed in this section, while appropriate to designate some of the architectural objects which have appeared under the term "fantastic," are inadequate for others. In fact, just as fantastic literature involves several categories, the "fantastic", the "marvellous" and the "utopian," terms such as grotesque, expressionist, visionary, art brut, and even the sublime, seem to be no more than categories under a more comprehensive term. The question then is to find such a term.

Going back to the terms analyzed in chapter I, viz. bizarre, eccentric and follies, and comparing them with the present definition of "fantastic," it seems clear that the soundest and safest (since it is not likely to provoke much controversy) term is "bizarre". What Gaudí's warriors [Fig. 2] on the Casa Milà have in common with Cheval's Giants [Fig. 17] on the facade of his palace and the towers of King Ludwig's castle [Fig. 14] is their difference from the architecture we are used to: they are "strange," "different," in short, "bizarre." But assuming that they are similar because they are different "from" something is the equivalent of assuming shared ideals and plans in people fighting a common enemy, which explains why so many a revolution ends in chaos when the fighting is over. If one is to follow Jencks, then in order to be "bizarre" a piece of architecture only needs one odd feature, e.g. the form of a star when seen from a helicopter. This may explain why classifications are so important in Jencks's approach but it may say very little to a person looking at the building from the sidewalk or from the ground floor of the building across the street. And something similar can be said for the terms "eccentric" and "follies," with the addition that these are loaded with many negative connotations. Moreover, these terms do not tell us much about that architecture, besides putting it in a static category which, if literature and art theorists have pointed in the right direction, may be much too restrictive. For if the fantastic is an "experience," that is to say the result of an interaction between a peculiar environment and its perceiver, then an architecture which looks strange may be other than just "bizarre."

Concerning the use of the term "fantastic" in architectural literature, a question which has escaped the attention of the writers in the field, and which may prove to be more illuminating than it appears at first sight, is why the term has been repeatedly used in spite of the inability of those authors to properly justify its adoption. And after the analysis of literary and art theories it is not difficult to suspect that one of the reasons is that the term "fantastic" has an appeal which neither "bizarre," nor "mannerist" or "grotesque," nor "eccentric" has. Consciously adults may profess indifference or disdain for the "fantastic" or "fantasies;" and yet, the word "fantastic" suggests the extraordinary, the magic, the impossible, and although we may not admit that we believe in miracles or extra-ordinary events, the frailty of human life sometimes makes us hope that they exist.

A second reason may be that, as pointed out above, the term fantastic is less restrictive than names designing specific, temporally bound art movements such as expressionism, surrealism and even mannerism (despite attempts to make the latter term more comprehensive), or very particular perspectives such as "visionary" or "sublime". Moreover, the other terms are not free from negative connotations: "bizarre" has as many as "fantastic," (albeit of a different origin): it stresses oddness, which is too closely associated with deviancy for comfort. "Follies", as its name indicates, is associated with an act of folly and more readily associated with garden extravaganzas in the 18th century than with Gaudí's architecture, although it may be argued that Neuschwanstein and the gardens at Bomarzo could both belong to this category. "Eccentric" is perhaps the only other term which is as sound and safe as "bizarre," and with less negative connotations. But just as "bizarre", "eccentric" puts those buildings in a static category. So only by knowing how those buildings are actually perceived as part of the built environment is it possible to be in a condition to determine which term is the most appropriate for those strange buildings that have received more labels than proper study.

4.10 Conclusion of Part I: Static vs. Dynamic "Fantastic"

At this point it is clear that while the architectural approach to the "fantastic" was essentially static -- the "fantastic" as a formal quality inherent in the architectural object -- in both literature and art the conception of the fantastic outlined in chapters II and III is essentially dynamic. Literature and art theorists have tended to consider the "fantastic" not as a quality completely attributable to an object or circumstance *per se*, but as a "potentiality" realized through "experience". In other words, the "fantastic" is what results from the interaction of a subject with an object, viz. an environment, or circumstances whose characteristics potentially *can*, but not necessarily *will*, trigger a fantastic experience. Those characteristics are basically four: ambiguity, juxtaposition, actual or virtual rupture with natural laws, and participation in a menacing atmosphere.

In both art and literature the notion of the fantastic implies "reason" and the "real world", but whereas in literature the "potentiality" is contained in an actual irruption of "other worlds" into the real world of the text, in the visual arts a mere suggestion of the disruption suffices. This means that in the "visual" fantastic, the actual existence of the "experience" depends even more on the subject. Because it is the subject who actually develops -- and so anticipates in the mind -- possible outcomes of the "menace" perceived. Thus it is the subject who ultimately turns the "virtual" fantastic into an experience by projecting into it fears and past experiences. Yet in both literature and the visual arts the subject having the direct fantastic experience is not the reader or the person looking at the painting, but the character of the book or the people "in," or "virtually in," the painting.

Thus, if reader or onlooker actually experiences that "moment of hesitation" characteristic of the fantastic, it is because of the perceiver's immersion in the atmosphere of the story or the painting, through the process of identification with a real or virtual character in the text or the picture; this, therefore, is a mediated experience. The

reader and the onlooker may physically experience a shudder of fear, but they know that they are not in danger. Of course it can be argued that there are novels in which the "virtual" menace could be so close to the reader's real world that suddenly the fantastic the fictional character's experience becomes the reader's "fantastic experience:" in the instant in which the thought that the fictional "fantastic" could actually occur hits, the "hesitation" takes place and the relatively safe and predictable world will become as dangerous as the one in which the character is living. In this case, one may speculate, the literary fantastic irrupts into the three-dimensional world, becoming a fantastic experience in itself, and as such it may present an intermediate case between the literary and the architectural fantastic.

Now the obvious question is: What happens when an individual faces a hybrid, an ambiguous architectural object which is no longer neither a literary creation nor an image in two dimensions, but a three-dimensional presence in his everyday world, that is, what happens when the experience is not "mediated?" The answer to this question is that we do not know, because, as pointed out in chapter 1, the focus of architectural literature has been the "fantastic" as a quality of a particular object rather than as an interaction between that object and a perceiving subject. Thus the next obvious question is: May not the notions advanced by literature and art theorists be used to explain the "fantastic" in the built environment? The answer to this question is "not directly," for two reasons.

First, none of the notions outlined in chapters 2 and 3 appear to have been validated through research. Second, literary and pictorial universes cannot immediately be assimilated to the three-dimensional world of our everyday experience. The creation of literary or pictorial worlds is limited only by the imagination of the artist, while in the built environment the constraints are many: physical laws, building regulations, economic limitations, functional requirements, site dimensions, the terrain's morphology and formal and functional characteristics of the immediate environment. Literary and pictorial worlds are defined once and for all; the built environment is dynamic, so the immediate surroundings,

when not the building itself, change, presenting at any point in time not only an appearance different from the one the creator had in mind at the time of conception, but also from the one a subject would have perceived at a previous occasion.

Despite those limitations the notions advanced by art and literature theorists can prove useful in setting up the appropriate frame for a study of the psychological aspects of the "fantastic" in the built environment, i.e. how these buildings are perceived, what type of experience they elicit in the perceiver and, as a result, whether this architecture can rightly be labelled "fantastic." Moreover, those notions can be useful in setting the frame also for a study of the creators of "fantastic" spaces, aiming to gain an insight into some general aspects of the fantastic, i.e. its connection with dreams, childhood experiences, mental health etc., which cannot be addressed when studying people's perception of "fantastic" places.

The psychological aspects mentioned are the subject of chapters V and VI. Chapter V consists of a study of the main issues concerning creators of "fantastic" places based on recorded personal history, biographies or empirical data. Chapter VI consists of an empirical study of people's perception of selected "fantastic" places throughout Europe.

PART II

V CREATING THE FANTASTIC: SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

5.0 The fantastic and the artist

According to Hammacher (1981) human beings can be considered in many ways as living in two places at once. They are single separate individuals, "a whole universe trapped within their own skin," and at the same time part of the larger organism of society. Thus we inhabit, simultaneously, two types of space: the secluded space of our inner world and the fluid network of relationships with other beings and things in the surrounding world.

In art it is possible to find the same split which is evident in the individual. It is either directed inwards or outwards, though it may sometimes be both at the same time. The outer-directed is oriented towards large sectors of a society, catering to their collective fantasies. *Pop* and *Op* belong to this group.

Within the other tradition, most artists seem to share a common characteristic: In the words of Hammacher (1981) their work as well as their lives are often disrupted to the point of obsession. The language of their images follows a code that has a profound meaning for the artist alone rather than one widely accepted. So when the symbols used are "public" they usually act in an oblique manner, revealing themselves as archetypal symbols. In any case the images produced are the artist's attempt to come to terms, symbolically, with his or her own experience. Psychologically, it is often the anchor by which the artist secures identity in an environment of shifting emotions and values. As Lawrence Burt (quoted by Coutts-Smith (1970)) puts it, art becomes a world of which the artist is in control. Sometimes art is the means by which artists maintain their sanity. The Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman (1981) sees the practice of art as an "exorcism," a ritual, a satisfaction of an interior need; "someone studying sleep discovered that if you are prevented from dreaming you go crazy. It is completely the same

with me. If I could not create my dreams -- my films -- that would make me completely crazy" (p. 52).

But there is also another side to it, or, if not another side, at least a darker nuance. "Saturnine natures" Hocke (1967) calls the mannerist artist, following fifteenth century humanist Marsilio Ficino, who took Saturn for what it was for Aristotle: a symbol of genius but also of somber temperament, crime and madness. Seldom, according to Ficino, is the Saturnine type represented by common characters or destinies but rather by men that are very different from their neighbors, whether sublime or beastly, whether covered with gifts or plunged in misery and loneliness. These traits, which characterize many of the artists working at the court of Rudolph II in Prague, could be found three centuries later in many a surrealist, symbolist or expressionist artist as well as and in their non-professional versions, the self-made "artist" or "bricoleur" trying to re-create a universe within the limits of his or her land plot in some bleak industrial suburb. "Scandals and eccentricities," says Jackson (1981), "form a breach in the stable, normal course of human affairs." And this is how those "saturnine natures" disrupt the order in which the neighborhood unquestionably follows the cycle of birth, work, reproduction and death. But how do they, themselves, fare?

Jakab (1978) and Volmat (1956) have provided an insight into these issues by exploring, respectively, the psychological universe of the builders of eccentricities or "fantastic" structures and the narrow fringe that seems to separate them, and the fantastic artist in general, from pathology. As Gombrich (1960) pointed out, the fantastic, in every wake of life, is disruptive, and in this respect "fantastic" builders are no exception.

5.1 "Fantastic" builders: A psychologist's approach

Construire n'est rien d'autre qu'un plaisir voluptueux comparable à celui de l'homme amoureux. Quiconque l'a jamais expérimenté sait que l'acte de construire produit à la fois tant de plaisir et de désir que, quelle que soit l'ardeur qu'un homme y déploie, il désirera toujours en faire d'avantage

Filarète, *Architettura ingegneria* (quoted by C. & C. Prévost, 1981)

The only psychological study of fantastic builders that could be found after exhaustive search is a report by Jakab (1976) on a film produced by her in collaboration with two other psychiatrists, G. Ferdière from France and Dr. Behrends from Germany. The sample consisted of four cases, three of which are "classics" of books on fantastic architecture: Simon Rodia (spelled "Rhodia" in the article), builder of the "Watts Towers" in the United States, Raymond Isidore, creator of a fantastic garden in France, and Junker, builder of a "junky" house in Germany. The fourth case, perhaps the best documented, has not yet been dealt with in the specialized publications. The builders, in this case, are two wealthy brothers, Alphonse and Raymond Rethoré, who, for four decades, have been building a monumental facade of their chateau in Angoulême, France. In the study, the works of these builders are presented under the name of "imaginary." Although no explanation is given for the choice of this term, it seems that the works have received this qualifier for being the realization of each builder's wishes, fantasies and personal dreams.

Besides the making of a film, the method followed by the author(s) consisted of interviews with the builders, and/or their relatives and/or neighbors, as well as of the study of the psychiatric records of two of the builders who had been hospitalized (M. Isidore and Herr Junker). The purpose of the study was to search for common traits in the "imaginary dwellings" and their creators through the analyses of the following three categories:

(i) the psychological traits or personality profile that may predispose someone to the creation of an imaginary dwelling;

(ii) the socio-cultural context of these works or the specific constellation which determined their initiation in time, their location and their style;

(iii) the essential traits of the imaginary dwellings.

The author(s) aimed to answer four questions (a, b, c and d) concerning these dwellings. From the analysis of each case the author concludes, following the above categories:

a. What do they build?

- an imaginary dwelling that is the realization of the most personal dream, often a symbol of an admired past; it represents historical or religious motives and it is also a personal shrine which can be a shelter in the present or a symbolical resting place beyond this life;

The common architectural traits of the buildings are:

- well-built, lasting monuments,
- out of context with their immediate surroundings but in context with the builder's cultural heritage, and
- built by individuals with the technical knowledge necessary to carry the works through;
- in all cases but one the materials used were inexpensive.

b. When do they build?

In times when contrasts are great, when the innermost desire for freedom, for power or for beauty is faced with an oppressive environment of poverty, or decaying social values.

c. Where do they build?

Always in personally owned land in lonely places, in slums or

amidst ruins, in places without any signs of progress or any glimpse of hope for the future.

d. Who builds?

- a lonely person (either single or widowed), leading a very austere life.

The common psychological traits among the builders of imaginary dwellings are

- loneliness,
- a "vision of *grandeur*," a need for signs of power and freedom represented by the building itself and a throne, a religious shrine, or a mausoleum where they want to be buried,
- great imagination,
- the tenacity to work daily for decades,
- a single goal "which is perhaps a never abandoned desire to play and an overwhelming urge to escape" (from what is not said in the article, but from the context it is possible to deduce that it is from the limitations or the ugliness of the socio-cultural environment).

All builders:

- experience happiness while building,
- assemble materials and make their designs alone,
- handle their tools and materials "realistically, in order to create the ultimate in their unrealistic imaginary world,"
- lead a sedentary life,
- seclude themselves from the reality of their environment, yet stamp upon it an enduring mark.

There are some differences as well

- in their economic status: although all of them are outside the middle ranges of the petite bourgeoisie, two of them (Rodia and Isidore) lived in poverty; the brothers Rethoré were unquestionably wealthy, and Herr Junker had inherited enough money to live without working;

- in their levels of education: the brothers Rethoré and Herr Junker were well educated, the other two had had only minimal formal education.

This paper has several merits of which not the least is its availability. First, it is an analysis of the subject done by professional psychologists, instead of lay readers and interpreters of Jung and Freud. Secondly, although its sample was too small to provide conclusive results, it could give some validity to observations made by other authors, such as the "extreme" character of these builders. As we have already seen, authors such as Arthaud, Hocke, Lassus, Thevoz, Vax, and Wampler had also reported on the "marginality" of these builders, on their situation on both sides of the mean, whether wealthy or poor, educated or almost illiterate, mentally sound or almost or downright insane. Moreover, the findings on the messianic, egocentric, wistful aspects of their personalities also coincide with the conclusions to which other writers had arrived.

Unfortunately, Jakab's noticeable exclusion of architectural literature not only hampered her taking full advantage of her findings, but also led, at least in one crucial case, to the adoption of a questionable terminology. The first questionable term is "imaginary," since it narrows the issue down to "what exists only in the imagination; unreal." "Imaginative," on the other hand, meaning "created by, indicative of, or characterized by imagination or creativity" (American Heritage Dictionary, ed. 1978) would have been more appropriate. Yet, this term has two drawbacks. First, it may appear as a redundant qualifier, since, in a broad sense, architecture must, to exist at all, be the product of imagination or creativity (independently of how much or how little of both).

The second term to be questioned is "dwelling" which is not very appropriate, as these builders seem to be more inclined to create structures without practical purposes rather than livable spaces. But despite these problems, the paper has the virtue of finding common denominators

under heterogeneous appearances in addition to being quite unique in the field.

5.2 The *bricoleurs* and the impulse to create

Just as in Jakob's studies, few non-specialized works have focused on the builders of "fantastic spaces," trying to recollect, when possible, their impressions, or to rely on written material left behind. In those works psychological aspects are taken into account, not for their interest in themselves, but for the role they play in the creative activity. For the most part, the artistic activity appears as a means to supersede, through the materialization of dreams or fable-like atmospheres, the anonymity imprinted by industrialization and the hardships of life.

Under the suggestive title *Féeries en béton peint* (Enchantments in Painted Concrete), Loyer (1971) discussed a number of gardens displaying Snow Whites, dwarfs, dragons and other imaginary creatures similar to those introduced by Bernard Lassus in *Les Jardins Imaginaires* (1977). Often called "art pavillonnaire" (bungalow art), this form of "art" flourishes in front or back yards of modest suburbs. The subject of these representations are, in general, symbolic and elementary themes (in a way quite close to what Koh claimed as archetypes): the park, the forest, the basin, the lake, the moon, the castle, the colonnade, without neglecting dangerous animals or maleficent creatures such as the serpent or a dragon. Those elements are presented in the context of a story, usually a childhood tale, although the influence of television is not negligible. According to Loyer this strictly personal phenomenon has as its motivation not only to attract attention but also to create and possess vital space. But although this art is the expression of an elementary need to animate an environment in which too many elements are ready-made, its archetypal content should not be underestimated, for in Loyer's view this is precisely the type of art which the Jungian school could use as a basis to reflect on the existence of the contemporaneous collective unconscious.

Ehrman (1962), writing about the same type of "builders," had tried to put in relief the "oneiric" as well as the philosophical content of this type of realization. Although in some cases it is evident that the builder had, at some point, suffered from some kind of mental disturbance, this is not always the case. What appears more often are traces of egocentrism, or the feeling of being inspired by a higher spirit. Quoting from some of the writings left by Cheval, Ehrman reports that the postman, to amuse himself while at his job, was building as if in dreams, an enchanted landscape having "all that the genius of a humble man can conceive (grottoes, towers, gardens, castles, museums and sculptures)..." (p. LV).

What triggered the move from dream to reality, according to Cheval himself (although some authors have speculated that this was a late justification giving more gloss to his work) was a pebble of an unusual shape he accidentally found while at work. It was then, Cheval related in his autobiography, that "I told myself: since nature provides sculptures, I will make myself architect and mason" (cited by Borne, 1969, p. 15). His neighbors thought he was a poor lunatic filling his garden with stones but that did not prevent him, when told by the authorities that he could not be buried in his palace "in the fashion of the Pharaoh" (ibid, p. 17) from building another complex structure in the local cemetery.

In the case of Raymond Isidore the trigger was a piece of broken china, also found accidentally. But, unlike Cheval, Isidore does not attribute the merits of his work to himself, but to an external force, as if he were under the command of a spirit who told him how to do it. He expressed having been driven, in spite of himself, to making monstrous beings. But since his production was sometimes more harmonious he saw his work as the exemplification of "good and evil."

As Ehrman reports, Isidore attributed to human spirit an important place in his work: "The spirit travels, wanders, it is free, it is everywhere. It does not want to live in a house built by an architect, a room imposed by force, but in a place of its taste, resembling itself" (p.

xxxix). Most of these "bricoleurs" had started their work when in their forties, or when they retired. According to Verroust (1978) they live on the fringes of almost everything: towns, income, way of life and sometimes, also, mental health. Yet Verroust also reports on their desire to show their work, on their wish to have their work appreciated even if only by children in the neighborhood. Sometimes people stop and take pictures, children ask questions and that seems to be quite satisfying. But they would, Verroust claims, do it even without recognition, just for themselves.

Wampler (1977), who mixed "soft" architecture with some of the "classics" of the fantastic group, maintains that this desire to build originates in both the desire to have "a place all their own" and in the impossibility of hiring an architect. However, the wild fantasy of some of the constructions presented by Wampler, plus the life-long fever of constant additions that characterizes most of his builders, may indicate that what is behind this urge is more than just "a place all their own." It is precisely when considering these builders that the "desire," so often mentioned by writers on literature as a component of the fantastic, starts to acquire a new relevance. For it seems that here the process, rather than the end result is the important thing. It is as if a never satisfied desire, pursued single-mindedly on a project that appears never to be finished, were also a form of defying death, or at least of keeping it at bay.

There is, among the stories surrounding fantastic buildings, one which, beyond the anecdote, adds some plausibility to the above speculation: Convinced that the ghosts of the Indians killed by Winchester rifles were haunting her, Susan, the heiress of the namesake fortune, consulted a spiritualist, and was told that she could save herself if she were to build a house without stopping, day and night. As long as the construction went on she would live. Chronicles prove that she did not beat death, but lived to the respectable age of 82, leaving behind her a house with 160 rooms and a place among fantastic buildings. Could it not

be that what is behind that story is less unique than we are willing to believe?

5.3 The Fantastic: a narrow line between pathology and art

Although writing mainly about the art produced by mental patients, Volmat (1956) touched some issues in the frontier zone between officially accepted artistic movements such as expressionism and surrealism, and mental disorders. Following Pfister, Volmat maintained that preferences among expressionist paintings reveal the psychological traits of the observer; this is so because the artist is understood only by those whose subconscious speaks the same language.

Several forms of art, among them primitive, children's and psychopathological art, seem to favor an "agglutination of images" which very often appears in dreams, myths and delirious states. By combining, decomposing and melting human, animal and vegetable forms, forms are created which are unique and endowed with strong magical significance. This mechanism of condensation converts the image into a symbol with multiple aspects and meanings. According to Volmat, Lombroso was the first to call attention to the abundance of symbols, hieroglyphs and inscriptions which can be found in primitive and pathological art (and also, it should be mentioned, in Cheval's palace, the Bomarzo Gardens and the surrealist painter Frida Khalo's works, among others). For Lombroso the egocentrism of the paranoid corresponds to the anthropocentrism of the primitive, both being the type of behavior conducive to animism.

Freud, on the other hand, proposed the theory that the psychological make-up of the neuropath and of the primitive are analogous, if it be admitted that neurosis implies a regression to a previous state of development. Thus the animism which characterizes primitive man corresponds to the narcissistic phase which can be found at the beginning of individual development. This phase is characterized by a belief in the extraordinary power of thought which is the basis of magic. This attitude has been abandoned with civilisation but art still shows traces of it. In

art, a man consumed by desire starts making something which resembles the satisfaction of his desire, all of which, through the artistic illusion, provokes affective reactions similar to those that the real satisfaction would produce. This is why, in Freud's view, it is possible to talk of the magic of art and to compare the artist to a magician. Furthermore, there is a rather close relationship between art and dreams: Both originate in the unconscious and express it in disguise, according to the laws of condensation and displacement. Concerning this theory, Volmat refers to Badouin, who remarked that the term "regression" does not necessarily imply pathology: Sleep and dream are also processes of narcissistic regression. For Badouin the regression present in art is rather a form of introversion, an orientation of psychological energy towards the world of images and interior life.

Sandblom (1989), in an extensive study of the relationship between creativity and disease, points out that neuroses and psychosomatic disorders strongly influence, or even constitute the foundation of, artistic creation. Thus, while the outbreak of mental disease may impair the creativity of patients who used to be creative, it may, in those who where not, cause an upsurge of creativity which has a therapeutic effect, particularly when the individual is apathetic or cannot communicate. According to Sandblom, many insane individuals have a spontaneous urge to create, and their art reveals symptoms of their disease. Through their works "we are invited to explore an inner world, fantastic and totally alien to ours" (p. 61). The fact that, although crude, many drawings by mental patients bear a similarity of approach with those of established artists "throws light on how art can disclose obscure phenomena in the emotional life of man" (p. 61). Although a mental disease has commonly, in its final stages, a deleterious effect on an artist's creativity, in its initial stages it often enhances it. Hölderlin's greatest poems were written at the beginning of his breakdown, and the Swedish artist Ernst Josephson produced his most original paintings during that stage: according to Sandblom, in the opinion of one of Josephson's friends, "Not until Joseph went mad did he find his right mind" (p. 73).

According to Volmat, modern and pathological art have some characteristics in common: expression of irreality, use of incomprehensible forms, artificial division of the object, and a playful attitude. Yet, there is a substantial difference on formal grounds: Professional painters follow academic principles (e.g. composition rules) and create more or less consciously, whereas mental patients do it unconsciously.

In Volmat's view, surrealism, which can be considered "an expressionism of depths," was an irruption of the fantastic in painting, and the unconscious constantly appeared in its representations. Yet, Volmat sees psycho-pathological and primitive art as being more authentic than surrealism, since the artists of this movement had tried, by indirect and artificial means, to express and to speak to and with the unconscious. Matthews (1982) sustains a similar point of view, disagreeing with authors who maintain that surrealist works abolish all difference in nature between the normal and the pathological. "It is solely the liberating effect of mental derangement, as made concrete in the imagery presented by certain insane artists that the surrealist prizes. They [the surrealists] may aim to emulate the results that insanity brings, but they go on proclaiming the virtues of holding rationalization in check" (p. 140).

H. Ey, on the other hand, (reported by Volmat, 1956), considered that the artist does "aesthetic work" since he keeps a certain distance to it, while mental patients are so fused with their work that this becomes not a work of art but an "aesthetic object." Thus, in Ey's view, surrealists *practice* the *marvellous* while the *alienated is marvellous*. Although Volmat points out that this distinction in the attitude of the artist does not seem to hold in reality, the difference between "work of art" and "aesthetic object" could be of some utility in dealing with "fantastic architecture." If the meaning of the term "aesthetic object" could be extended to comprise any object made with an aesthetic intention but without professional skills, then, on the same principle, it could be said that the spaces produced by *bricoleurs* are "aesthetic spaces," that is, spaces created with an emphasis on aesthetics but with little or no

formal skills. In this way the old controversy of whether the spaces built by *bricoleurs* are architecture or not could become irrelevant, as those spaces would belong to a category of their own.

Yet, regardless of whether non-professionals create architecture or aesthetic spaces, a fact that cannot be denied is that, as most of the writers in this section have pointed out, it is not unusual to see in an individual that a penchant for the creation of fantastic spaces is accompanied by mental instability or some kind of peculiar behavior. This seems to occur independently of whether the creator is a professional architect or not, and in this respect biographical details on King Ludwig II of Bavaria and on the catalan architect Antonio Gaudí provide some interesting insights into this issue.

4.4 Madness and power

Although Ludwig II of Bavaria (1845-1886) is not the designer of Neuschwanstein, the most "fantastic" castle to be found outside a "fantasyland", he certainly is the force which conceived it and finally gave it its shape, for as Cable (1961) points out, the projects had to be approved by the King "down to the last knob" (p. 36).

King Ludwig, who inherited the throne at the age of eighteen, shares many characteristics with the fantastic creators studied by Jakab: he had an unhappy childhood and was a lonely person who preferred a ride in a golden sledge at midnight to human company. He was dominated by both a passion for building impractical and sumptuous castles, and a sense of "grandeur" beyond his prerogatives as a king of a comparatively small domain. Yet, king he was, and like most "fantastic" builders, he also stood on one of the extremes of the social scale.

According to de Grunwald, the mental instability which irrupted before the king turned forty and which led to his abdication, was an inheritance from the branch of the Hohenzollern family to which his mother belonged. Although during his childhood nothing forbade Ludwig's tragic end, this period was far from happy. His father, King Maximilien,

while showing little if any affection, was trying to bring up his two children (Ludwig and his younger brother Otton) according to the Spartan model: getting up very early, little food, intensive lecturing, severe punishments and very little money. Abandoned to himself, Ludwig took refuge in daydreaming. His French governess initiated him to the splendors of Versailles and emphasized the inherent superiority of princes. Louis XIV became young Ludwig's hero and years later his castle at Herrenchiemsee was going to bear proof of this admiration. The enormous castle had only two bedrooms: one was for himself, the other for the ghost of *le Roi soleil*.

The romantic paintings representing Lohengrin with his swan and the Nibelungen cycle which Ludwig found at his family's castle in Hohenschwangau aroused not only his imagination but also, from the age of nineteen, a lifelong infatuation with both Richard Wagner and his music. This infatuation, which was to produce what are perhaps the most passionate letters ever written by a king to another man, was also the cause of a good deal of financial trouble for his ministers. According to de Grunwald (1967), Ludwig's love for men, repressed by his Catholic faith and feelings of guilt, found its outlet in a passion for castle building which unfortunately also revealed his lack of artistic talent and his love for gaudy decoration. Bainville (quoted by de Grunwald, 1967), referring to Neuschwanstein, pointed out that "it is not an inquisitive person, an artist, someone with a delicate taste" who ordered the castle "which produces on those who enter it a state of limitless amazement" (p. 139). Designed without any consideration for practical matters, the castle served "to facilitate [the King's] flight into his kingdom of dreams" (de Grunwald, 1967, p. 139).

Ironically, it was in Neuschwanstein that the king heard that a delegation of his ministers, including those whom he considered to be the most loyal to him, had appeared in the neighboring castle of Hohenschwangau to demand his abdication. Two days later he was taken to the castle of Berg as insane; and two days after the transfer he was found dead, with his physician, in a nearby lake. His death, as so much

else concerning him, "remains an enigma." As he had said to a friend, he wanted it to be so (de Grunwald, 1967). So Ludwig II of Bavaria came to be known as "the mad King," although in the words of his cousin Elizabeth, the empress of Austria, "Ludwig was not crazy: he was only an original lost in his dream" (de Grunwald, 1967, p. 200).

5.5 Gaudí: Eccentricity and Genius

According to McMullen (1968) Gaudí was an amalgam of late Romantic and Early Modern conceptions of the architect as a culture hero: He mixed Ruskin's eagerness with William Morris's zeal, and his faith in his own powers "resembled the cosmic crankiness and harsh egotism of the elderly Wright." (p. 30). Politically, he was an ardent Catalan separatist who refused to speak Spanish, a devoted, conservative Roman Catholic and a tireless student of medieval symbolism.

He was a handsome young man but had apparently only one brief love affair, and never married. According to McMullen his celibacy, fortified by long walks and a vegetarian diet, explains the strange, sensuous shapes he chose for his buildings. In 1910, when he was in his late fifties and one of the favorite and most successful architects of the affluent Barcelona bourgeoisie, he gave up his career and devoted himself entirely to the famous church of the *Sagrada Família* (Holy Family). Eventually he went to live in his workshop on the grounds of the site and became an ill-tempered hermit, dressing as any of his workmen. When the construction funds ran low he begged in the streets of Barcelona, hat in hand.

In June 1928, at the age of seventy-six, he absentmindedly crossed a street and was badly injured by a passing streetcar. No-one recognized him in his shabby clothing, and he was not treated immediately. He died three days later on a pauper's bed.

5.6 Conclusion. The "fantastic" as obsession

If the "fantastic" is "marginal" as a literary genre it is no less

exceptional when it comes to the creators of "fantastic" spaces. Although it is clearly beyond the scope of this study to draw general conclusions about the creators of such places, there is little doubt that they are "originals" who have decided to make a statement, and who have found their way. Moreover, although it is too early to identify the particular personality traits of contemporary architects and artists who design buildings which are "different," the experience of the past seems to indicate that this could be an interesting terrain for future investigation.

A feature of importance seems to be the determination with which most of the builders of these spaces work, independently of their social standing or of their profession. Not only "bricoleurs" spend years on the materialization of a particular idea; as Gaudí gave up everything to work on the Sagrada Família, so the Italian-American architect Paolo Soleri has been devoting himself exclusively to the construction of his visionary *Arcosanti* in the Arizona desert. When funds run low he makes and sells bells so building can continue. Perhaps, rather than people lost in their dreams, as the Empress of Austria defined King Ludwig, the builders of "fantastic" architecture are people with a dream whose materialization has become the sole objective of their lives.

VI. THE PERCEPTION OF "FANTASTIC" PLACES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

In the preceding chapters the theoretical approaches to the fantastic in literature and art as well as the empirical and biographical approaches to the creation of "fantastic spaces" were examined in order to identify alternatives of analyses aiming to overcome the main limitations of the architectural approach to "fantastic architecture" outlined in chapter I. The objective of the present chapter is to provide an insight into the perception of some of those "strange spaces" which have been labelled "fantastic" through an empirical study constructed on the basis of the perspectives gained in the preceding chapters.

6.0 The Study

Objectives

The study has two main objectives:

1. To test the validity of two contradictory assumptions frequently advanced in architectural literature, i.e. that in architecture the "fantastic" is solely a quality inherent in the architectural object and that something as concrete as architecture cannot be "fantastic."
2. To investigate a hypothesis based on literature theorists' conception of the "fantastic" as an experience, i.e. that the type of architecture frequently labelled "fantastic" is not "fantastic" *per se*, but by virtue of the perception and experiences it may provoke.

More specifically, the aims are to establish:

1. Whether the perception of a "fantastic" place is affected by
 - a. familiarity with the "fantastic" place, gained through previous visits, living in the vicinity, or even living in the place;
 - b. the way in which the perceiver came to know the place, i.e. whether it was an accidental or a "tutored" discovery;
 - c. any previous knowledge about the place, whether historical, pictorial, referential or other.

2. the impression the visitor/perceiver has of the place, and how the "real" place compares with the mental image (whether based on pictures, texts or hearsay) he/she had before visiting.
3. whether the place evokes in the perceiver images connected with fantastic stories, paintings, etc.;
4. whether the place, as experienced, is associated with feelings of uneasiness or even fear;
5. the role played by the surrounding environment in the perception of the "fantastic" place.

It is necessary to note here that although it could be hypothesized that cultural factors play a role in the perception of a "fantastic" place, no provision has been made to take such factors into account for two main reasons. First the term "culture" is as ambiguous as "fantastic" with the aggravating circumstance that it is even more loaded with variables which are difficult to both define and measure. Introducing this factor with some rigor would have multiplied the scope of the problem beyond that which could be manageable for the present work.

Second, an alternative research design focussing on culture would have required to reduce the typology and number of sites to one, thus curtailing the possibility of investigating those variables and issues identified in the literature as relevant for the "fantastic." It is clear that in a state of the art in which the empirical knowledge about the perception of "fantastic spaces" is nil, the most pressing need is that of finding whether places which have been equally labelled as "fantastic" are or not perceived as such. There is little doubt that reducing the sites to one would have provided information about a place labelled "fantastic" not about the "fantastic" used as a label for places.

Method

The study consists of a total of one hundred and twenty tape-recorded interviews, twenty for each site, with visitors to six "fantastic" places throughout Europe. The places selected for the study have all been mentioned repeatedly in the architectural literature on the subject.

Criteria for site selection

The "fantastic" places studied were selected on the basis of two criteria: labelling, and type and function of the setting. The first criterion requires that the place has been labelled "fantastic" in architectural literature. The second requires the setting to fall into at least one of the following architectural/functional categories: buildings/landscaped spaces, inhabited/uninhabited, related/unrelated to daily life, built by professional architects/by non-professionals.

Given the lack of antecedents for this type of study, the criteria were established as a tentative means to detect whether the perception of "fantastic" forms is affected by functional variables. Thus, two types of buildings and one type of landscaped spaces are studied, and for each type two places are selected with the object of allowing some type of comparison concerning their formal features:

Buildings: The two types of buildings studied are: dwellings (inhabited) and castles (uninhabited). The study of "fantastic" dwellings has the purpose of assessing the reactions of the observers to a building associated with daily life, and studying how this knowledge affects their perceptions. Castles, on the other hand, are studied for the opposite reason, they being some of the most conspicuous buildings in fairy tales, and therefore more likely to be associated with a fantasy world than any other type of building.

Landscaped spaces: From the standpoint of the frequency and type of use, parks and gardens lie midway between dwellings (associated with daily life) and castles (exceptional situation). These offer a particular

interest because they are places in which to relax, to think and to let the imagination wander.

The actual places selected for this study are:

- Dwellings: Two contemporary 4-5 story apartment buildings, both in urban areas and both inhabited. The first, known as *La Maison des Schtroumpfs*, is located on the intersection of rue Louis-Fave and rue du Grand-Pré in Geneva (Switzerland), designed by professional architects. The second, known as *Hundertwasser* is located on the intersection of Löwengasse and Kegelgasse, in the city of Vienna (Austria), and was designed by a painter.
- Castles: The two buildings in this category, which are among the most frequently mentioned in the literature on "fantastic" architecture, are considerably different. The first is the castle of *Neuschwanstein*, built on royal command by King Ludwig II of Bavaria and situated on a cliff overlooking the town of Schwangau, on road 17, a few miles north of the city of Füssen, in western Germany, near the Austrian border. The second is not a castle in the traditional sense of the word but a massive and highly elaborated building known by the not very modest name of *Palais Idéal* ("Ideal Palace"), is located in the French town of Hauterives, department of Drôme (road 538, on the river Galaure) was designed and built by a man without any architectural training. This construction was brought to the knowledge of the public at large by members of the Surrealist movement, who professed a great admiration for it. Both buildings are located close to villages, out of main thoroughfares, the "Palais" even more so than Neuschwanstein.
- Landscaped spaces: The two best known "fantastic" outdoor spaces are *Park Güell* in the city of Barcelona (Spain) and the gardens of *Bomarzo*, located on a secondary road connecting the towns of Orte and Bagnai, some sixteen miles west of Viterbo (Italy). Although Bomarzo was originally laid out as a private garden, it is nowadays open to the public. Both places are of roughly the same size, but the locations are quite different: while Park Güell is part of an urban area and of easy

access, the garden of Bomarzo (known also as *Sacro Bosco* or The Sacred Park of the Monsters) is accessible only by automobile or tour buses. Nevertheless, since the objective of this study is to assess the perception of the formal aspects of the place rather than its use *per se*, location differences have been considered irrelevant. A detailed description of each building/garden is provided with the in-depth analysis of each site.

Population

Twenty adults, ten of each sex, were interviewed at each of the places, every sixth person in crowded conditions and every second when no more than three people were seen within one hour.

Given:

- the variety of locations for the settings (from countryside -- Bomarzo -- , to capital city -- Hundertwasser;
 - the diversity of types of perceivers that can be found in/around most of the settings (from a passer-by to the resident and visitors from abroad);
 - the limitation of resources to obtain very large samples, if all types of perceivers were to be represented in significant numbers;
 - the different conditions of visual and physical access at the settings (Bomarzo, Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Park Güell are surrounded by tall visual barriers while the other sites are not);
- a limiting criterion to define the "perceiver" had to be established.

Since a pilot study had demonstrated that the interview format requires that the interviewee spends at least fifteen minutes with the interviewer, passers-by were not considered as part of the population. The "perceiver," therefore, is defined as "any person: a resident, a neighbor or a visitor (whether from the same town, from out of town or from abroad), met on the grounds of the site and engaged in some activity bearing a relationship with the setting e.g. resting, taking care of children, photographing, mowing grass, or the like."

"Ground" is defined, for fenced-in spaces, as either the area beyond the cashier's box (Bomarzo, Cheval's "Palais Idéal") or beyond the entrance (Park Güell). For non-fenced spaces "ground" is the landscaped area around the building (Hundertwasser, Schtroumpfs) or the natural area defined by some physical characteristic, e.g. the promontory around Neuschwanstein.

The Interview Format

The interview format consists of nine open-ended questions, with supplementary questions and probes aimed at assessing the interviewee's perception of the place. In order not to discourage visitors with only little time to answer, interviews were kept short: a previous pilot study had shown that the number of questions should be kept in the vicinity of ten. In the earlier study it was found that although visitors are, for the most part, receptive to questions within questions, i.e. when asked for clarification or expansion of something they have said, they tend to get impatient after the tenth question. People on their own tend to be more willing to accept longer interviews, but willingness also, to a great extent, depends on whether the interviewee is part of an organized tour, has a bus to catch etc. and on weather conditions.

The interviews were conducted in English, French, Italian and Spanish, by the same interviewer, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., during the summer months. The questionnaire used contains the following items:

1. Why are you visiting this place?
2. Is this your first visit?
3. a: How did you learn about the existence of the place?
 b: why did you decide to come?
4. a: Did you have a mental image of the place before coming?
 b: Where do you think that this image came from? Probe: Did you see pictures of the place before coming?
5. a: What is your impression of the place? [If the person has seen the place in pictures ask also:] You said that you have seen it in pictures before; now that you have seen it in reality, what is the

- impression you have, compared to the one you had from the picture?
- b: what, if anything, does the place make you think of? Probes: Does the place make you think of images you have seen in children's story-books? Other books? Paintings? Or dreams?
6. What do you think this place would be like at night? or in a forest? Or if you had come across it by pure chance? Probe: Does the place, as it is, communicate any feelings of fear? and at night? in a forest? if you had discovered it by chance?
 7. If a place similar to this one were to be built in your neighborhood, what would your reaction be? Probe: would you accept it, reject it, like it, dislike it?
 8. If you had to use just one word to define it, which word would that be?
 - (9). [If "fantastic" has not been used:] Would you call it "fantastic" [and if so:] why?

For three of the sites, Neuschwanstein. Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs additional nested questions were added to question #5. In Neuschwanstein, people were also asked: Have you visited any of the others castles built by King Ludwig? [if yes, then: how do those castles compare with this one [Neuschwanstein]? [if no, then: are you planning to visit any of the other castles built by King Ludwig? if yes, then: Why?]. As the other castles built by King Ludwig of Bavaria are gaudily decorated, but their external appearance does not deviate from that of traditional Renaissance French and German castles the aim of the question was to establish whether the visitor was interested in King Ludwig's castles in general or in the "fantastic" *Neuschwanstein* in particular. At Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs people were asked: Would you like to live in this place? Why? As in the Schtroumpfs many interviewees were already living in the place, not necessarily by choice but because they were in a waiting list for Municipality-owned housing the question for them was changed to: if you had a choice, would you choose this place to live? Why?

The interviews were numbered according to the order in which they were carried out. In order to provide some system of identification, verbatim transcriptions in the text are accompanied by the interview number preceded by # and in brackets.

Analysis

First, a general thematic analysis of the responses to the interviews for the six sites was carried out in order to establish general patterns and differences among them. In a second step each site was analysed in depth, viz. taking the interviews as wholes, and then discussed, first in relation to its functional pair, i.e. the garden at Bomarzo with Park Güell, Neuschwanstein with Cheval's "Palais Idéal," and then with the other sites, thus providing further insights into the general view rendered by the in-depth analysis.

The categories for the data analysis were established through an iterative process. In the first step the different terms used by the interviewees for each question in each site were registered separately. As in each site a certain number of interviews were in one or more foreign languages an equivalent in English was proposed by the researcher (in some cases accompanied by explanatory notes) and then submitted to native speakers holding degrees in psychology or linguistics who were also proficient in English.

In the second step, broader categories were established according to the purpose of the investigation (Sepstrup, 1981) and these were tested for reliability following a modified version of the "expert" method. Once the researcher had established a set of mutually exclusive categories (Lazerfeld, two professionals in the field of psychology were given a brief description of the problem and the objectives of the research and were asked to find a manageable number of categories for the terms presented. Subsequently, the researcher and the experts, working as a team and taking as a basis the categories established by the researcher, discussed and modified them until a consensus was established. This method of making the categories compatible through discussion was

considered crucial, as the category formulation could not be based on "every day life," obvious cultural patterns or previous research in the field. The data obtained was tested for significance using the Fisher exact probability test (p) in each individual site.

In chapter VI the information thus obtained is confronted with the theoretical aspects of fantastic literature and art discussed in Part I, with the psychological insights gained in chapter V, and finally discussed in relation to the main hypothesis defined as the objectives of this dissertation.

6.1 RESULTS FOR THE SIX SETTINGS: AN OVERVIEW

As the first step in the data examination a thematic analysis is carried out to provide an overview of the six settings. In order to avoid unnecessary fragmentation the questions are, whenever possible, grouped and analyzed under one heading. In each case the number of the question is indicated as well as its objective. Differences between the perceptions of males and females, nationals and foreigners, first time visitors and regulars are reported only when considerable differences are registered.

6.1.1 Demographics

The population of the six settings is composed of both nationals and foreigners, but there are some differences, both in the area of origin of foreign visitors and in the number of nationals among the sites. In Neuschwanstein and Park Güell the foreign sample is from Western Europe, North America and Japan; so also in Bomarzo, Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs except that no Japanese visitor was met there. In Cheval's "Palais Ideal" the sample consisted only of visitors from Western Europe. Conversely, while the proportion of nationals at Neuschwanstein was 15% and only slightly higher at Hundertwasser (20%), the percentage rose to 45% in Park Güell and Bomarzo, to 65% in the Schtroumpfs, and peaked in Cheval's "Palais Ideal" (80%).

6.1.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives, expectations, and images of the place.

The first four questions of each interview have two main objectives: the first is to investigate what kind of knowledge the visitors had about the place prior to the visit and whether that knowledge was acquired through reading or word of mouth, by looking at pictures, by previous visits or by other means, and whether they had any previous images or expectations. As it has been argued that the "fantastic" can exist in visual arts but not in architecture, any discrepancy between

images and reality could provide some insights into the issue. The second aim is to establish what prompted the decision to carry out the visit, i.e. whether the place itself, chance or other factors.

At all but two of the six settings between 80% and 85% of the sample were first time visitors, the exceptions being Park Güell, where 30% were regulars, and the Schtroumpfs, where 20% of the interviewees were residents of the building, 10% residents of the housing complex and 30% were neighbors who visited the place frequently. With the exception of Neuschwanstein, all the interviewees visited the place either because they had chosen to do so, or because they were accompanying a friend or a relative; most of the second-time visitors to all the settings belonged to the latter category. In Neuschwanstein, on the other hand, 30 % of the sample had on guided tours including a visit to the castle.

Concerning decisions to visit the place, the motives seem to vary along three interrelated lines, depending on: whether the perceiver is a native or a foreigner; whether the creator is a well known figure; and, as a result of either one or both together, the type of knowledge that the perceiver possesses. When the creator of the place is: a historical figure (Neuschwanstein); a very famous architect (Park Güell); a humble man made famous by the Surrealists (Cheval's "Palais Idéal"), then nationals are often more motivated to visit by an interest in the creator than in the place itself. Nevertheless, wanting to see "a strange place" or "if such a strange place really existed" appears as the single most common reason for visiting across all six settings; the other motives were: "for historical reasons" or because they "read about ... [Gaudi, Cheval etc];" "because I felt curious," and "because I came with a tour," "I came with my [parents, relatives,...]."

With the exception of the Schtroumpfs, at least 50% of the interviewees at each site had an image of the place based on a picture she or he had seen either on television, on a postcard, in a book, a brochure or at a tourist office. The percentage of visitors who had seen a picture fluctuates between 20% for the Schtroumpfs to 90% for Neuschwanstein.

Perceptions of the place

The fifth question aimed at investigating whether the visitors (and at the Schtroumpfs also the dwellers) spontaneously perceived the settings (or any aspects of these) as "fantastic;" how the image they had of the place before coming compared with the actual place, and whether the place had an evocative power, e.g. if it made them think of or remember "fantastic" or other images seen in books, films, etc., and whether or not it gave them the sensation, even if a flickering one, of having been transported into "another world."

The findings show that perceivers associate at least five of the six places with "fantasy," and fantasy-related qualities such as "dream-like" and "irreal," "fairy-like" (féerique) although in varying degrees: In Neuschwanstein (40%) it is the single most common feature, in Cheval's "Palais Idéal" (35%) and Park Güell (30%) it is the second most commonly mentioned feature, after "admiration for the creator" (75% and 40% respectively), although in at least half of the cases both features were mentioned together. At the Schtroumpfs the mention of "fantasy" was 10%, just like at Hundertwasser, where people tended to relate it to "toys" and "children's worlds" (40%) or to see the building as "imaginative and exciting" (30%). Bomarzo, on the other hand, was more readily seen as "mysterious," "hermetic," or "esoteric." Although from a Mannerist standpoint the two latter could be considered as qualities inherent in the "fantastic," it was estimated convenient to keep them separate, as the point can be controversial. It can be argued, for instance, that hermetic or esoteric doctrines are not fancy tales, and that the search for power or transcendence that a "hermetic" magus may be engaged in is very much "part of reality," however separated that reality may be from everyday life. Thus it is clear that "fantastic" and "esoteric" or "hermetic" do not belong to the same category.

As in the case of the decision to visit the setting, an interest in the creator appears to play a role in the way people perceive the place, and here also there is a tendency for nationals to show more interest in the creator than foreigners do, although in this case this

can be expected only when the creator is a historical or an internationally renown figure, i.e. at Neuschwanstein, Park Güell and Cheval's "Palais Idéal." On the other hand, the role of creators who are still alive, i.e. Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs, or are little known, i.e. Bomarzo, is either negligible or depends on other factors. In such cases no significant difference between natives and nationals was found.

The evocative power of the place, as reflected in the frequency with which the interviewees' associated it with images seen in or suggested by books, sculptures, films or dreams is quite high and definitely much higher than the "fantasy" content associated with the place in the previous questions. At Neuschwanstein, 70% of the interviewees associated the place with images seen in books, in most of the cases in children's books (fairy-tales or fables). At Park Güell the general percentage of image association was the same as at Neuschwanstein (70%), and slightly lower at Hundertwasser (65%); at Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Bomarzo the percentage was in the vicinity of 60%, with the lowest (50%) for the Schtroumpfs. However, not all places evoked "fantastic" images, as in Neuschwanstein. In Cheval's "Palais Idéal" there is a predominance of dream-like images, in Park Güell of a variety of images, spanning from collages to science-fiction cartoons; in Bomarzo the span covers classical Italian literature and modern mystery novels; in Hundertwasser it goes from Russian fairy-tales to toy shops, and in the Schtroumpfs from "wonder caves" (caves with strange natural formations) to posters of Pop-art.

Concerning the associations of the settings with "other worlds," the proportions observed proved to be of interest to the qualitative analysis: Neuschwanstein had the highest frequency (55%), followed by Cheval's "Palais" and Hundertwasser with 45% each, Güell (40%), Bomarzo (30%) and finally the Schtroumpfs with 20%. Those "other worlds" were predominantly "fantastic" in settings like Neuschwanstein and Park Güell; oneiric at the "Palais," the world of childhood at Hundertwasser and the "worlds of the past" at Bomarzo.

A point of interest, which requires some in-depth analysis, concerns how people feel about the confrontation of the image they had of the place with the place itself. It comes as no surprise to find that those who had seen pictures are more likely to be disappointed than those who had not; but the occurrence follows a puzzling pattern: the Schtroumpfs, which has one of the lowest percentages of picture-image holders, presents also one of the lowest percentages of disappointed visitors; on the same line, but at the other extreme, is Neuschwanstein, which has the highest proportion of both, very closely followed by Bomarzo. Cheval's "Palais Idéal," Hundertwasser, and Park Güell, on the other hand, have high or relatively high percentages of picture-image holders, but very low percentages of disappointment. These apparent contradictions, however, may be explained by the conjunction of several factors such as: quality of the pictures, i. e. the higher the quality the greater the possibilities of disappointment; size or lay-out of the settings and photographing techniques used, i. e. a small site which is made to appear much vaster by the use of wide angles or particular points of view; and the association of "fantastic" qualities with the setting during the process of "picture viewing," i. e. the higher the degree of fantasy attributed to the picture image the greater the possibilities of finding the real object disappointing. These problems are too complex to be discussed here but they will be given due attention in the in-depth analysis of each site and in the final discussion.

Place, feelings and context

Question six has three objectives. The first is to investigate the emotional response to the place, i. e. feelings and moods that people associate with the it. It was hypothesized that if the "fantastic" is the "hidden passenger" proposed by literary theorists, then its impact would or could be translated into feelings, rather than into perceptions susceptible to be expressed in a coherent, descriptive manner. The second objective is to assess (albeit with an hypothetical question), what role, if any, the immediate environment and the perceiver's mode of coming into contact with the place could play in the perception of the place as "fantastic". Finally, since both art and literature critics have speculated

that the "truly fantastic" is associated with fear, it was hypothesized that, if so, some indications should appear in the responses to questions either about feelings or about the hypothetical environments. Nevertheless, a question about fear was added, to make up for possible involuntary omissions on the part of the interviewees.

The percentage of people who reported having some feelings about the the place is rather high: 85% for Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Hundertwasser; 80% for Neuschwanstein; 65% for Park Güell and Bomarzo, and 40% for the "Schtroumpfs". The type of feelings associated with each place, however, vary considerably: in Neuschwanstein, Park Güell, the "Palais Idéal" and Bomarzo between 10% and 30% of the visitors mentioned the presence of feelings which "are here but which I cannot define"; in Neuschwanstein, the "Palais Idéal" and Park Güell around 20% of the visitors (mostly natives) expressed admiration for the creator and the work. In Neuschwanstein, feelings of melancholy, of being in a world disconnected from reality, of a "mythological madness," constituted about a third of the responses; at the "Palais Idéal" and Bomarzo people expressed feelings of "uneasiness," and in those two settings and in Park Güell that they felt that parts of the settings were "a little uncanny;" Bomarzo was mostly associated with feelings of melancholy, decadence and death, "the end of things," while Hundertwasser (75%) was associated with fun, playfulness, "lightness of being," and the Schtroumpfs, though to a lesser degree (40%), with joy and contentment.

When asked to imagine the place at night, more than half of the sample associated Bomarzo either with feelings of fear or with uneasiness (45% and 35%, respectively), and something similar occurred at Park Güell with 50% and 20% respectively; fear also represented a considerable percentage in Cheval's "Palais Idéal" (45%), but was negligible at the other settings, where qualities such as "magical" (Neuschwanstein) and "perhaps strange" or "the same as during the day" (Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs) replaced them. In all the cases women mentioned fear at least twice as often as men. When asked about what they thought the place would be like in a forest, most of the interviewees said that the set-

tings would acquire some "magical" or "fantastic" qualities, although feelings of uneasiness and fear were associated to a considerable degree with Bomarzo (65%), and with less than half that percentage with both Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Park Güell. Discovering the place by chance, on the other hand, seems, at least in people's imagination, to take them close to what fantastic writers associated with the "fantastic experience:" the instant of hesitation, the "I cannot believe my eyes, yet ...". In Neuschwanstein and Cheval's "Palais Idéal" the proportion of people who imagined such a reaction was around 70%; in Park Güell 65%, Hundertwasser 55%, and in Bomarzo and the Schtroumpfs around 30%. Feelings of fear, or rather the presence of a disturbing feeling, were not absent from the image in the forest, but were mentioned only at Park Güell (55%), Bomarzo (30%) and Cheval's "Palais Idéal" (where the percentage was as low as 5%).

Despite all the mentions of or comments about fear and uneasiness reported above, a very low percentage of people answered affirmatively when explicitly asked whether they associated the place with fear, women admitting such feelings twice as often as men. The places more readily associated with fear were Cheval's "Palais Idéal (45%)," Bomarzo (35%), and Park Güell (30%), although for the latter one half of the affirmative responses meant "rather disturbing."

"Fantastic places" and neighborhood

In the next question people were asked how they would feel about having a "fantastic" place in their own neighborhood, a question of evident relevance to architectural design. If a designer were tempted to deduce from positive responses to the previous questions that "fantastic places" are liked and that it follows that a proposal for a new such place would necessarily be well received, then this question could help to put the issue into perspective. This is so because it is one thing to like a place which is seen once or twice in a lifetime and quite another to like it when it is close to home. The answer, however is not straightforward since the variation among sites is considerable. The highest level of rejection was found at Neuschwanstein (85%) not because people

disliked it but rather because they felt that it would look out of place, it would lose its charm, become a folly or the most frequently mentioned "because it would lose its uniqueness". The next-highest site in level of rejection is Cheval's "Palais Idéal," only that at the "Palais" the rejection was due to people's feelings that "it would be too disturbing to have it around the corner." All the other places registered a level of rejection equal to or lower than 20%.

Defining the site in one word

The aim of this question was to obtain a summary in a single word of what the place represented for the visitor. At Neuschwanstein and the "Palais" fantasy and fantasy-related adjectives, such as "magical," "unreal," and "fabulous" were the single category most often mentioned (35%). At Park Güell fantasy-related adjectives were mentioned as frequently as adjectives related to "imaginative" and "creative." At Hundertwasser, the highest single frequency (50%) corresponded to a category defined as "ludic," grouping "playful" and "fun," with 25% for fantasy related adjectives, while at the Schtroumpfs the "ludic" category had a frequency of only 20%, with 50% for "different," "trendy" and "colorful," and 20% for "fantastic". At Bomarzo slightly more than half of the sample considered the place "decadent" and "melancholy", with only 5% relating it to "fantastic."

The "fantastic" as a question

In the last question the interviewees were explicitly asked whether they considered the place to be "fantastic" and, if answering affirmatively, then why. The frequency of affirmative responses is much higher than in any of the spontaneous responses. The highest percentage of affirmative answers corresponds to Park Güell (75%), followed by Cheval's "Palais Idéal (70%), Neuschwanstein and Hundertwasser, both with 60%, the Schtroumpfs with 35% and Bomarzo with only 5%. Concerning the reasons why the interviewees agreed with the term "fantastic," between half and two-thirds explained that it meant simply "which has fantasy," or "because of the site where it is built," or even "because it is 'fantastic' to get those ideas;" for the other half "fantastic" had a

variety of meanings which can be considered to be closer to the fantastic as defined in literature and art. This issue will be discussed in more detail after the in-depth analysis of each setting.

It must be noted that the terms "fantastic" and "imaginative" have been considered as two distinct terms. Although it is difficult to assert that the respondents were conscious of a distinction, when prompted for clarification they often replied that they had used the term "imaginative" because they thought that the creator of the place had "lots of imagination;" "fantastic," on the other hand, was rather associated with "from another world", with "because it cannot be true," with the extraordinary. Thus, it seemed clear that as Joedicke (1962) had pointed out, the two terms belonged to different categories.

6.1.3 Discussion

This thematic analysis shows that there are considerable differences in the visitors' perception of the six settings, and that some settings are more consistently associated with fantasy than others. The type of knowledge the visitor has about the place appears to play an important role in his/her perception of the place. Moreover, the findings indicate that nationals perceive the places differently from foreign visitors, and that women may be more prone to associate the settings with fantasy than men.

This analysis, however, is too panoramic to provide an explanation of the behavior of the different variables and the internal dynamics of each setting, as well as an insight into the "meaning" of "fantasy" and "the fantastic," related to architecture. In the next section, an in depth analysis will be carried out in order to investigate these issues and to establish the main differences among the sites.

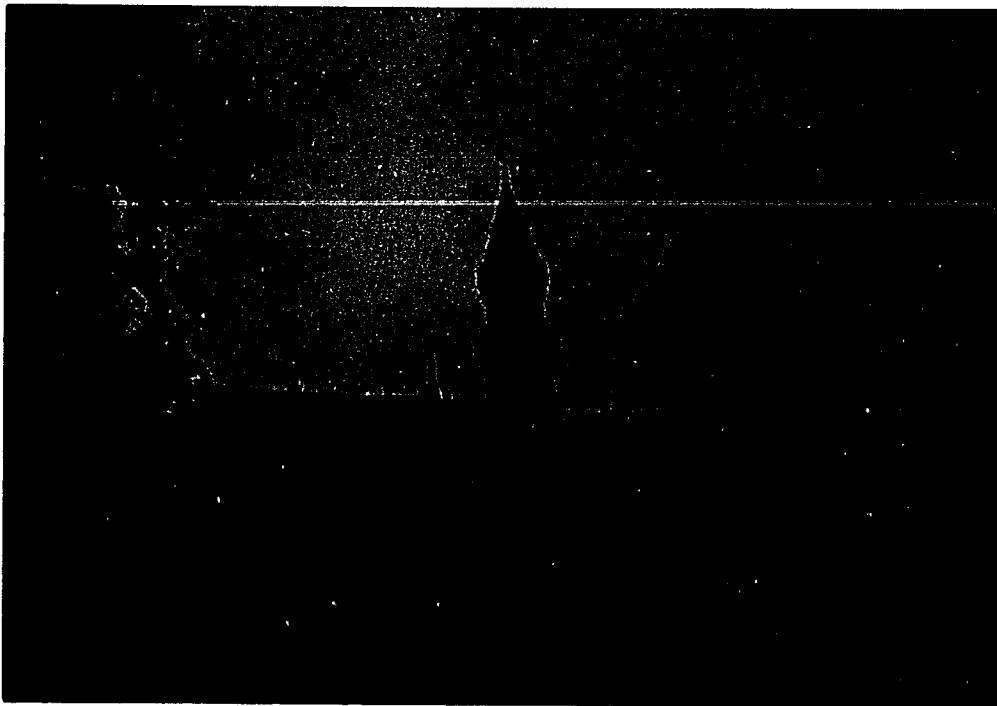
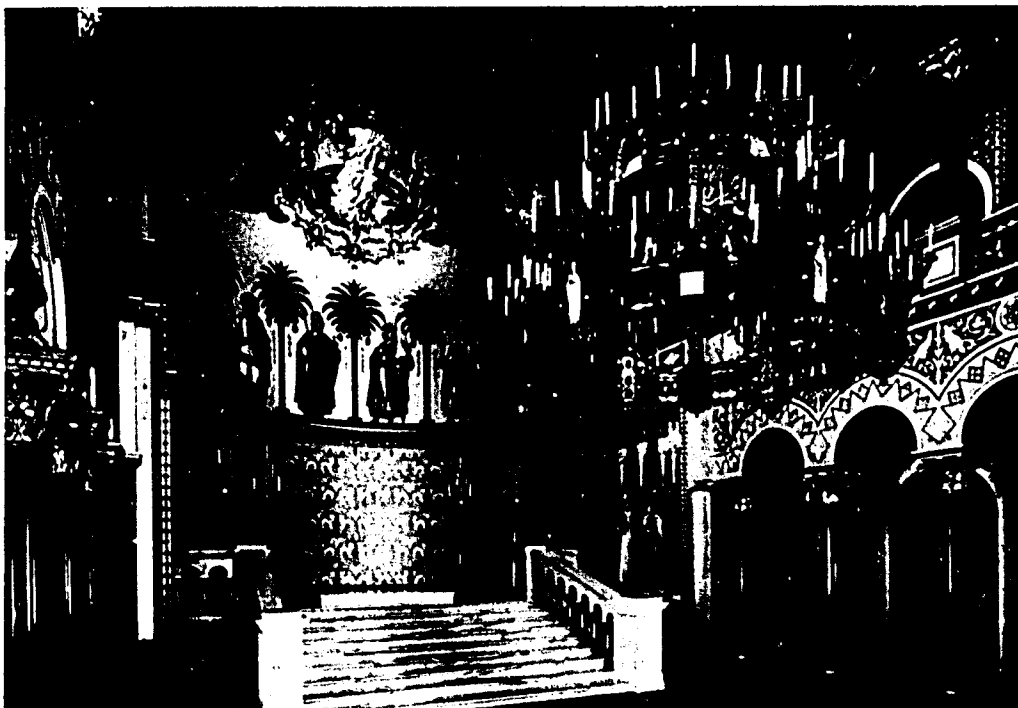


Fig. 13: the fairy-like image offered by books and tourist brochures... (photo A. Montarzino)

NEUSCHWANSTEIN
Schwangau, West Germany

Fig. 14: and the neo-Byzantine, neo-Gothic, neo-Baroque and anything-goes interior. Here the throne hall... (Photo A. Montarzino)



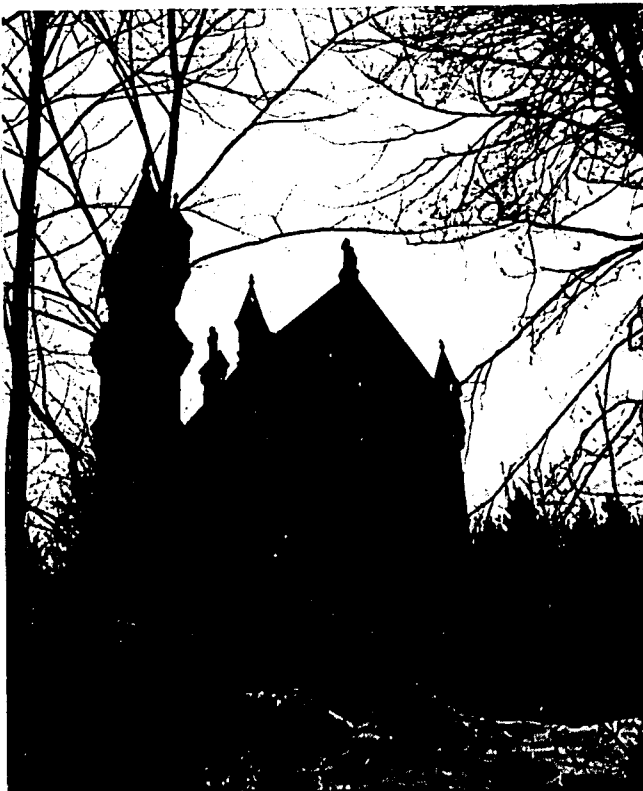


Fig. 15 The contradiction, depending on one's view-point; towards the sky the fairy-tale image... (photo A. Montarzino)



Fig. 16... and what the pedestrian's level offers (Photo A. Montarzino)

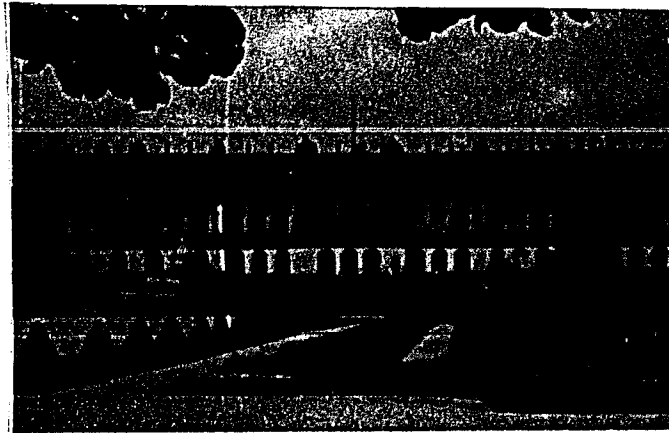
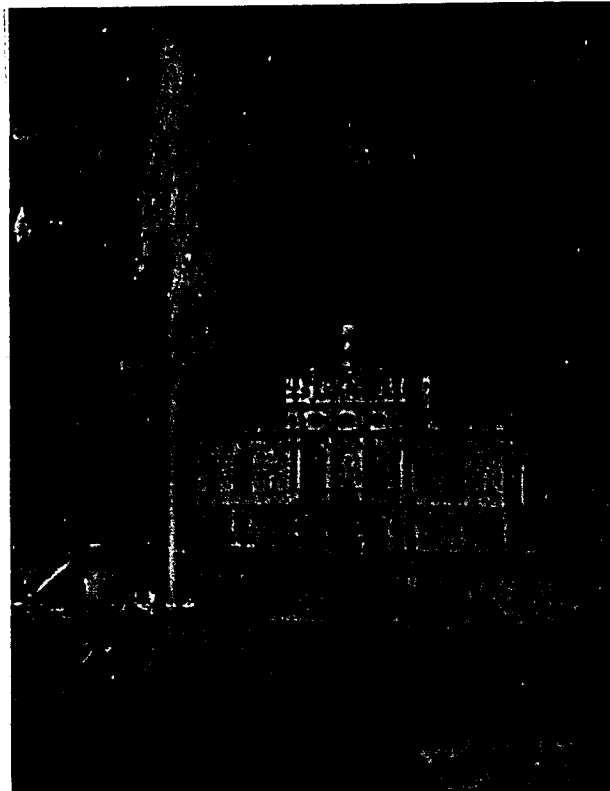


Fig. 17: The castle of Herrenchiemsee
(Photo A. Montarzino)

The two other castles built by
king Ludwig II in Bavaria

Fig. 18: The castle of Linderhof
(Photo A. Montarzino)



6.2 NEUSCHWANSTEIN

6.2.0 The Setting

In 1869 King Ludwig II of Bavaria, then aged twenty-four and a fervent Wagnerian, started a building cycle which was going to produce the three last monumental castles built by a European monarch: Neuschwanstein, Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee. Neuschwanstein [Fig. 13-16], the first to be built, and the strangest, was conceived as a place which "in his imagination could have served as the residence for a Tannhäuser, a Lohengrin or the knights of the Graal" (de Grunwald, 1967, p. 139).

The design of the castle is based on sketches produced by Christian Jank, a Munich stage designer, later to become chief of architects and decorators at Linderhoff, the second of the three castles. Construction started in 1874(?), and was still not finished at the time of Ludwig's death twelve years later. The choice of the site is, in the view of Mary Cable (1961), Ludwig's "triumph of creative imagination:" the castle stands among monumental, gray crags, the snowy chain of the Alps above, a green plain below, surrounded by a forest of dark pine trees and in the proximity of two small lakes, Schwansee and Alpsee. The building itself is a tall and predominantly white ensemble of machicolated gateways, arched windows, crenellated towers and slender turrets with funnel-shaped roofs. The interior is a disconcerting mixture of Romanesque, late Gothic, Tudor, Moorish and Byzantine architecture and boasts outsize frescoes of Wagner's heroes in stiff and vacuous attitudes, as only a nineteenth century neo-classical painter could produce.

The two other castles due to King Ludwig passion for building, Linderhoff and Herrenchiemsee (Fig. 17-18), lie at some distance from Neuschwanstein. Both are monumental and lavishly decorated but more traditional in outlook, as they were inspired, respectively, by Marie Antoinette's Trianon and by Versailles. All three castles have become a popular sight for tourists.

6.2.1 Demographics

Along with Park Güell -- and in clear contrast to the "Palais Idéal" -- Neuschwanstein is the most internationally renowned of the six settings. Eighty per cent of the sample were foreign visitors coming from different countries in Western Europe (30%), from North America (45%) and from Japan (5%). In contrast, the proportion of nationals (15%) and locals (5%) is relatively low. Moreover, Neuschwanstein is the only place where people coming in organized tours (hence visiting the place as a part of a package) have been interviewed; 30 % of the interviewees came by the latter means, the majority women. Appendix 1 gives a summary of the statistical data.

6.2.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives and place-image

Although the proportion of nationals in the sample at Neuschwanstein is low, it is still possible to detect a pattern, found also at other settings, concerning a significant difference ($p(N=20) = .01309$) between the attitudes of non-local nationals and foreigners towards the place when its creator is a historical figure or a renowned personality. When asked about the reasons for their decision to visit the place, all the non-local native Germans of the sample answered "for historical reasons," having learned about the King at school, and thus visiting the castle as an historic place. Among non-Germans only 5% were also interested in the king; the other non-Germans had either come on a package tour (30%) or had read about the place, seen images in a book, a travel agency or on a postcard. Fifty percent of the interviewees were prompted to visit the castle because they wanted to see "such a [fabulous], [strange], [unbelievable] place," and another 30% because they felt curious. In one case that curiosity had a rather peculiar source: a young man from Spain had decided to visit the castle when somebody gave him "a puzzle with the castle on it, and I just felt I had to see it" (#6).

Visitors from the United States tended to point out that they knew about the place "like everybody else, because Walt Disney has reproduced

the castle" (#3), and very often their reasons to find the place "fantastic" was that it could be in "fantasyland." However this tendency of North-American visitors to associate a built fantasy with Disneyworld was also frequent in two of the other settings studied: Hundertwasser and Park Güell.

Perceiving the place

The type of knowledge the visitor has about the place appears to be one of the determining factors in his/her reasons for visiting the place and his/her ulterior perception. Natives of the country, whose first contact with the place has been via history books, and foreigners with a particular interest in history, tended not only towards a factual approach but also towards an explicitly non-fantasy one. German visitors pointed out that although well aware that the castle is usually presented as a "fairy-tale castle," that was not their reason for visiting. In at least one other case the historical knowledge acquired on the spot (through a guided tour) has increased the building's "reality value" to the detriment of the fantasy-related ones. This, however, is not always the case: a woman from the Netherlands, visiting for the second time, pointed out that the first time she "did not relate it to fairy tales, only afterwards, when I learned about the King's mysterious death" (#4).

The perception of the castle as a "fantasy" or as "related to fantasy" is the single most reported attitude (40%); almost three quarters of these answers come from women. Although this difference was not found statistically significant, it may represent a trend to take into consideration. The other 60% perceive it in a variety of ways: "of historical interest" (20%), as "imaginative" (30%), or as a "folly" (10%).

The most common source of association of the castle with fantasy is via fairy stories, and often by comparison: a man from Spain noted that the castle has a fairy-tale look to him because he is accustomed to "Spanish castles which look like fortresses, places made for warriors"; in his view, Ludwig's castle is

closer to the idea one has of castles, because those ideas come from those fairy

stories we all have read, Perhaps what contributes most to that idea is, more than the building itself, the place where it is built, up on the cliff and surrounded by forest, Spanish Castles, on the contrary, are in very rocky and dark places (#7).

A French woman, on the other hand, pointed out that "it certainly looks like a fairy-tale castle, but, of course, those things are always better in books" (#9). Thus the fact that most brochures and books refer to Neuschwanstein as King Ludwig's "fairy-tale" castle may contribute to the frequent mention of the subject.

Image and reality

With the exception of Bomarzo, in no other setting have people so often reported some kind of disappointment by what they actually saw, compared to what they had expected from pictures (40%). A much lower proportion (20%) said that they had seen "something more" than they had expected. The positive experiences, it should be noted, referred mostly to size: "it is bigger than I thought" (#11), or to location: "it is amazing that they could build it here" (#16). The disappointments seem to have several sources, among which the high quality of pictures of the castle, from postcards to puzzles, may rank high. Expectations instilled by photographs seem to be so high that the photographer's angle, or even the season in which the photo was taken, may contribute to the disappointment. An American visitor noted that the castle is more spectacular on photographs,

because there you can see the whole castle as if it were in front of you, Maybe the picture was taken from a helicopter? And the picture I saw had been taken in the fall, with all the colors, and it was glorious (#13).

In other cases the disappointment appears to originate in the nature of "fantasy" itself, and some interviewees seem to be conscious of this (c.f. the French woman quoted under 6.1.22). Another source of disappointment seems to be the confrontation of photographic images emphasizing appealing architectural features and a reality crammed with crowds and other inconveniences: 20% of the complaints at Neuschwanstein had this origin; as a visitor put it:

there are too many people here; one wants to come and to be alone, to look at it as if one were discovering it" (#7).

However, the greatest source of disappointment seems to be the castle's interior which could not be in a more blatant contradiction with the exterior: in almost 50% of the cases in which the viewer expressed disappointment, the source was the "gaudy," or more often the "byzantine," character of the interior. A woman pointed out that

when I saw the castle at the travel agency it made me think of Rapunzel, the tale by the Grimm Brothers. Now that I have seen it, I only have the same impression from outside the castle, when I look up; the interior is quite terrible, with all those Byzantine-religious paintings" (#12).

Another woman pointed out that "the fairy-tale image is maintained, but what makes one dream is the exterior, not the interior" (#13). The interior, it was found, can act in detriment of the fantastic image even when the interior is liked: a Spanish man, who confessed to being "a bit of a bricoleur," and who found the interior "beautiful," pointed out that after seeing it, "the castle, which formerly looked fairy-tale, has turned into a caprice, something that only the very rich can do" (#1). However, for this man, a blue collar worker, this is far from having a negative connotation, because he relates Ludwig's passion for building to himself: as a bricoleur who has "a modest house but tries to make it better by building and applying my ideas," he thinks that King Ludwig was considered mad "because his ideas were different from everybody else's. In his place, I would have made the towers even taller" (#1).

Distinguishing the castle among others

In order to detect whether the visitors were interested in King Ludwig's castles in general or in Neuschwanstein in particular, they were asked if they had visited, or planned to visit, Herrenchiemsee and/or Linderhof. Forty percent said that they had or would, but most of them were on a tour which included a visit to the other castles; of those who had already visited at least one of the other two, approximately three-fourths pointed out that the other castles were more "luxurious" or

"gaudy," but that Neuschwanstein was "the most surprising, because it did not look like any other castle" (#12). Among the independent tourists two-thirds manifested that they were primarily interested in Neuschwanstein.

Evocative power

As pointed out in 6.1.22, one of the most frequent sources of association of the castle with "fantasy" was the recall of images from fairy tales which the castle seems to provoke in the viewers; this finding is confirmed by the answers to two further questions, in which people were asked whether they associated the place with images seen in books, films, etc., and with "other worlds." Seventy per cent of the sample had some type of association with images, the single most common (35%) being with the illustration of tales which most visitors had read as children or, in the case of North-Americans, with the reproduction of the castle in Disneyworld, or simply with "Fantasy-Land." Also Walt Disney's films seem to have made their contribution, in this case not only concerning Americans. A French woman pointed out: "of course it makes me think of books and films: I also saw Disney's 'Sleeping Beauty' when I was a child" (#19). Women tended to associate the setting with fantasy-related images more often than men but this difference was not statistically significant.

Associations of the castle with "other worlds," which in this case meant "worlds of fantasy," is high compared to the other settings: 55%, with women associating it three times as often than men. Although the difference in the frequency of associations between men and women is not statistically significant it seems to be another manifestation of a trend often found in other settings as well.

Place, feelings and context

If the images people associate with Neuschwanstein are often related to "fantasy," the feelings the place communicates seem to point more towards the exceptionality of the situation. Eighty percent of the visitors reported some kind of feelings; 35% reported feelings of

strangeness "at being in a place which is unlike anything I have ever seen before" (#12); or because "the place is wrapped in mystery, as the King" (#8). A Frenchman, who had time to wander around while waiting for the queue to the ticket office to get shorter, manifested to have felt

puzzled, because I went behind the castle and had a look at it without people pushing around, and suddenly I just could not believe that the building was there; real people do not build those things; so it struck me that maybe the building was not a real building, it was just a *maquette* and I was one of those little plastic men architects put there to show how tall the building is (#6).

Other people reported "feelings that are there, but which one cannot define" (#4); or even feelings of "disgust for the anachronism of the building [particularly when thinking that] think it was built only a hundred years ago, in the same period of the Eiffel tower: what a waste" (#9).

Among the sites studied, Neuschwanstein is, despite its being isolated and surrounded by forest, one of the least associated with fear, as reflected in the answers to the hypothetical questions in which the visitor was asked to imagine how the place would be at night, and if it were encountered by chance. In great contrast to Cheval's "Palais Idéal," at Neuschwanstein only 5% associated the place with fear at night and no association of this type was reported for the possibility of a chance encounter. A possible explanation for this is that, as a male visitor pointed out, "Neuschwanstein is too sugary to inspire fear" (#18). But perhaps the fact that the castle is illuminated at night may also account for the lack of fear in those who had seen it and even associated it with the term "magical." An American man who arrived late at night pointed out that "when I saw it [illuminated] from the road I could not believe my eyes: it was like something one only sees in movies" (#13). Concerning this absence of fear it can be argued that it is the castle being a tourist attraction which moves its potentially frightening qualities into a different realm. While such a possibility cannot be discarded, its importance should not be overestimated. Cheval's "Palais" is also a tourist site, yet the percentage of fear is much higher than at Neuschwanstein.

Just as at Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Park Güell, the possibility to "discover the place by oneself" yielded a high frequency (70%) of reported disbelief ("I could not believe my eyes"). The American man quoted above, who saw the place illuminated at night, pointed out that

I have some idea how it would feel [to discover it by chance]; in a way it was what happened to me last night, when I was driving here; I was paying a lot of attention to the road since I have never been here before, so when I saw it ... I just could not believe my eyes (#13).

Concerning the remaining 30% of the population there is a considerable difference between Neuschwanstein and the "Palais Idéal:" while at the latter they thought that they would experience fear, at Neuschwanstein the interviewees thought that they would experience "delight" and "surprise."

"Fantastic" places and neighborhood

Of all the settings studied, Neuschwanstein is the one which has registered the highest frequency of rejection (85%) when people were asked if they would accept/appreciate having the castle in the neighborhood. Surprisingly, the adduced motives for rejection seem to give some support to the contention that Neuschwanstein is seen as "fantastic." The most obvious indication is that very few of the rejections (15%) were made on the basis that the building is a "folly" or, as an English woman pointed out, "a joke, a fake: something out of place in this world" (#9). Understandably enough, 30% of the rejections were made on the assumption that the place "would look out of place in the city or neighborhood," or, as a man from Spain pointed out, "because in a big city it would look like some kind of nightclub or a fair" (#6). But 40% rejected it because "there is only one Neuschwanstein; I would not like to think that there were another" (#8), or because "it would lose its charm if it were many" (#7).

Defining the site in one word

Just as in the hypothetical question about the place at night, the words "magical," "dreamlike" and "fantastic" appeared also when people were asked to define the place in one word; the percentage (35%) is con-

sistent with the percentage obtained by fantasy-mentions in previous questions.

The "fantastic" as a question

As at the other settings, when people were explicitly asked whether they would consider the place "fantastic," the frequency of affirmative answers rose to nearly 60 %. However, the interpretation of the word "fantastic" varies considerably: for half of the respondents "fantastic" means "which has fantasy," often accompanied by the term "imagination." This suggests that in such cases the castle is seen as the result of an act of exuberant imagination rather than as an evocator of "other worlds" as interpreted by the other half of the respondents. For the latter Neuschwanstein was "fantastic" because " it looks like something that cannot be here, or which cannot be 'real';," in the view of one of the women the castle is "something 'real-unreal'; I know that this does not make much sense, but maybe it is not so difficult to understand" (#16). For another interviewee Neuschwanstein is "fantastic" because "it could be in Disneyland" (#3), or because "it could belong to the magic kingdom." When, as the last question, asked which feature the interviewee considered made it "fantastic," 25% mentioned the site, 30% the towers with the pointed roofs, and 10% the fact that it looks like an illustration in a book. Women were three times as likely to call the setting fantastic and this was found significant with $p(N=20)=.00956$.

On the other hand, no significant differences in perception were found between people visiting the site individually and in groups. A possible explanation is that whereas people in organized tours tend to follow appointed guides to visit the interior of the castle (which presents is the less "fantastic" side of the building), when outside, they are left to wander around and make the descent to the village on their own. Another possible explanation is that the proportion of this type of visitors of visitors on organized tours was too small (30%) to present any significant trend.

Familiarity and the "fantastic"

An unexpected phenomenon detected in the analysis of the answers to the questionnaire is that the people who are most likely to find Neuschwanstein "fantastic," or to have a fantastic experience, are those at the extremes of the familiarity spectrum: i.e. those who have very little (first time visitors) or those who have a great deal of experience of the setting (such as people who have been living in the area for a long time); those in the middle ranges tend to perceive the place as "non-fantastic."

Although the number of second-time visitors is too small to be conclusive (15%), two out of three of those visitors said that the castle was more "fantastic" the first time. However, an inhabitant of the village, who was interviewed because he was on the castle's grounds, stated that

although I do look at it often, some days it looks strange even to me, I remember when they put up the lights. One night I think they were just testing them [the lights], because I had never seen them before; I had just turned my eyes in that direction and I saw it and I was speechless; I do not remember exactly what I thought then, but something about the ghost of the King coming back,...paying us a visit ;[but] perhaps it is just that that the castle is un-inhabited, and sometimes one likes to imagine things" (#20).

6.2.3 Discussion

The in-depth analysis indicates that Neuschwanstein is linked to the type of "fantasy" literary theorists call "the marvellous," that is associated with worlds of the type "Once upon a time": worlds with their own laws and separated from ours. In architecture this corresponds to buildings or spaces that are closer to illustrations of fairy and folk tales than to the illustrations found in manuals of the history of architecture as examples of any specific architectural style.

The first indication of Neuschwanstein's link with "the marvellous" is its consistent association with fantasy images from fairy tales through several questions and with an average frequency of 40%. Concern-

ing these associations of Neuschwanstein with fantasy, a speculative question that can be asked is to which extent the responses obtained may be conditioned simply by the constant reminders, in tourist brochures and popular magazines, that Neuschwanstein is "King Ludwig's Fairy-tale castle." This speculation seems valid when taking into account that the visitors see the castle only from among a noisy crowd, surely not a "fairy-tale" atmosphere. However, concerning fantasy images there is some evidence that people not only elaborate on their own but may have very distinctive experiences. Thus, if crowds are annoying at the time of the visit, selective memory can play a filtering role. A woman visiting the castle for the second time reported that she did not see it as a fairy-tale castle during her first visit, but afterwards, because "I remembered the castle from the distance, and it was marvellous. I liked to think that it was there, on the cliff; all by itself and empty at night" (#4). This rises the question whether the effects of seeing "strange places" is not a long term process, although this may be an issue quite difficult to investigate.

The second indication is the consistent absence of reported fear despite the castle's location on an isolated cliff and its being surrounded by a deep forest. As already mentioned, a plausible explanation for is that, as one of the interviewees pointed out, Neuschwanstein is far too "sugary" to provoke fear, that is, it is too much of the safe type fantasy found at "Disneyworld," where the spectator knows that his well-being and safety are one of the top priorities of the entertaining company and its insurers. Another possible explanation is based on the finding that it is women who account for the greater percentage of fear across the survey. Since at Neuschwanstein women are also the ones who most often associate the castle with stories they know to be unreal, it might well be that for them the unreality of the story builds a "bubble" which isolates the place from the dangers they imagine lurking in solitary or heavily landscaped places such as Bomarzo or Park Güell. Hence, the absence of fear.

The third indication of Neuschwanstein's possible link with "the marvellous" is the quite frequent rejection of the castle as a place which the visitors would like to have in their neighborhoods, not only for the obvious reason of its looking out of place but also because of the risk of its forfeiting its charm by losing its uniqueness. A plausible explanation is that as the literary "marvellous" belongs to another realm, in this world of ours that "otherness" can be replaced either by the remoteness and uniqueness of the architectural object or by its confinement to the limits of a "fantasyland": by keeping its distance the object keeps its magic. This, in addition, suggests that it is not "familiarity" which may destroy the "fantastic" but the "proliferation" of the "fantastic" object, and that the higher the fantasy content of the latter (i.e. the closer to the "marvellous"), the greater the risk of destruction by that proliferation or loss of uniqueness.

The fourth indication of a relationship with the marvellous can be found in the way in which the King's madness is perceived, or rather denied. Although it is widely known that King Ludwig was officially declared insane, or, as it was phrased at the time, "not apt to reign," his madness is either seldom mentioned or else transformed into a romantic trait. Whether such an uncritical attitude is a product of Ludwig of Bavaria's being a king or of the visitors' unconscious empathy with the "desire to escape reality" typified by Neuschwanstein, it is difficult to say. But the fact that so many visits were decided because of a wish to see a "fairy-story castle" appears to indicate that the second motive, that is an empathy with his escape into the marvellous, is more plausible than respect or awe for his royal status. If so, this may also explain the opposite attitude adopted by many nationals, i.e. the rejection of fantasy in favour of national history.

Fantasy and national visitors

The anti-fantasy attitude displayed by many natives may be due to two related factors: rejection of fantasy as something shameful, and the role played by the type of knowledge the visitor has about the place prior to the visit. Concerning the first factor it can be argued that the

"historification" of the building, i.e. seeing it as part of the country's history, serves a double purpose for national visitors: On the one hand it allows them, as individuals, to avoid appearing as indulging in fantasy by visiting the castle, for it may be that people are more likely to be ashamed if caught fantasy-indulging in their own countries than abroad. On the other hand, by rooting in history a building which must have some value in the eyes of the visitors, the nationals neutralize its fantasy content while confirming its belonging to their own cultural patrimony. In this way, instead of being a "fantasy" one should be ashamed to visit, the building becomes a safe historical-cultural artifact worthy of receiving visitors from all over the world. But this may not solely be the result of a fantasy-negating attitude, for the type of factual knowledge that nationals appear to have of the place, usually learned at school, is likely to act also as a fantasy-deterrent. History is supposed to deal with facts, and facts and bed-time stories are not likely to be seen as belonging to the same category. This type of knowledge, by its turning the place more human, makes it less fantasy-like.

Fantasy and foreign visitors

Another indication of the particular role played by the type of knowledge visitors have before arriving to the setting or acquired during the visit can be seen in the attitude of those who are on the antipodes of the nationals, that is foreigners who have learnt about the place exclusively through an acquaintance with "fantasylands." Here there is an interesting phenomenon of reversal between original and reproduction. Walt Disney has reproduced Neuschwanstein in the "Magic Kingdom" because of its obvious fairy-tale quality, and now many people who have visited or know about Disneyworld see Neuschwanstein as "fantastic" because of the fact that it can be "separated" from the world and included-secluded in the Magic Kingdom. This "Disney effect," however, is not limited to Neuschwanstein for some of the other settings have been related to "Disneyworld" as well, although in those other cases it seemed enough for the visitor to imagine that the setting "could be" in Disneyworld to relate it with the fantastic. This discussion will be re-opened in chapter VI.

Fantasy and familiarity

Literary theorists have argued that familiarity destroys the fantastic. One interesting finding in this study is that at Neuschwanstein the degree of perceived fantasy and familiarity forms a U-shaped curve with maximum possibilities for fantasy for those with no familiarity (first-time visitors) and for those with great familiarity (people living in the proximity) and with a minimum for those with a certain degree of familiarity. Given that the maximum of fantasy is to be found at the two extremes of the familiarity spectrum, it can be hypothesized that it is not "habituation" *per se* which annihilates the "fantastic" qualities of a building, but rather the habituation to prototypes: it is not habituation to the particular building but to that type of building. If there were many of them they would all become "commonplace." As far as the building maintains its uniqueness, the "perceptual click" caused by its features may not disappear even with a high degree of familiarity. In this case accidental happenings, such as changes in the weather or the installations of lights, may produce those "seconds of hesitation," of not believing one's eyes, which both strangers and locals have reported.

6.1.4 Conclusion.

Of all the settings, Neuschwanstein is one of the most closely associated with the type of fantasy known as "the marvellous" and this explains its lacking one of the components of the "truly fantastic" as propitiated by literature and art theorists: fear. There are indications of "fantastic experiences" (hesitation, instants of suspension of disbelief) when circumstances combine with instants of absent-mindedness on the part of the perceiver. Memory, image and previous knowledge also appear to play a preponderant role in the perception of this type of places.

CHEVAL'S "PALAIS IDEAL"
Hauterives (France)

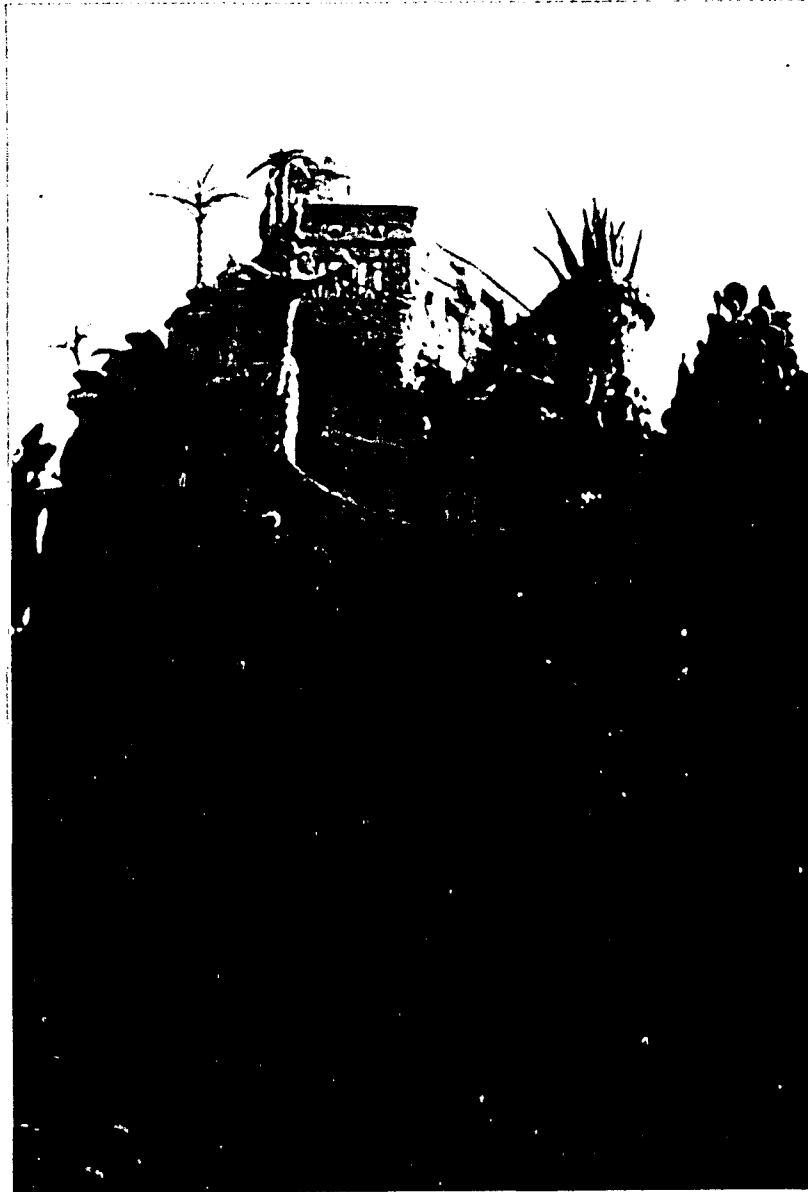


Fig. 19. The intricate facade of the "Palais" guarded by giants
(Photo A. Montarzino)



Fig. 20. A forest in cement
(Photo A. Montarzino)

fig. 21. Or a Burmese temple
in the forest...(Photo A.
Montarzino)



6.3 FERDINAND CHEVAL'S "PALAIS IDEAL"

6.3.0 The Setting

In 1879 Ferdinand Cheval, a rural postman in the district of Drôme (France), then forty-three years old, laid the foundations for a building that he had held in his imagination for ten years (which means that the "Palais" was conceived at the time the construction of Neuschwanstein began). The building Cheval envisaged was to serve as his monumental tomb, where, in due course, he would be buried "in the style of the Pharaohs" (Borne, 1969, p. 20). For thirty years afterwards Cheval walked his daily round of twenty miles as a postman carrying a basket or pushing a wheelbarrow in which he could collect the bits and pieces he needed for his building. And for thirty years also he invested all his spare time and savings in what today is known as the *Palais Idéal* [Fig. 1], a massive construction 12 feet tall, 76 feet long and 36 feet wide, with a narrow gallery as the only interior space and with an astonishing agglomeration of giants, plants, animals, druids, vases, stalactites, stalagmites, columns, monsters, towers, turrets, miniaturizations of buildings and inscriptions on the facades (Figs. 19-21).

The inscriptions, scattered all over the building, cover a wide range, from the the admonitory and pompous:

God and country are our masters
if we serve them well
they will serve us equally,

Do not do to you neighbor
what you would not like
others do to you,

to the plainly egocentric:

In the spare time
that my work has permitted me
I have built this palace
[worthy of] the Arabian nights
where I have engraved my memory

By creating this [construction of] stone
I wanted to prove
what the will can do,

Or the proud and humble at the same time:

All this that you see, passer-by
is the work of a peasant,

Or mysteriously:

From a dream I brought out
the Queen of the world,

Informed by the local authorities that French law did not permit burials outside established locations, Cheval started a new construction in the local cemetery, while showing what was now his "palace" to those who, in increasing numbers, came to see it. Cheval became a celebrity in France when the Surrealists chose his "Palais" as their icon; however more than a quarter of a century (half since Cheval's death in 1928) had to pass before the authorities listed the building as a historical monument. Today the "Palais" may be visited for an entrance fee.

6.2.1 Demographics

Unlike Neuschwanstein, the population sample at Cheval's "Palais Idéal" is composed mostly of nationals (80%). The low proportion of visitors from abroad may be the result of three factors: First, although Cheval and his "Palais" are the subject of several books and articles, they are mostly in French, hence inaccessible to a dominantly English speaking international community. Second, the "Palais" is far from the

"image popularization" phenomenon that characterizes Neuschwanstein which made it possible for a visitor to learn about Neuschwanstein through a puzzle. Third, the lack of other tourist attractions in the area, in addition to an accessibility hampered by a poorly signalled network of secondary and tertiary roads, are likely to discourage all but the most determined foreign visitor. Appendix 2 gives a summary of the statistical data.

6.2.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives and place image

The inconveniences mentioned above in addition to the necessary detour from main tourist road ensures that the visitors are there because they want to see the place rather than merely because they happened to be in the area.

Concerning the motives for visiting, roughly 45% of the interviewees had come because they had read or heard about the postman-builder and wanted to see the work of "that extraordinary man," 35% because they wanted to see "that extraordinary place." Ten percent were second time visitors who wanted to see the place again or to show it to someone else; 5% had visited the place more than twice and came with someone else, and another 5% were locals who had "dropped by". There were as many visitors motivated by an interest in the creator as in Park Güell (35%); however, in relative terms (ratio between number of natives interested in the creator/number of natives) it is not. At Park Güell three out of four non-local nationals were interested mostly in the creator and at Neuschwanstein three out of three; at the "Palais," on the other hand, this ratio is two out of three. Although the pattern linking interest in the creator with national population seems to be maintained, the relationship is weaker here than at Park Güell.

Concerning the image the visitors had of the place before arriving, 90% reported having seen photographs of the place, either in books (in general in black and white) or on postcards.

Perceiving the place

At Cheval's "Palais" the work and the man seem to be so amalgamated in the mind of the nationals that in six cases out of eight they did not make any distinction between the one and the other. Their view of the "palais" was that of a man working in solitude, "carrying all those stones in his barrow, every day, for twenty years" (#6), or "doing all that work in his spare time, without payment" (#8). Such a person was "without any doubt a genius, to have those ideas" (#15) and also "a very religious man, you only have to read the inscriptions" (#7), although those inscriptions are also "very moralistic, with all that worshipping of work: but one has to understand that he was very much a product his time" (#2). Although the proportion was not significant, women took to seeing the man "in the act of creation:"

When I look at it I think that the man who created it must have been extraordinary; it might have been a pleasure to know him; not to live with him, that I think was not easy, but to know how he felt when he was building; I think that he was like a child (#12);

or in the view of another woman:

it must have been terrible to be the wife of a man whom all the neighbours must have considered mad and who was putting everything he had into a building which must have looked even more strange or uglier then, because it was...new...but he, the man himself, he must have been a happy man, or at least happier than most men; he had that sense of purpose, he had a dream; how many of us can say that we have a 'Purpose' in life? We toil for our bread as the Bible tell us to do, we may even have a job which is interesting and that we like; we are useful members of society, we have children who will continue to populate the earth, and so what; where is the individual, the soul, where is the 'Me' with a personal destiny? He thought he had it, and in retrospective I envy him dearly for that" (#7).

Foreigners, however, and one third of the nationals had their vision of the place in itself. Among this group, approximately one third found the place "strange" and "disturbing" and the causes of the disturbance "difficult to define." The others found it "fantastic" and "fascinating." One woman pointed out that

it makes me think of dream-images; as in a dream, one likes to get lost in it and at the same time one is happy because one knows that one can get out; I think it

is fascinating, but at the same time it disturbs me, perhaps because I am by myself, so I am not so reassured as one is when one can share feelings and impressions with someone else (#5).

A woman who was a teacher in a neighboring village and who had taken small groups of children to visit the place at several occasions added that the Palais was:

féerique (fairy-like); children like it and it is mysterious also; here even noisy children become quiet, as if they had entered a church. That always surprises me; that silence; that respect for the place (#8).

Along with the variety of responses mentioned, the proportion of people who at this stage considered the place to be "fantastic," "a fantasy," "a dream-like place" was 35%, that is slightly less than at Neuschwanstein, where the proportion was 40%.

Image and reality

In the confrontation image-reality the "Palais Idéal" registered the lowest level of disappointment across the settings. Neither nationals nor foreigners considered the building to be below their expectations. On the contrary, 55% reported that the real building was better than on the photos. The fact that the images people had came from black and white photos or from postcards may have played a role in determining the low level of disappointment registered.

Evocative power

The evocative power of the setting (reported by 60% of the sample) is lower than at Neuschwanstein (70%) but it is the one most often associated with dreams (20%). The images with which the building is associated were, in 15% of the cases, of the "realistic" type: "Renaissance etchings," "buildings from Asia," or "temples from India and Burma." The associations with "other worlds" (45%) are mostly related to the worlds of dreams or of madness, although there were also few associations of the type "a place out of the Arabian nights," or "the castle of the Elf King." Women tended to associate the building with "other worlds" three

times as often as men, and this difference was found significant ($p(N=20)=.03482$).

Place, feelings and context

"Uneasiness" and "fear" were spontaneously associated with Cheval's work more often than with any other of the settings studied; while Neuschwanstein, in the words of an American visitor, "is too sugary to produce fear," Cheval's work seems to create apprehension even in those who had not yet visited it: a French architectural student interviewed in Park Güell mentioned that in spite of his interest in strange architecture (his reason for visiting Park Güell), he dared not visit Cheval's Palace; in his words "it scares me, although I cannot say why." About two-thirds of the visitors who considered that the place communicates feelings of fear or uneasiness could or would not explain why.

The frequency of reported fear at night at the "Palais" (45%) is only slightly lower than at Bomarzo and Park Güell (the two with the highest frequencies across the six sites), though the surrounding area is simply landscaped and there are houses right across the street. Moreover, the "Palais" is imagined as seven times more frightening than Neuschwanstein, despite the latter's being much more isolated. Women account for seven-ninth of the fear reported, although the fear does not seem to be due to the "shadows around," as was the case in Bomarzo and Park Güell, but rather by the building itself: for one female interviewee the source of fear at night would be the contours of the building, its lack of "line" (#1); but also particular weather conditions seem to play a role in the perception. One of the women pointed out that the sky being blue, as it was at that particular moment, contributed "to make the building not only less ominous but even joyful;" and another woman, referring to the place at night said:

I do not think that the building is scary at night in general. But if the moon is behind it, it would seem even more contorted; it would make me think that I am going to die soon, or something like that (#4).

Uneasiness, on the other hand, was reported by 25% of the sample, mostly by men (4/5) who said that the place would make them think "of guarding a cemetery" or "of being close to death." The difference between the experience of fear and uneasiness reported by men and women was found significant with a $p(N=14)=.018465$. The remainder of the sample felt that the Palace would be "surprising" and "more strange" at night.

Curiously, the "Palais" imagined in a forest was considered the less threatening than at night or if found by chance. Only 20% associated it with fear, and this could be due to the fact that in the forest the Palace is quite often (30%) linked to "Burmese or Indian temples." Of the remaining 50%, half saw it as "more interesting," and the other half associated it with some "fantastic" image: women tended to see it as the "enchanted palace" or as "the palace in the enchanted forest" and men as "a toy" and "a dream," but these differences in preference were not significant.

Concerning the "encounter by chance," 30% reported "shock, surprise" and 70% "disbelief:" to be "unable to believe what my eyes are seeing" or "thinking that I am dreaming."

In the explicit question about fear the Palace has the highest frequency among the six settings: 45%, more than 2/3 reported by women. The difference between men and women in the perception of fear at the "Palais" was significant with $p(N=20)=.0348$.

"Fantastic" places and neighborhood

The "Palais" scores, along with Neuschwanstein, the highest frequency of rejection as a place to have in one's neighborhood, but the motives for rejection are completely different: the reasons advanced at Neuschwanstein were that the castle "would look out of place," and "would lose its charm;" at the "Palais," 60% of the sample mentioned that they would not like to have the building close to their homes because they found it "too disturbing," "too violent," or because "there is something of the village fair about it: apparently festive but in fact full of

monsters" (#9). Or because, as a French woman pointed out, the building is "like a long and dangerous trip; thrilling, but one wants to take it only once" (#1). Only 5% of the people interviewed rejected it on the conviction that "with too much viewing it will stop being interesting" (#2). This is not the view, however, of the only resident of the village who was interviewed on the place. According to her, in winter and at night, when the trees have no leaves, "it still seems strange and *magique*: all depends on when and how one sees it" (#14). Women tended to reject the building twice as often as men and although the difference was not found to be statistically significant, this may indicate a trend akin to that found for fear.

Defining the site in one word

Surprisingly, it is in the one-word definition that the most fantasy-like qualifiers begin to appear "phantasmagoria," "rêverie," "magical," and "fantastic"; these constitute 35% of the answers. The remainder is distributed with 15% for "imaginative," 15% for "unique" and "exceptional;" 20% for "strange" and 15% for other terms such as "monumental" or "the work of one man".

The "fantastic" as a question

Seventy five percent of the visitors answered affirmatively when asked whether they considered the place "fantastic." Approximately one third adhered to the literal interpretation: "as showing fantasy, imagination"; others found it "fantastic" because it was "big, very decorated and useless;" or "because one cannot define it" or "because it makes me think that I am a child again." According to one visitor the fantastic character comes from its lack of specific use. As she put it:

when one sees ancient monuments, one thinks of people who lived there, while this place is a completely imaginary creation; no-one has lived here, and this is what gives it its dream-like appearance. It is like a child's creation; it does have a function; it does not serve any practical purpose (#3).

The fantastic and familiarity

In the question concerning the visitors's feelings about having the building in his/her own neighborhood, some of the visitors hypothesized that the place would become less intriguing by being in the neighborhood. However, a woman who had visited the place on several previous occasions pointed out that

the first time I saw it I was a little disappointed; I had heard so much about it that I was expecting something even more astonishing; but the more I get to know it, the stranger it seems to become (#8).

The village resident, on the other hand, pointed out that

one thinks that one gets used to it but one does not; and I even think that if the whole village were like that one would go to other villages and see that all the others are different and one will find this strange again (#19).

Half of the second time visitors said that the Palace they remembered was "bigger, heavier, more full of details and monsters." The other half pointed out that it was difficult to say whether there was any difference between the first and the second time.

6.3.3 Discussion

Cheval's "Palais" is, along with "Park Güell," the setting which most closely approaches literary and art theorists' definition of the "fantastic." Fear as a component figures predominantly. When it does not, as when the "Palais" is imagined in the forest, the explanation points towards the role of the environment and the referential quality of the architectural object. The Palace inspires uneasiness during the day, it is thought to inspire uneasiness and fear at night and if encountered by chance. Why not in the forest, then? Because in the forest it is often associated with a Burmese or an Indian temple and that association may be due not only to formal similarities but also to the fact that those temples are very often located in tropical areas and people are used to see them in pictures with a rain forest in the background.

Now, a Burmese or and Indian temple in a rain forest is an exotic but not an extraordinary sight. People are used to seeing such temples in

geographical and travel magazines, and what those pictures say is that such a temple is part of mainstream architecture in that part of the world. Imagined as a Burmese temple in the forest, the "Palais" becomes mere "exotic" cultural artifact i.e. it ceases being "a fantasy," a "hybrid," an "oddity" built in Hauterives, France, to become a prototype, something which is common albeit in another culture. Take it out of the forest, back to its actual environment and it becomes fearsome again. Why? Because now it is an oddity again, something difficult to explain. Like Bomarzo, the place seems to hide something. If not, why did the visitors, in those two places more than everywhere else, wonder and ponder about the "soul" of the creator? It can be argued that the "creator" has been present all along, and that, as Borne (1969) pointed out (c.f. chapter 1), visitors go more to see the work of the man than for the work itself. However, the "evolution" of the visitors' perceptions seems to show something else.

When asked about the motives for visiting, almost half of the visitors possessing some knowledge about both the creator and the place, said that they went to see "the work of one man." From this point of view, the "Palais" seems to confirm Borne's assumption. But as the perception advances the Palace seems to appear less and less as the "effort" of one man to gain in importance as the "expression" of that man. Was he religious? Was he like a child? Most visitors think that he was not a common man and that uncommonness makes them turn to themselves and reflect about their own lives. This, however, is not an attribute exclusive to the "Palais." Most of the settings have provoked reflections, whether on life, feelings, the past, or even on the state of architecture. Thus, it can be speculated, although in some cases "strange" architecture appears to the viewer mostly as a facade, it becomes "inverted" architecture as it is internalized by the perceiver and converted into a motif for or a reflection about the self or the world. Concerning these reflections it can be speculated that the considerable number of introspective comments collected could indicate that it is mostly intellectuals or highly articulate people who are attracted to and visit this type of settings. However the fact that in all sites but one (Bomarzo)

people who expressly declared to possess little or no formal education have also contributed with some kind of abstract thought, may well indicate that a reflective attitude may be more the result of people's interaction with the place than of the interviewees' psycho-social make-up.

Given the Palace's double character of a disturbing place which provokes introspection, it is not surprising that it is so often rejected as a place one would like to have in one's neighborhood. For it may be that, as Jencks (1979, c.f. 1.2.3) pointed out, "strange" places act as a Rorschach test, uncovering the perceiver's own monsters. In addition, the "gratuitousness" of places like the "Palais" and Neuschwanstein seems to play an important role in this respect. A useful building does not pose many questions; but an enormous castle erected at great expense and used only for nine nights, or an intricate structure which demanded thirty years of unrelenting work so the owner could be buried "like a pharaoh" seems to be beyond understanding, and thus contributing to the strangeness of the place.

"Strangeness," however, is not a permanent quality, and how long it lasts appears to depend as much on familiarity as on the place itself. Just as at Neuschwanstein and Park Güell, the "Palais" seems to provide more surprises at both extremes of the spectrum of familiarity, viz. first time visitors and residents. Second time visitors seem to have adopted a certain distance from the place. But on the other hand the surprise for first time visitors seems to wear out more rapidly at the "Palais" than in settings such as Park Güell, perhaps also because at the "Palais" the surprise is more intense (given the characteristics of the building) but less diversified (the "Palais" is one small building in the same color while Park Güell has several sectors with clear differences of form, texture and color).

6.3.4 Conclusion

To sum up, it can be said that Cheval's "Palais" attains the "fantastic" as conceived by literary theorists, i.e. as including fear, although the likelihood of someone's having a "fantastic experience" may

be extremely rare. As most of the visitors reported, a "fantastic experience" would be linked, even more than at Neuschwanstein, to a chance encounter with the place. However, the location of the "Palais" in a small village with no other attraction reduces the possibility of such a happening close to nil, since people are likely to go there only to visit the "Palais". Nevertheless, Borne's contention that people are attracted to places such as the "Palais" more by the performance of the creator than by the work itself can only be partially maintained, for two reasons. First, those attracted by the performance of "one man" are almost exclusively nationals, who may like to see the creator as an exponent of some national virtue (vision, love of work) all the while asserting his exceptional qualities (which may call for reflection upon themselves). Second, even the nationals end up by concentrating more on the place for its own sake than as a reflection of the performance of its creator. A source of confusion in this respect could be that, as reported, the place appears so much as an "expression" of the creator that the two are often fused in the view of the perceiver.



Fig. 22: A monster as seen in tourist guides or books (Photo A, Montarzino)

BOMARZO
Bomarzo, Italy

Fig. 23: ...and as seen in reality (Photo; A, Montarzino)

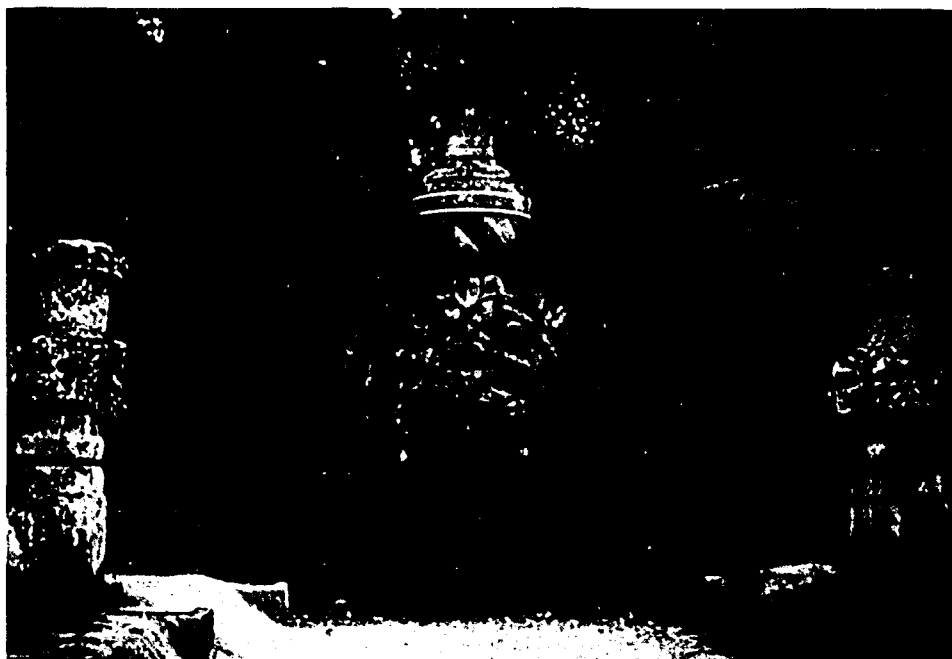




Fig. 24, Furious colosii...
(Photo A, Montarzino)

Fig. 25; ..., and corners reminiscent of death (Photo A, Montarzino)



6.4 BOMARZO

6.4.0 The Setting

Although designed by the architect Pirro Ligorio, the gardens at Bomarzo are considered to be the creation of their owner, the Duke Corrado (said Vicino) Orsini. Born fragile of health and the youngest of three sons, Vicino's future in sixteenth century Italy did not look very promising. Yet he managed to inherit the title and the family property, and to marry the beautiful and coveted Julia Farnese, in whose honor he built "the Sacro Bosco," or "Holy Wood of the Monsters" adjoining his villa at Bomarzo. At her death Vicino added to the gardens a temple in her memory, designed by Vignola. Vicino continued expanding the gardens until his death but as his heirs were not interested in them, they started to deteriorate and were finally sold out of the family. They suffered further deterioration during World War II, but after the war, in the hands of a new owner, they were somewhat restored and opened to the public.

The "Sacro Bosco" [Figs. 9-10, 22-25] is a garden secluded in a ruffled landscape, well into the countryside, to be found only at the end of a labyrinthine path of secondary, tertiary and quaternary roads. Enclosed by a wall, with a door crowned by the Orsini's coat of arms as the only access, the gardens present a peculiar layout. Distributed over a series of uneven terraces, sometimes almost hidden by the overgrown vegetation, the visitor finds a myriad of gigantic stone sculptures: grotesque faces (one of them known as "Hell's gate"); an elephant carrying a Roman soldier; a mermaid; a reclining female known as "Sleeping Beauty"; a dragon attacked by greyhounds; a (purposely) leaning two story house; and also turtles, unicorns, sphinxes, vases and benches, all spotted with moss and lichen, the fine traits of the faces erased by four centuries of weathering. In a clearing the pure lines of the temple built by Vignola stand in violent contrast to the rest of the garden.

Like Ferdinand Cheval, Vicino Orsini was fond of inscriptions,
often engraved on doors, pedestals and vases:

He, who with a knitted brow
and haughty lips
does not come here, he cannot admire
the famous seven monuments.

When entering the garden
think if such wonders are the result
of genius or deceit.

Intention: "only to give vent of one's heart."

He who wanders in the world
wishing to admire stupendous
wonders come here where are
dreadful faces, elephants, lions,
bears, ogres and dragons.

Here every thought flies away.

6.4.1 Demographics

Just as at Park Güell, nearly half of the sample at Bomarzo (45%) are nationals, but as the adjoining *villas* and the gardens are isolated in the countryside and in private hands, the type of "regular visitors from the local population," frequent in park Güell, is absent from Bomarzo. All foreign visitors interviewed came from Western Europe, except for one woman from Brazil who, however, was an Italian resident. The proportion of second-time visitors to Bomarzo was low (10%), and all of the interviewees had reached the place by private transportation. Appendix 3 gives a summary of the statistical data.

6.4.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives and place image

Since the Duke Orsini is not a relevant figure in Italian history the knowledge that most nationals have of the place's creator is practically nil, and that explains why, with 45% of Italians in the sample, Bomarzo registered one of the lowest frequencies in the "historical reasons"-category (15%, of which one third were foreigners interested in Renaissance art). Of the remaining 85%, slightly more than 2/3 came to see "a strange place" and the rest "for curiosity" or accompanying a friend or relative.

Nearly half the visitors (45%) found out about the place in tourist guides, 40% heard about it from friends, and 15% read about the gardens in specialized literature. As no guided visits are offered, information about the place cannot be acquired on the spot, except by the acquisition of a booklet at the cashier's desk.

Perceiving the place

From an architectural point of view Bomarzo is no more complex than Park Güell or Cheval's "Palais Idéal;" yet the visitors' perceptions are more multi-layered and diverse. At least 30% perceived it as "other," that is as if the gardens were "something else" or as if they contained a "message," a code obscure to the non-initiated. It was not infrequent for the interviewees to start the verbalization of their impressions with a "it makes me think of . . .," and what they thought of was mostly (but not only) decline and decadence. A Frenchwoman (#3) found herself thinking of "the erotic sculptures of India" although no depiction of erotic acts is to be found, and the highest level of nakedness to be seen are the breasts of a mermaid, a reclining female giant and the two small sphinxes at the entrance. A Frenchman (#5), who saw in the gardens "the collapse of Rome, with their monuments and their orgies," pointed out that the gardens had "a strange atmosphere, part garden, part cemetery." A visitor from Spain (#6) found that the gardens made him think of "the paintings

of Goya; there is a touch of madness about them, although I cannot say where it is exactly," and a Italian visitor (#2) found them "hermetic; a text to which we have no key." Men tended to see the place as "hermetic" or "esoteric" five times more often than women, and although this was not statistically significant, the difference is important enough to deserve some comments. A plausible explanation for men's seeing the garden as a coded message more frequently than women could be that this is the most "rational" explanation which men could find of what may otherwise appear as a pure caprice, while women allowed themselves to be submerged in an atmosphere of "mystery" which they accepted as a matter-of-fact, without any need of further explanations.

The perception of the place as having an "atmosphere of mystery" is not infrequent (30%): A German tourist [#8] found Bomarzo "mysterious" because she did not know if Orsini "was intending to surprise or rather to 'exorcise' something." Comparing Bomarzo with the *Villa d'Este*, which she had visited during the same trip, the same visitor pointed out that "Villa d'Este is a game; Bomarzo has something more, but it is difficult to define, perhaps because one can associate it with madness." In other cases the "mystery" seems to spring from the ambiguity of the place; for an Italian visitor the duke

obviously wanted to shock, but at the same time added details as to a temple dedicated to his wife, which is really moving; that peaceful piece of architecture among the monsters,...; like order among the disorder. The annoying thing is that one cannot even say if one likes it or not; it makes you think of the complexity of the human soul, and that is not always amusing. (#10)

For the remaining 40% of the visitors the garden was a constellation of things: "a sign of decadence" (#17); a garden "which is much more interesting than the French, which are so geometrical" (#11), "a very Italian garden, and so different and sinister at the same time" (#16). For an Italian man the garden was "a mixture of decadence, playfulness and power; you cannot have something like this built if you are not powerful and rich" (#19), and this provoked a reflection on the impact of technology on the art of gardening: "Today the Duke would vent

his madness, or God knows what it was, on a personal airplane or a yacht; we are becoming nomads, again." In a way the general impressions of Bomarzo can be quite accurately summarized in the comment of a Brazilian woman who has a house some 25 miles away and had taken her guests to the gardens on several occasions:

the interesting thing about the garden is that it seems to have something for everybody; I can bring even people who do not care about architecture: they are all amazed, as when you take children to the zoo for the first time (#1).

Image and reality

Disappointments caused by the "reality" of the setting compared to the image are due, it seems, not to the illusory power of photography per se or the delusory quality of the garden's layout, but to an addition that the gardens have suffered in recent years and which photographers have carefully avoided in their pictures: fences around a good number of the sculptures. Although some visitors did see them as necessary: "there were no fences a few years ago, and of course it was much better, but children were climbing over the sculptures and damaging them" (#1), the effect is nonetheless lamented. In fact, the fences account for the totality of the disappointments (35% of the visitors were disappointed) in the confrontation image-reality. One of the visitors pointed out that "with those fences around the imagination cannot be freed, as it must have been in the original garden" (#2). For another visitor (#6) the negative aspect of the fences is that "they change the character of the garden [which] ceases to be a garden to become an outdoor museum;" and so much so that "if one needs a lot of imagination to create a place like this...[as much is required] to imagine it without the fences" (#12).

Evocative power

The link of the gardens with images suggested by literary works is one the strongest found in any of the places studied. Sixty percent of the sample mentioned associations ranking from classical Italian literature to modern fantastic and mystery novels. One visitor (#5) imagined the gardens as "the perfect scene for Boccaccio's characters," and another "for a movie by Fellini" (#9). Often the stories are disturbing, more by

the sense of menace they convey than by any actuality of frightful happenings: a female visitor (#8) thought of "a story of a stone garden where the characters were scared without knowing why, expecting something ominous that never happened"; another woman related that when she was looking at the sculpture of a turtle carrying a couple

a very strange story by Marcel Schneider [a contemporary French writer], which starts with the collapse of a big statue in a garden, struck me, and though I knew that nothing could happen to me here, I started to look over my shoulder;

her explanation was that

the friend who came with us, who is an art teacher, mentioned that at the time the gardens were built, intellectuals and noblemen alike were interested, if not directly involved, in the study of magic. So maybe I just have been putting all that together, without knowing (#15).

Conversely, the associations with "other worlds" are low compared with several of the other settings: only 30% had any associations to report, and in 5 out of 6 of these the "other worlds" were, simply, "the world of the past." As an Italian restaurant critic (#16) who was on assignment to the area pointed out, in Bomarzo "there are no other worlds; only the ghosts of the past." To the woman to whom the garden recalled the story of the collapsing sculpture, the "other world" was

the uncomfortable feeling I had that there was something awful in the air until I found my friends again...[but]...the worst thing is that I did not even feel silly; maybe one likes places like this because one can make a fool of oneself without feeling guilty or ashamed (#15).

Place, feelings and context

At Bomarzo there is a surprising consensus in the feelings the place seems to instil in the visitors. About 65% of the respondents admitted experiencing some kind of feeling for the place. In 4/5 of the cases those feelings were melancholy, nostalgia or the sadness provoked by ruins, by the signs which mark "the end of glory." An Italian woman (#18) found that the gardens made her experience "nostalgia for eras grander than ours." Other visitors associated them with "the sadness of death," and that may explain why, when giving their impressions of the

gardens, some visitors pointed out that these "would be even better if wilder; more overgrown, with taller grass" (although they are far from being neatly trimmed). Some visitors seem even to have relished in the morbid state that the gardens appear to induce: a Dutchman, who liked the gardens' "air of decadence," pointed out that "the state of abandonment in which [the gardens] were left for years has done them a lot of good;" he had spent several hours in the gardens, reading and thinking, and found that they looked at their best

now, in late afternoon, with that low yellowish light. It makes them look even sadder, and one can almost feel the arrival of the ghosts who must roam this place at night (#13).

Bomarzo, along with Park Güell, is the place with most associations with fear in the three hypothetical situations presented; 80% thought they would experience some disturbing feelings, but while 90% of the women described those feelings as fear, men tended to present them as "uneasiness" or as a "I would not like to be here." According to one man the reason was "that there is a touch of madness [in the gardens] and at night it may become more manifest" (#7), but in most of the cases the "not-reassuring" feeling during the night was simply due to the gardens' layout which "has too many corners" (#9). But for most of the women the reason was straightforward: as one of them put it "in the outdoors one seldom has the sense of being 'safe.'" However the role played by the sculptures was not completely negligible. As one woman pointed out

at night, and in this garden I would see them [the sculptures] moving whenever a leaf moved and faint of fright. Just thinking of it scares me (#10).

Women were likely to experience fear four times as often as men, who expressed that they would rather experience uneasiness. The difference in the perception of fear and uneasiness between men and women is significant, with $p(N=16)=.00874$.

The idea of finding the gardens in a clearing in a forest was, for women, no more reassuring: 80% of them stated that they would feel fear, because

a forest is supposed to be a natural place, so if you find something like this you would think of something hiding, sinister, I don't know, Unless I am not alone or with my two Doberman; in that case I may go and have a look, (#19)

Fifty percent of the men, on the other hand, reported that they would feel "very intrigued and not completely at ease" but would not experience real apprehension. In this respect there is a significant difference between the attitude of men and women ($p(N=14)=.00299$).

But in Bomarzo the possibility of encountering the place by chance seldom seems to provoke (as it does in the other settings) the impression "I would not believe my eyes." 30% of the interviewees would find the possibility of discovering the gardens by chance "disturbing," and the rest simply "surprising." Concerning the specific question about fear, 40% were of the opinion that the gardens are not fearsome but that they could be uncanny "because sometimes it makes you think of things that in a more normal place you would ignore or discard as idiotic as soon as such a thought comes" (#7).

"Fantastic" places and neighborhood

Surprisingly, Bomarzo is one of the places with the highest level of visitors' willing to have the gardens in their own neighborhoods (70%). Some visitors even thought that the gardens would look "modern" or consider them "an interesting place in which to think." The restaurant critic quoted above (a Roman) thought that he would like

to go and think out my articles; it would give them a decadent twist, and I am sure some of my readers would not mind a bit of that. But...unfortunately, in a city, there is a risk is that the gardens will be taken care of much more than they need to look really interesting (#16).

This visitor was not the only one to maintain such a point of view: almost two thirds of those who said they would like to have the gardens in their neighborhoods expressed a similar concern. The few rejections were on the grounds that "they would look out of place ... in Normandy" (#15) or that "Venice is too Byzantine and has too few spaces for a place like this" (9#). For a small proportion (10%) acceptance of having the

gardens in one's neighborhood, however, does not necessarily mean that one likes them. As a woman pointed out: "I would not reject them, but I would not go there either: once is enough;" or an adolescent who visited the place with her parents, against her will: "I would accept, but I would prefer a tennis court" (#20).

Defining the site in one word

A variety of single words were assigned to the garden, most of them (55%) related to terms the visitors had used before: "mysterious," "decadent," "melancholic" and "sad." "Fantastic" is completely absent, the closest terms being "capricious" and "contradictory," totalling 10% of the sample.

The fantastic as a question

Along with the Grand Schtroumpfs, Bomarzo registered the lowest "fantasy percentage," a mere 30%; and 2/3 of those who said yes did it because they thought that the creator had "imagination." When asked what element they thought made the garden fantastic about half mentioned "the whole garden: the sculptures plus the wild vegetation" and the other half specific features such as the inclined house, the sculpture supposed to represent the entrance to hell, or even the elephant carrying the Roman soldier.

The "fantastic" and familiarity

Familiarity does not seem to play any special role in the case of Bomarzo. Second time visitors did not seem to experience the place differently from first time visitors but since they were few (10%) no relevant conclusions can be drawn at this point.

6.4.3 Discussion

Of the six settings Bomarzo ranks as the lowest in fantasy but one of the highest in fear. It is also the most paradoxical of them all. The first paradox concerns the definition of "fantastic:" if we accept, as some literary theorists have proposed, that the "fantastic" implies a "virtual menace in an otherwise ordinary setting," then Bomarzo is, in-

so far as architecture can be, the most "fantastic" of all settings. But if "fantastic" has to include "disbelief," then it is not. Bomarzo is the place with the lowest percentage of "disbelief" if found by chance, and one of the less frequently associated with the worlds of fantasy. If the essence of Bomarzo were to be expressed in one word, that word would be "atmosphere," and that atmosphere is more phantasmagoria than fantasy in the sense of "imaginary worlds." The elements of a plausible explanation for this situation can be found in the second paradox which concerns the temporal/formal characteristics of the garden.

The second paradoxical aspect of Bomarzo is that although from a chronological point of view Bomarzo is the most remote of all the settings (the perceivers and the creator are separated by more than four centuries); formally, i. e. as a garden with sculptures, it is closer to our present daily life than Neuschwanstein or the "Palais." Faced with this apparent dichotomy the visitors' reactions seem to be an intense questioning about the place and its creator, a questioning they deepen by taking it beyond the merely anecdotic aspects of the gardens into the problems and mysteries of the human condition.

The third paradox concerns the lack of significant differences in perception between males and female, a striking feature when Bomarzo is compared with the other five settings. Although Bomarzo follows the typical pattern of women reporting higher percentages of imagined fear at night and in the forest by women, the only other significant gender difference (more interesting than statistically significant) concerns men's more frequent perception of the place as "hermetic," "esoteric" or "cabalistic" while women tended to see it as "mysterious" and "strange." The lack of other significant gender differences may be explained by the fact that the dominant element of the garden is "reality" represented by an "atmosphere" dominated by the phantoms of the past. Thus, the association with fantasy and its sequel of "other worlds" that women favored in other settings and which accounted for the main differences between the sexes in the other settings, are absent in Bomarzo. Given all these peculiari-

ties, it is not surprising that the two most distinctive variables among the six settings, i. e. fear and knowledge, often show a quite idiosyncratic behavior at Bomarzo.

Non-fantasy and fear

Concerning fear, a characteristic that Bomarzo shares with Park Güell is that the major source of the fear that visitors imagined they would experience in the garden appears to be what it has in common with most other gardens and parks (trees and vegetation) rather than its peculiar features (its location and the monsters). Thus, the highest frequency of fear was registered at night, when, in the words of one visitor, "all parks and gardens are frightening." Nevertheless the sculptures should not be seen as completely devoid of a role: as a visitor pointed out, the movement of the vegetation can easily give the impression that the sculptures are hiding "something ominous" which is slowly getting ready to attack. The fact that many of the sculptures are oversize and offer excellent hiding places may reinforce those impressions. Yet, comparatively, Bomarzo appears to be less frightening at night than Park Güell, which is seen as suffering some kind of metamorphosis (from a colorful fantasy into a monochrome nightmare) thus increasing the frequency of imagined fear.

Bomarzo at night is also perceived as much less frightening than Cheval's "Palais," although at the latter the reported frequency of fear is only slightly higher than at Bomarzo. This is so because the immediate environment of the "Palais" is much more reassuring than Bomarzo's. The "Palais" is in a small village, and the neighboring houses (just across the street) are comfortably visible over the upper border of the wall that surrounds the site. Bomarzo, on the other hand, is isolated in a rugged landscape and comparatively this should be perceived as more frightful. The explanation may be that although the true creator of Bomarzo was the count Orsini, the final lay-out is the work of a professional designer. As a result Bomarzo appears more "orderly," hence less disturbing when compared with places built by a "bricoleur" such as Ferdinand Cheval. However, in clear contrast with both the "Palais," and

Park Güell, Bomarzo "in the forest" is seen as creating as much apprehension as at night. The explanation for the differences between Bomarzo and the "Palais" is clear: the "Palais" is not particularly frightening in the forest because, as already mentioned, it would then be associated with a temple.

The differences with Park Güell are more subtle. According to the explanation advanced by one of the visitors, Bomarzo in a forest would be frightening because in such a place one expects to see only natural things, so something as obviously man-made as Bomarzo would necessarily create fear. But if this were the case, Park Güell should appear as frightening as Bomarzo, which it does not. A possible explanation comes from the type of association with images that visitors have in both these places. Park Güell is seen as colorful and often associated with fantasy images; so in the forest, although it may provoke a certain amount of fear, it is often seen as becoming more "magic," as provoking a delightful "suspension of disbelief." Bomarzo, on the other hand, is more readily associated with literary works than with images, and literary works develop a sequence of events, which means that in them a virtual menace may be actualized at any moment. Thus, given that at Bomarzo no felt or imagined menace is likely to be mitigated by any illusions of "fantasy worlds," e.g. the "marvellous" as in Neuschwanstein or the "magic" at Güell, the gardens are imagined as frightening. This might be accentuated by the sense of reality created by the fact that Bomarzo is the most "humane" of all settings: humane not only because of the omnipresence of its creator, but also because the monsters serve as a reminder of human duality: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde who could switch faces at any moment. This sense of "dynamic reality" vs. "static fantasy" is also influenced by the second of the distinctive aspects of Bomarzo: knowledge.

Strangeness and knowledge

In the case of Bomarzo, the knowledge about its creator acts in the opposite direction of the findings at Neuschwanstein; whereas the readily accessible knowledge about King Ludwig has made his castle "less fantastic," the little knowledge the visitors have about Orsini makes the

place only more strange. The apparent contradiction, however, may not run very deep: King Ludwig's castle is a post-Enlightenment materialization of a fairy tale illustration and the notion of "extravaganza" is likely to be mixed in the perception of even the most fantasy-prone of the visitors; Bomarzo, on the other hand, is not only pre-Enlightenment but also post-Renaissance, i. e. a product of the reactive period which in Arthaud's words was "much closer to man's phantoms than to his reason" (c. f. 1.2.5). And phantoms seem to be what people see and the ones who create the "atmosphere" of decadence, strangeness and melancholy perceived by the visitors at Bomarzo.

Moreover, Bomarzo is strange without providing any cues; overgrown and unkempt, it presents even more an image of death and decay. There is no mitigating fantasy à la Disney in Bomarzo: if it is so disturbing it is because it appears as a phantasmagoria of a reality, even if that reality was actual four centuries ago. On the other hand, of all the settings Bomarzo is the one which most closely appears to confirm Jenck's (1969, c. f. 1.2.3) hypothesis that "strange" architecture acts as a Rorschach test. At Bomarzo every visitor seems to see a different place, and the most interesting proof of the gardens' paradoxical ambiguity is people's readiness to transfer it to their own cities. Bomarzo does not need "uniqueness" like Neuschwanstein because it is not a "fantasy:" there is no illusion to be maintained, no "another world" besides the world of the past or its nostalgia. Bomarzo is not as "monstrous" as the "Palais." Once in a city the monsters would cease to be part of a message the visitors cannot decipher, because the mystery of the gardens lies not in its monsters *per se*, but in what people imagine that the monsters meant, four centuries ago, to Vicino Orsini. Free from its creator and his phantoms the place is reduced to an original park. In a time of architectural-historical revisionism it may even, in the words of a visitor "become modern."

6.4.4 Conclusion

Bomarzo is the most complex of the six settings, quite clearly located on the dividing line between "fantastic" and "non-fantastic." From the experiential standpoint it seems to have the highest evocative power among the settings and to possess a definite atmosphere of mystery, melancholy and decadence; yet it is only exceptionally considered fantastic by the visitors. In addition, it is one of the places in which the *a priori* interest in the creator is almost nil as a motive for visiting, but in the process ends by being one of the dominant features in the perception of the place. Likewise, the monsters of Bomarzo are not disturbing *per se* but as monsters which, by first appearing to the visitors as phantoms of the creator, end up by being the phantoms of humanity. This may explain what can be called the "multiple referentiality" of the place, i.e. the quality of allowing for a multiplicity of perceptions as "other." At the same time, this multiple referentiality may explain the high level of acceptance of Bomarzo as a place in the visitors' own neighborhood. The fact that the gardens can be so many things at the same time makes them unique for each individual and for that very reason qualifies them as universal. Moreover, the fact that the differences in perception between men and women are rarely significant may be another indication in that sense. So it can be concluded that Bomarzo is "strange" rather than fantastic, and engages the affects of the visitors, inducing to them to questioning and reflecting upon themselves and others and in the process, upon the human condition.

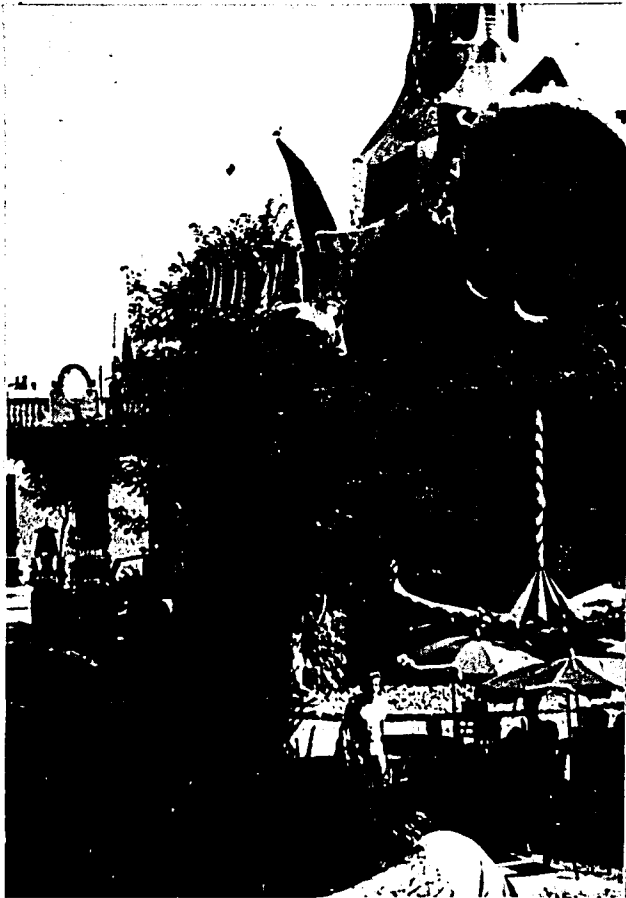


Fig. 26: The park with its air of a
oversize village fair (Photo A,
Montarzino)

PARK GÜELL
Barcelona, Spain

Fig. 27: The gigantic staircase leading to the colonnade,
which at night make some interviewees think of a cemetery
(Photo A, Montarzino)



6.5 PARK GÜELL

6.5.0 The Setting

Park Güell, built in two stages (1900-1903 and 1907-1912), was originally designed as part of an urban development conceived on the model of the English garden cities. But the venture, patronized by Count Güell and designed by the Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí, failed and the park remained a private garden up the 1920's, when the Güell's heirs handed it over to the Municipality of Barcelona to be used as a public garden. Built on several levels of interconnected viaducts, terraces and covered plazas, the park [Figs. 26-27] offers a colorful display of tile covered benches, staircases, roofs and reclining columns in whose sinuous, contorted or globular forms dragons and other fabulous animals can be discerned or easily imagined. It is not surprising, then, that the park is among the architectural works most frequently presented in the literature as "fantastic".

Far from being pure form, the Park counts with structural innovations such as the inclined pier, which by following the slope of an inverted catenary eliminates the need of steel reinforcement. Gaudí's structural inventiveness, demonstrated in the Park and elsewhere, has been the argument most frequently used by Gaudí's admirers against those who called him a "fantasist." But like his admirers, his detractors were legion, and always ready to argue that an architecture which neither belonged to a school nor created one could not be "good" architecture. To some of those detractors, however, the lack of a Gaudian school was not something to be regretted; it must have been a thought along those lines what prompted the Argentinian writer Marco Denevi (1984) to include among his hypothetical "horrors in art": "a complete city designed by Don Antonio Gaudí" (p. 214).

6.5.1 Demographics

At Park Güell the proportion of nationals in relation to the total population is the same as in Bomarzo, 45%, but the composition of the non-native population is more varied, as it includes people from Western and Northern Europe (35%), North and Central American (15%), and Japan (5%). At Park Güell the composition of the native population is also unique: two thirds of the national population is constituted by people who live in the neighborhood and regularly visit the park. Appendix 4 gives a summary of the statistical data.

6.5.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives and place image

The trend detected on other sites concerning nationals' interest in the creator when this is a renown personality acquires a peculiar expression at Park Güell. As Gaudí's celebrity as an architect has largely surpassed the frontiers of his own country, visiting the setting because of an interest in its creator is no longer limited to the nationals: approximately one third of the foreign visitors were at Park Güell because they were primarily interested in Gaudí, or because, as an American visitor pointed out, "when one is in Barcelona, Gaudí (and all Gaudí) is a 'must'" (#7). Among the nationals, as could be expected, this tendency was only found for non-locals, who visited the park because it is a work of Gaudí. The local population, as fiercely proud as they seem to be of having a work by Gaudí in the neighborhood, visit it because for them it is the local park. In summary: of the total population, 30% visit it as their local park; 30% because of their interest in Gaudí, and 35% because they wanted to see "the strange park," and 5% because they "felt curious." Sixty percent of the sample had a clear image of the place as a result of having seen photos of the park, either in books, on post cards or on television.

Perceiving the place

One of the distinctive traits of Park Güell is the widespread interest in its creator, which here not only reaches the highest point among the six settings, but rather approaches the "personality cult." In some cases the interest in the artist completely takes over any other consideration: a Spanish man from the south of the country said:

since I read about Gaudí at school I have seen all his work. This man was a genius and I am his admirer. What he has built is a delirium, it is fabulous, magnificent. What he has made with stone is unbelievable; in many places there is just stone, without any steel [referring to the piers described in 6.4.0]. And if you want a proof of what kind of genius he was, just look at the *Sagrada Família* (#1).

In other cases the reactions were mixed: a native of Madrid, who visited the park because he likes Gaudí, sees the park as

a form of integrating the Mediterranean landscape with the evocation of different cultures ... The park "is very innovative; it plays with elements of the past but in a new way; and even if I had not had known who designed it I would have said: it is Gaudí" (#7).

Although, as mentioned, locals do not visit the place because of Gaudí, they are proud of having a work by him in the neighborhood and this seems to play an important role in their perception of the place. A young woman who grew up in the neighborhood pointed out that "Gaudí was a genius and that can be seen in the park. We all like it and are proud of having it here" (#2) and a local man, now in his sixties, said

"when I was a boy I saw [the Park] as a complicated construction; now that I know more, it seems to me even more complicated. Gaudí was a genius: there are no two pillars or columns with the same design" (#3).

Men seemed to be more interested in the creator than women but this difference in interest was not found to be statistically significant.

Place, fantasy-imagination and imaginative thinking

Unlike in the other settings, in Park Güell fantasy and imagination appear indissolubly blended in one category: about 35% of the total sample consistently named them together, including a Japanese man who,

like many Americans at Park Güell and elsewhere, perceived it as both, since for him "it looks like something from Disneyworld." As in the other settings, women chose "fantasy" more often than men but this difference was not found to be statistically significant.

Locals and foreigners alike perceived the Park in an all-embracing mixture of images and reflections which they expressed with the paucity of a soliloquy. For an American woman the park was something that

makes me think of forms that grow in nature; it is as if a stone garden has grown out of the earth. It makes me think of trolls, perhaps because my mother used to say to me that I was 'like a troll under the bridge,' and it also makes me think of stories I read as a child. But I wonder to which point this is proper of Gaudí or of the Spanish culture. I went to the Miró museum two days ago and I remember something that impressed me a lot; there was a recorded interview with Miró and to the question whether he was a Surrealist he answered; 'no; I am Spanish'. The strange thing is that the images about trolls and forms from the earth that the Park brings to mind are not very sophisticated; but the place is, with all that terracing and tunnels. It is contradictory; primitive, and organic, and complex at the same time. In a way, it makes me think of Latin American writers and their 'magic realism.' That is what this park is for me (#12).

Of all the six sites Park Güell seems to be the one most often perceived as a source of creative thinking (45%) whether by educated foreigners or by locals without high levels of education. The American woman quoted immediately above maintained that the park "is a good place to think; I have seen people soaking in the place, just thinking." With local visitors memories and present perceptions overlap, creating an inextricable tapestry. A man who as a child thought that the Park was "Moorish ruins" and "used to play [there] with the other boys and scare the girls" mentioned that later he came with his books because the park "it is a good place to think; one puts one's head to work here." When asked if he could explain why he would "put his head to work" there vs. in any other park, he offered an answer which deserves to be quoted *in extenso*, for it may throw some light on the Park's function beyond the relaxing-and-recreation model. His explanation was that the place

is different; you may like it or think that Gaudí was mad, and the place will still be different. I have not travelled much, nor have I been to University, but

to me everywhere parks and houses look more or less the same; when they are decorated, they are brown and when they have a little color, they are just squares; so this is more like something from another planet, I heard some people say that it just looks like a *verbena* (fair). See, the difference is that it is not cheap tin or wood, It is built solid, with all kinds of forms and materials and colors that look new and are always shining, even when it rains, One comes here and can feel like a Chinese emperor. And then you always discover something new; not big things, just little ones. That, I think, was Gaudí's vision; make something that one can see as new. [When asked if he would visit a modern park if it was in the neighborhood he said] of course I would; change is nice. But some things do not change; I worked for two years in Madrid, and I could go to a park there and all that, but each time I came to Barcelona, I came here. This is not just a place to sit, as those modern parks which seem made for blind people (#3).

For a female teenager who lives in the low income sector of the neighborhood the Park is "an inspiration laboratory;" she used to play with dolls under the viaducts (a segment of the park which looks like a cave), but since her house is "too noisy, I used to come here to write my school papers, too. It was always easier here" (#17). For a young woman working as a maid in the higher income sector of the neighborhood, the Park is a source of both mental stimulation and refuge: she likes the place because "people from everywhere come to see it." She likes "to come and think" because she feels that "one can dream and think 'incredible' things here without being afraid that your mother or your older brothers will come and call you stupid" (#15).

But the same richness and colorfulness were seen by other visitors as "unbearable:" a woman whose husband designs theater sets but who is "a convinced Mondrianist" found it "fatiguing" and wondered if the term "gaudy" did not originate with Gaudí's work (#12).

Image and reality

Approximately four-fifths of the non-local visitors had seen photos of the Park before coming, and the level of disappointment is, along with Cheval's "Palais Idéal," one of the lowest (10%). About four-fifths of those who had seen photos thought that the Park was more interesting

than they had expected, in most cases because they found it "bigger" or "more intricate." Those who declared to be disappointed considered that "the pictures made us believe that the whole place was made of broken china. It made us think of a big outdoor sculpture. We did not expect to find these dirt paths" (#12).

For locals the problems of "reality" are more down to earth, particularly for old people; for half of the local visitors, all of them women, security is the main problem: "It was more family-oriented when we were young, and there were less security problems too; we miss that very much" (#4). In general men appeared to be more satisfied than women although this difference in attitude is not statistically significant.

Evocative power

The frequency of association of the Park with images seen in books is high: 70% reported some type of association, with four-fifths of them related to fantasy. As in Cheval's *Palais Idéal* (and unlike most of the other sites) the proportion of men and women reporting these associations is roughly the same. An explanation is that men have often related it with science fiction images of adventure of the sort of "finding a lost world," although associations with "drawings from a Russian tale" (#20) were not absent.

The frequency of associations with "other worlds," on the other hand, was lower than the frequency of associations with images (40% against 70%) and, it should be noted, half of those who had any associations were local visitors. For 1/4 of the visitors "other worlds" were "masquerades" of this world: "a procession of masked people" (#15) or a "fair, with all the color and noise" (#10) whereas the majority associated it with imaginary worlds. Women tended to associate it with "places of the imagination" such as "Pinocchio's island" and "the Sorcerer's garden" whereas men were tended to associate it with science-fiction images. Women also tended to associate the Park with other worlds three times as often as men. Although this difference in attitude is not statistically significant it may be indicative of a trend found also in other settings.

Place, feelings and context

The frequency with which people reported feelings communicated by the place was the same as in Bomarzo (65%); however, while at the latter feelings were mostly associated with melancholy and decadence, at Park Güell they concerned "admiration for Gaudí" (20%), joy, wonder, amazement and surprise (20%). The remaining 25% reported a variety of feelings, from contentment to well-being.

Just as in Bomarzo, feelings of fear were predominantly associated with the place at night, mostly by women: 90% of the women imagined that they would experience fear, while 40% of the men opted for "uneasiness."

One of the men interviewed who lived in the neighborhood remembered

to have been here at night as a boy; we managed to get in a couple of times and though I knew the place well, it was not much fun; but one does those things to prove that one is an *hombre* (#3).

The difference between men and women concerning fear at night was found significant with $p(N=16)=.0166$.

As at the other settings, temporal factors played a role in the perception of the place; a female teenager living in the neighborhood pointed out that she likes to see the park at night, from the outside, when it is stormy, because then "it is particularly scary." When asked to imagine the place at night a woman commented: "I am imagining it under the moon, and I must say that I would not like to be here; it would look like a monstrous cemetery" (#17). But perhaps the most remarkable point is that immediately before, the same subject had defined the Park as "playful." In that sense, at Park Güell, the changes in perception between day and night are much more contrasting than at Bomarzo. Park Güell "in the forest," on the other hand, was seen as less "fearsome." Only 20% of the total sample imagined it in that category, while 40% saw it as "more strange," and 30% as "magic," and the rest as nothing special. Women tended to see the place as magic two times as often as men. This difference in attitude although not statistically significant may indicate that there is a gender difference, either in the perception of the places or in the attitude towards the "fantastic."

In reply to the specific question about fear 50% of the women and only 10% of the men expressed that the place as it was at the time of the interview (daytime) could inspire some kind of fear; as in the preceding paragraph the difference may not be statistically significant in itself, it seems to be indicative of a trend when considered together with similar values.

"I would not believe my eyes" is the most common impression (65%) the visitors thought they would have if they had discovered the Park by chance. Or as an Englishwoman put it: "I would think that I had one whisky too many" (#18); 65% reported such feelings of disbelief while 35% mentioned "surprise, astonishment." An interesting point is that some of the interviewees volunteered an imaginative search into their feelings. A female Mexican visitor, after she had delivered her response, added

but I wish I could be eight, ten years old and discover it for myself; those are things that one remembers the whole life; unfortunately, something like this is not likely to occur; parents always take the initiative (#4).

The actual experience, reported by two of the local visitors, appears to confirm that woman's expectations. A man (#3), who moved to the neighborhood when he was around seven years old and was taken by a neighbour of the same age to the Park reported

I still remember the surprise; I had never seen something like this, I was, I think, a little scared at the beginning, all I could see from the gate was so strange and I also thought one could not go in, that it was private. But then I went crazy, my mother used to tell people who came to visit us about the fuss I made when I went home; I wanted everybody to go with me and I even insisted that we go with my great-grand mother, who was living with us and could no longer walk (#3).

The young woman quoted above, who came from a farm in the north of the country to work as a maid in the high income section of the neighborhood, related that

the first week I was here, I was going on an errand, and walked for a while along the [the front] wall, asking myself what this could be to have a wall that long. But when I came to the main door and the staircase I stopped and was mute of surprise, I just could not believe it, I dared not get in, I said to myself that I

did not have the time and went away. Then of course I realized that it was the Park and when I had my first free day I came and I have been coming ever since (#15).

"Fantastic" places and neighborhood

More than half of the sample (65%) mentioned that they would like to have a place like the Park in their neighborhoods; this proportion includes those locals who answered affirmatively to the question whether they would have it in the neighborhood if they had the choice. The remaining 35% rejects it on the grounds that "it is too Spanish for where I live" or "it would not look all right in my neighborhood." But like Bomarzo, Park Güell was rejected in some instances because of its intrinsic character: an American woman mentioned she would prefer a functional park in her neighborhood; she lives "in New York City, where one needs a park to relax, and I do not think one could do that in a place like this" (#7).

Defining the place in one word

To define the place in only one word, 35% of the population used the word "fantastic" or a fantasy-related term such as "magic," "surrealistic" and "fabulous," while 40% opted for the term "imaginative." The remaining 25% opted for a variety of unrelated terms ranging from "original" to "Mediterranean."

The fantastic as a question

As in the other settings, the percentage of affirmative answers to the explicit question concerning whether they would call the place "fantastic" (75%) was much higher than the percentage of "fantasy-related" responses (between 30% and 40%) they had provided in previous questions which did not contain any explicit reference to "fantastic". About half of those who answered affirmatively said that the term meant "because it has fantasy, imagination" and the rest offered a wide range, from "thinking of the enchanted forest" to the lapidary "if 'fantastic' means unrealistic and unnecessary, then it is," passing through "because it looks like a place which cannot exist," "because it looks more like a scene

for a children's theater piece than a real place," "because it looks like something designed by someone who was high," and "because it is full of different strange places, like the world of the Arabian nights." When asked about the features which made the place "fantastic" two thirds mentioned tile-covered parts, i. e. the main staircase and the "dragon-bench;" one half of the remaining sample mentioned the stone work, i. e. the terraces and the viaducts, and the rest the fact that the Park was designed by Gaudí.

The "fantastic" and familiarity

Four out of five local visitors mentioned that they still found "something new" in the Park, even after twenty years of coming regularly. In this park, however, no second time visitors were interviewed, so it is not possible to establish whether the trend detected at Neuschwanstein and at the "Palais Idéal" i. e. that second time visitors tend to find the place less "fantastic" than first time and regular visitors, is maintained here. Concerning the absence of second time visitors it must be noted that although this may be the result of chance, the location factor should not be overlooked. The Park is located at a considerable distance from the center of Barcelona where three of Gaudí's most famous works, viz. the Church of the Sagrada Família, Casa Milà and Casa Batlló are within walking distance from each other. Thus, it could be that second time visitors, who in most cases come as companions, would advise (and accompany) a neophyte to visit the downtown buildings rather than the Park, which requires the use of public transportation.

6.5.3 Discussion

The findings show that two elements are dominant at Park Güell: its creator, and the richness of the visitors' experience. Concerning the perception of the place as fantastic the frequency reported is consistent across the site, remaining slightly under 40%. The type of "fantasy" prevalent at the Park is a mixture of "high imagination," "evocative power" and fear. Given that, analytically, one of the most noteworthy aspects of this setting is its contrast with Bomarzo, the results are

discussed in relation to those of Bomarzo without neglecting the comparison with other sites when they are relevant.

The place and its creator

One of the main differences between Bomarzo and Park Güell concerns the role played by the creator in the overall perception of the place. Park Güell is a place where the formal richness and strangeness appear as both a reminder of the "greatness" of its creator and as a stimulator for thinking, imagining and fantasizing. The creator's presence is clearly felt in Park Güell, even more strongly by first time visitors than by locals who may not necessarily remember or think of him on their usual visits; the fact that locals mention the creator almost as often as do other nationals may be no more than a burst of local and national pride in the special circumstance of being asked about the place. In contrast, Bomarzo is a place of atmosphere, and that atmosphere is "mystery." At Bomarzo the creator, who is never mentioned by the interviewees as motivating their visit, soon begins to be felt as a presence, which is the more pervasive the freer the visitors are from feelings of local or national pride.

Moreover, in this type of places the presence of the creator may manifest itself in even more subtle ways and the "mystery" atmosphere attributed by the visitors to Bomarzo may be a good example of this situation. Given the visible state of unkemptness of Bomarzo, it could be tempting to see "mystery" as the result of its air of decay. But if neglect and mystery were highly related the latter would have been reported also at Park Güel, since it is far from looking like a trimmed corporate plaza in Midtown New York. However, this did not occur, and a possible explanation could be found in the different ways in which the two creators are perceived. Gaudí is seen as a genius, with foresight and a clear architectural purpose; his imagination and reason are seen as to have worked in unison. Many visitors go to see his work with him uppermost in their minds. But it seems that often, in the course of the visit, the importance of the creator starts to recede: it is as if the the genius of the place had become more powerful than the memory of the man. In con-

trast, the visitors to Bomarzo, deprived of cues about the place, are forced to guess about Vicino Orsini in order to organize disparate impressions, and in the process creator and place together may acquire a new meaning. Thus what we have is a reversed situation. At Park Güell the creator was important previous to the visit and fades in the process of viewing. At Bomarzo, an irrelevant creator becomes the key of the perception.

The first plausible explanation for the increasing interest in Bomarzo's creator vs. Gaudí's stationary or even vanishing role at Park Güell may lie in the fact that Bomarzo (like the "Palais") is "expressionistic" (in the strict sense of the word) and as such is a depiction of some aspect of the creator's soul, feelings or thoughts, or all three at the same time. This Park Güell could never be. Like Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs, Park Güell was "designed" by a professional who took into consideration the needs of a collective user (although at the time the prospective users were only the prospective inhabitants of the "Colonia Güell"), and no matter how wild his imagination or his conceptions, he still had to comply with norms and regulations and requirements unheard of in Bomarzo or the "Palais." Why is it then that if Park Güell is more functional than the "Palais" or even Bomarzo, it is more often associated with imaginary worlds than these two? A possible explanation is that Cheval and Bomarzo are, as already men, expressionistic and for the same reason "humanistic" in the sense that they would induce the visitor to reflect upon the human condition. Park Güell, on the other hand, is rather seen as the result of one facet of its creator, .e.g. his talent as a professional, thus detaching the perceiver's attention from its creator and directing it to other types of images.

The second plausible explanation for the difference in the creator's perception at Park Güell vs. at Bomarzo is that at the Park there is something paradoxical concerning the creator and the place: here the creator is important "before" the visit (and so much so that there was a case in which a visitor had reduced his experience of the place to the observation of "the work of a genius") but he plays only a small role in

the perception of the place because the richness of form and color is such that it becomes the dominant factor. This dominance may well be further accentuated by the power of those forms to evoke fantasy-images or images from "other worlds," thus effacing even more the role played by the creator in the perception of the place.

Experience and form

As already discussed, the importance attributed to the creator may be superseded by the the richness of the experience which appears to come mostly (if not solely) from the perception of the formal aspects of the Park and their power to evoke fantasy images, images of "un-real" worlds. Concerning the latter there is another formal element, besides form and color, which may contribute to the associations with "fantasy worlds" and this is the impression of immutability conferred by the use of stone and tiles. As one of the visitors pointed out, those "are always the same." While local visitors grow from infant to adult and into old age, the "tiles are always shining under sun or rain... [and you come here and] feel like a Chinese Emperor" (#3).

Yet the tiles, while giving the park its color, contribute to the creation of a "dark side." Bomarzo is charged with melancholy; it is "decadent" but monochrome. Park Güell is as colorful as a village fair or a *verbena*, and like those it may have a glittering facade but also a dark back, c.f. the visitors' associations with "a place for processions, with people masked," or that with "Pinocchio's island," or "a monumental cemetery" at night. Hence the association of the Park with fear. Certainly, the greatest percentage of associations of the Park with fear at night are attributed, as at Bomarzo, to its "corners and shadows." But that cannot be all: a more conventional park would hardly be associated with a "gigantic cemetery." But when imagined "in the forest," on the other hand, the frequency of reported fear is much lower than at Bomarzo, and this is so because the Park's colorful forms can be seen as playful and magic, whereas the monsters of Bomarzo always will regain their appearance of sepulchral sculpture.

Moreover, the metaphor of a village fair with its bright and dark sides also illustrates the type of "fantasy" that Park Güell represents: an event in which fantasy and reality inter-penetrate and coexist in one unquestioned unit. In this context, the associations of the park with both the "procession of masked people" mentioned above and with the concept of "magic realism" proposed by another interviewee can be seen as very close to each other. In both images the Park appears as "apart" from everyday reality, but without either shunning it as in "the marvellous" (Neuschwanstein), or confining it to man's inner world, as at Bomarzo.

The world of the Park is "reality" disrupted from time to time by images which may be both frightening (because they remind us of things we fear) or "marvellous" (because they appear to be from "other worlds"), but the mixture is fluid and in constant change: It may depend on the itinerary chosen, on the visitor's moods, on the weather. The lay-out of the Park multiplies the possibilities of change since its paths offer many alternative routes and the tiled surfaces advance or recede, explode in colors or disappear into the earth. It is not surprising then that Park Güell is perceived as a fluctuating pattern of fantasy-fear: fear-some and unsettling at night, and unbelievable, a shocking "moment of hesitation," if found by chance.

Fantasy-fear

The fantasy-fear at Güell is different from that at Cheval's "Palais," where this combination has reached its zenith. The fantasy-fear at Güell is more "orderly." The Park was designed with a purpose and that, besides approaching it to mainstream architecture, makes its fantasy more benign, sifted through a professional mind and arranged with some obedience of established aesthetic patterns. The "Palais," on the other hand, is formally "art brut" in all its dimensions and the monsters that Cheval can unleash Güell cannot. At the "Palais" as well as at Bomarzo people seem to ponder and reflect; at Park Güell they appear to think. Most visitors rejected the "Palais" as a place for their neighborhoods and no one, including those who would have it close to their homes, manifested that he/she would like it as a place "to go and think." To a

clone of Bomarzo built in their neighborhood, many visitors thought they would "go and think," perhaps because once in a city, transplanted, clean and trimmed, it would lose the traces of Vicino Orsini to become a park with sculptures, a "modern park." In such a park the monsters could help "to think" because they would have ceased to be part of a hermetic message and become monsters tamed by city life.

At Park Güell there is not taming to be done, nor a secret message to be decoded. Certainly, works proclaiming the existence of a "secret language" inscribed in the Park's features are not lacking (c.f. Joan Llarch, 1982), but this type of interpretations were absent from the visitor's perceptions. For some visitors the Park may be "too Spanish" to be anywhere else than where it is, but otherwise it is a place where to go and think. It may not be very welcome in cities where over-stimulation is the daily fare of the inhabitants, but in medium-sized towns or sleepy neighborhoods it could be an stimulant to imagination. Park Güell and Bomarzo are not only separated by four hundred years but also by the ways in which they are perceived.

6.4.4 Conclusion

Park Güell's fantasy seems to be a relatively tame one. As a place, it stands between Neuschwanstein and the "Palais," participating in the "fantasy" of one and the fear of the other. With Bomarzo it may not share more than the fear that, as parks, both can provoke at night.



Fig. 28, A toy-house in the city
(Photo A. Montarzino)

HUNDERTWASSER Vienna, Austria

Fig. 29... Beautifully integrated with the street for visitors, though
less, it seems, for residents (Photo A. Montarzino)



6.6 HUNDERTWASSER

6.6.0 The Setting

The seven story (at its highest) apartment building located on the corner of Löwengasse and Kegelgasse is the brainchild of the contemporary Austrian painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Continuing a tradition of the twenties' and thirties', the city of Vienna decided to run a series of pilot projects, of which the building known as "Hundertwasser" is the most colorful output. Received by the press with titles such as "late Gaudi", "haunted house," "play-castle" and "ecological Neuschwanstein," the place has become a tourist attraction, visited every day by hundreds of people from all over the world.

In 1979 Hundertwasser presented his first concept for the building, which it consisted of a model of 50 match-boxes. In 1983, after some initial difficulties the plans were approved and the construction was finished in the fall of 1985. The building [Figs. 28-29] has a very distinctive appearance. The apartments are all of different sizes; the floors are often at irregular levels and the interior walls curved. On the facade every apartment sports a different color, including a conspicuous blue, and each one appears separated from the next by both horizontal and vertical rows of colored tiles. Part of the facade of the building which stood on the terrain now occupied by Hundertwasser was reconstructed and distinctively incorporated in the new one in order to "invite the ghosts to move in." An external staircase supported by polychrome columns leads to a café on the second floor, with a terrace which sports cast marble sculptures of the type produced industrially for garden decoration. The several other terraces of the building, also with reconstructed marble sculptures, are covered by grass and trees.

The building has also a fake tower, crowned by a golden dome. According to its creator, in the past only the very rich could afford such a luxury but now the tower can make everyone living in the house feel like "a king." Patterns made out of tiles and mirrors can be found on the

surface of the facade, as well as on nooks and crannies here and there. On Kegelgasse the street has been converted into a pedestrian walk and mini-plaza integrated with the building. There, amidst scattered benches and a few young trees, the visitor finds a fountain gently spluttering on a tile covered basin decorated with the twelve signs of the zodiac. Near the entrance of the building, on the mini-plaza, there is a giftshop selling slides, postcards and books about the building.

For the present research, the "grounds" are the pedestrian area and the mini-plaza on Kegelgasse described above.

6.6.1 Demographics

In clear contrast to the Schtroumpfs, the sample at Hundertwasser is made up of 20% nationals, of which half are neighbors visiting the building's grounds and the other half non-Viennese Austrians. As the residents seem to be weary of the tourists, none of them could be found "on the grounds" engaged in any activity besides getting in and out of the building. The foreigners in the sample are mostly West Europeans (seven eights of the total) and North and South Americans. Appendix 5 gives a summary of the statistical data.

6.6.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives and place image

Although the creator was known to 30% of the sample, only 5% visited the place with him as the principal motif; ten percent visited it because they live in the area and like the place, 50% because they wanted to see a "strange place," and 35 % because they "felt curious." Concerning the way the visitors learnt about the place 10% did it by simply living in the neighborhood, 40% by word of mouth (from a friend, from a Viennese met in a restaurant, a fellow traveller in a youth hostel; a teacher of German at a summer course for foreigners), and the remaining 50% through postcards or brochures, although only 40% of the sample declared to have a clear image of the place before arriving.

Perceiving the place

The expression "it makes me think of," which was typical at Bomarzo, is found again at Hundertwasser, but as might be expected the types of associations in the two settings are radically different: Bomarzo is associated with elements which convey an atmosphere of "gloom" and "despair;" Hundertwasser with "colorful paintings," "games" and "childish fantasies." At Hundertwasser 10% of the visitors think of a "fantasy related to something else": "a painting by Miró," or "of Gaudí and Park Güell" (#11); 40% to something related to the world of childhood such as "a doll-house or a gigantic birthday cake" (#18); "a magic toy-shop" (#3); "a puzzle for toddlers" (#4); "a pixie-house" (#1), while 30% see it as "imaginative," "exciting" and "fun," and 15%, as "different", and "unexpected." Five percent think it is "awful."

Perceiving and imagining living in

At Hundertwasser perceiving the building and imagining how it would be to live in it seem to be part of the same process: around 45% of the sample brought up the subject before they were asked to do so. This simultaneous way of perceiving a building and imagining living in it is of interest for two reasons. First, it seems to have prompted some interviewees to elaborate quite freely on the subject. Second, the analysis of those spontaneous elaborations may indicate the existence of a peculiar feature in people's interaction with "fantastic" architecture. This peculiarity seems to be an emotional interaction between the subject and the place which goes beyond mere preferences, and is obviously different from the common type of attachment that people develop for a dwelling.

Some interviewees imagined the interaction to be so pervasive as to have an influence on their personality. One such case is that of a Frenchman who visited Hundertwasser because he was interested in comparing it with apartment buildings in Brussels and Berlin, also painted in bright colors as part of an effort to upgrade run-down neighborhoods. His comparison could not be made because:

unfortunately there is no way to know who lives here and how expensive the place is. But I like the building; it is kitsch, mythical, mystical, fun. There is

something soft and childish about it, I cannot imagine a banker or a top executive living in a place like this; he would be afraid of not being taken seriously any longer if someone found out where he lived. However, I would not live here; I am afraid I am sometimes more of a child and of a dreamer (rêveur) than I should be or than what is permissible at my age; and a building like this, I think, could make that worse. But for those who are not afraid of themselves I think it is fine, I am just glad the building is here; because this is like a bit of oxygen in a city like Vienna (#20).

For some locals the mere proximity of the place seems to be a source of joy or at least of good spirits. A retired Viennese, who often comes and sits on one of the benches, expressed that although at the beginning he did not like the idea of having the building there, he was now happy.

This is not "serious" architecture but one nice to look at. It is "happy", one feels more contented or that the sun is shining even when it is not, just by being around, something one rarely can say of architecture. And at the same time it is very human and daring. You can come here and feel a little younger, or think of the crazy things you have done when young, and feel happy you did them,.. But I do not think I could live here, I may feel young when I look at it from the outside but I think it would make me feel too old if I were "inside," if I were part of it. Besides, my wife hates it; she says that it is nonsense, that one has to be soft in the head to find this worth looking at. I think it is of no use to discuss such things because it is not even a question of good or bad taste, but, in my view, of what the place does to you. And how many times can one say that a building "does" something? Rarely, I would say (#17).

A young Viennese woman, who spends a lot of time in her apartment alone with her baby, and comes to sit on the benches in front of the building, expressed similar feelings:

I come here often with the baby and sit around, particularly when I feel a little "blue" or tired; the colors cheer me up and looking at those pieces of glass and the little windows and particularly at the onion of the tower I feel a little like a child again; careless, irresponsible like a child, that is; and then I like also to see the people coming from all over the world. It is easy to talk to people here; they all feel carefree and playful, and I like that. I know that some people

were not happy with the idea of having this built in their neighborhood, but now they are proud of it. It became much easier to give street directions. Now it is "from Hundertwasser to the right or the left"... However, I would not like to live in; I was told that the apartments are a little crazy inside, with uneven floors and that may not be good for the baby; besides, I prefer to see it from the outside; one can fantasize more, and I would not like to live in a place always surrounded by visitors; it is like living in a fish bowl. I heard that although the residents are happy to live in a famous house they are not that happy about the number of visitors they get and their lack of privacy; I saw a couple of times people asking them to show the interior, because they wanted to take pictures. So they try to avoid them. During all the time I came here I never met anyone sitting here. The just rush in (#12).

But foreigners have not been insensitive to the mood-lifting effects of Hundertwasser. A German woman thought that

it must be nice for a child to live here; or better still, to have a school like this, so to go to school would be less dreadful. I can see myself going there, inventing funny stories on the way. But it could be nice also to have in front of one's own house, for those days in which everything looks bleak (#19).

In other cases, the place seems to stimulate the zany side of the perceiver. An Englishwoman in her 50's, doubtless with a peculiar sense of humor, pointed out that she would certainly not like to live in the building because

it will take over my life and color it blue like the walls. I feel I would look ridiculous living in such a house; I would not dare to open a window and stick my head out, just in case someone would shout at me: "Rapunzel, do not undo your hair and go back to the kitchen; you are getting old for little games." I would rather leave it to young people with children, or to students, (#18)

Most people (70%), however, said they would like to live at Hundertwasser, and the reasons advanced were almost as varied as the subjects. Practical considerations appear in general as soon as the question of whether they would like to live in the building is posed; a German woman (#1) thought that she would like to live in it because "it looks so

happy and friendly" but "the windows are very small, so perhaps it is dark inside" (#1). For others lack of privacy (too many visitors taking pictures) was the main drawback with living in the building since they "would feel observed" (#2), (#18), although the opposite has also been seen to be the case. For some visitors, the "fish-bowl" seems to be an incentive to live in the house. A young Canadian visitor said: "I would love to live here because it is like living in a monument; something one cannot do very often. And then, if you feel lonely, you come down and there will always be someone to talk to" (#15).

The liveliness attributed to the place was another of the qualities perceived as reasons for wanting to live there. A woman from Germany (#1) would choose it because "when I see it I have to smile, it is friendly and also incorporates nature: trees and greenery" and "I do not think that I would get tired of the house because every day have I would things to discover." And for an Italian man the place "has more life and more style than most existing buildings" (#7).

In other cases "ecological" considerations are added. A woman from Germany said she would like to live in Hundertwasser because "it is an architecture for living; you have grass on the roof and that saves on heating; and I also like the color" (#4). In some cases color is a reason for rejection but the "liveliness" is recognized: An Italian woman pointed out that she would not like to live in the house because she does not like color for herself; but she likes the fact "that it is a building with feeling;...it is probably nice for children. They seemed to be quite interested in it; and it may stimulate imagination" (#11).

"Difference" is also seen as a good reason for choosing the house, but that holds only as far as the building remains "unique": A Frenchwoman (#9) pointed out that she "would not like to live in it if the buildings around were like this because, first, one would feel overwhelmed, and second, the building would lose its uniqueness." A similar view was held by an Italian man:

If all the buildings were like this one, then I would like to live in a

geometrical one, [Yet],... I would live here only for a while; I could not imagine myself having to look at it all my life. It would give me a feeling of nausea; it has too many things. It is like a very rich dessert; you can eat only small quantities (#3).

A visitor from Venezuela, on the other hand, found it ludicrous...I do not know how people could accept their government to invest money in something like that; if it were for a preparatory school one could accept it; otherwise it is money wasted (#16).

Image and reality

Although 50% of the interviewees say that they had seen pictures of the place, only 40% considered that they had a clear image of it prior to visiting. Nevertheless, 5% reported some kind of disappointment while 15% said that the place was better than they had expected.

Evocative power

The frequency of association of Hundertwasser with images from books, paintings and sculpture is one of the highest across the six sites. Sixty five percent reported some kind of association: with illustrations in children's books (25%); with toys, doll-houses, puppet theaters, Lego-models (30%); and with Disneyworld (10%). The associations with "other worlds" is relatively high, 45%, which in more than two third of the cases that meant the "world and games of childhood." Women associated the place with images and other worlds slightly more than twice as often as men and this was not found to be statistically significant.

Place, feelings and context

Eighty percent the population reported experiencing feelings towards the place. Just as with the preceding questions, those feelings were mostly related to the joys of childhood: to "feeling like a child again," "carefree," "playful" (35%); and "fun," and "joy" (25%); but there were also feelings of "friendliness," "contentment" and "freedom" (20%).

At Hundertwasser people's associations with fear were nil in the four cases: at night, in the forest, if found by chance and in the explicit question. Concerning the place at night 10% imagined it would look "magic," 75% more surprising (in half of the cases depending on the weather: snow, moonshine), and 15% to be "the same." "In the forest," 20% (all women) would see it as "magic," 60% "more surprising," and 20% could not imagine it. Among those who saw it has "magic" the image was of Hundertwasser as "a big house for the seven dwarfs" (#3) or as "a ballet scene" (#17). According to one of the interviewees put it, Hundertwasser in the forest could not cause fear because "one thinks that only nice people could live here" (#4). Similarly, "finding it by chance," would produce 55% of "disbelief," and 45% of surprise. Women mentioned the term magic more often than men but this was not found statistically significant.

"Fantastic" places and neighborhood

Among the six settings Hundertwasser is the one with the highest percentage of acceptance as part of the interviewees' neighborhood (75%). Among the rejections two thirds were not due to the building itself but to its incompatibility with the interviewee's neighborhood.

Defining the place in one word

For half the sample the one word that could define Hundertwasser was, or was related to "ludic;" for one quarter the term was "fantasy" or a fantasy-related term; and for the remaining quarter it was "imaginative" and "creative." There is also a significant difference between men and women in the selection of a fantasy related word; women favored this word four times as often as men, although this was not found statistically significant.

The fantastic as a question

As at the other settings the proportion of people who would call the place "fantastic" rose sharply on the last question; 65% of the sample said that they would call Hundertwasser "fantastic," in half of the cases with the literal interpretation of fantastic as "which has fantasy,

imagination." The other interpretations covered an interesting range: "because it looks more like a painting than a real building" (#10) or "like an illustration in a book rather than real" (#12); "because it is like a playhouse" (#4); "because it could be in Disneyworld" (#15); "because it could be from Legoland" (#20).

When asked what they thought makes the place "fantastic" 20% of the interviewees mentioned "the whole design; it is impossible to separate one thing from the other." Thirty five percent thought it was "the golden dome and the reconstituted marble sculptures;" 25% "the dome and the inclined pilasters;" 10% "the colors and the windows," and 10% did not know.

The "fantastic" and familiarity

The percentage of the sample who had been at Hundertwasser more than once (including locals) is too low (15%) to draw any conclusions, but it may be of interest to mention that among that small group no signs of "habituation" seem yet to have appeared. Of the two local visitors one mentioned that "one does not get tired of this place because one always finds new things" (#17) and the other expressed . Another local visitors mentioned that the image she had of the building as a painting when she saw it for the first time has not changed, although the way in which she sees it now

depends a lot on my mood and sometimes on the weather. When the sky is very heavy ...[the house],... really looks like one of those magic houses in children's movies; and if it has snowed and the sky is clear, one wants to get in, to be comforted; it looks so warm; you think that there must be a grandmother there, waiting for you with warm cakes (#12).

6.6.3 Discussion

The perceived content of fantasy is higher at Hundertwasser than at the Schtroumpf and Bomarzo but lower than at Neuschwanstein, Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Park Güell. A plausible explanation for the latter is that although the perception of the place is very often referential -- "it makes me think of..." -- it is first and foremost perceived as a

"place to live in." An interesting indicator of this attitude is that almost half of the interviewees spontaneously gave their opinion about living in the building as part of a question about their general impression of it.

But if there is a single expression which can summarize Hundertwasser, then this must be "architecture of affects." In no other setting do visitors, whether locals, nationals or foreigners, appear to empathize so much with the place. A possible explanation is that the building is frequently associated with toys, doll houses, constructions made with building blocks, i.e. with the salient features of the world of childhood, and this may give the illusion that the house can return those living in it to that carefree, idealized time. This may explain why the overall impression of Hundertwasser is that of a playful, "happy" building, a "ludic" event. More than just a building, Hundertwasser appears, like Bomarzo, as an "atmosphere." But what in Bomarzo was gloom and decay is at Hundertwasser images taken from an idyllic home: the laughter of children, images of a grandmother, a happy story in a book. Most of the people who said that they would not live in Hundertwasser offered reasons such as not wanting to feel childish or, on the contrary, out of place for not being childish enough. Particularly visitors older than fifty said that they would feel out of place, an opinion shared by people of that age group at the Schtroumpf.

In stark contrast to these images of idyllic life as perceived or imagined by the visitors, the inhabitants can be seen rushing through the entrance door, rejecting any approach by a stranger. The proverbial Austrian friendliness is not to be found at the doors of Hundertwasser. In contrast, the residents of the Schtroumpfs are approachable and very much willing to talk about their building: at Hundertwasser the "atmosphere" seems to be outside, at the Schtroumpfs, inside. A plausible explanation is that visitors to Hundertwasser largely outnumber those to the Schtroumpfs. But this could also be due to a difference in both the inhabitants' attitude and the relationship between public-private domains. Concerning the first it is clear that the Schtroumpfs' dwellers

manifestedly feel privileged. Despite some problems with furniture due to odd angles, most of the inhabitants interviewed said that they had not moved into a building but rather into "a new way of living" which includes being photographed on their balconies by strangers coming to see their building. Concerning the second, the fact that at the Schtroumpfs there is a green buffer between the sidewalk and the building (recently protected by a low fence) may help in achieving a more relaxed atmosphere than at Hundertwasser. At the latter, the integration with the surrounding area is greater and more aesthetically achieved; however, it seems to fail in providing what the inhabitants need in order not to feel crowded by strangers.

Concerning the role played by the creator, the findings show that Hundertwasser deviates from the pattern established by the other settings. Although at Hundertwasser the creator is a relatively well known painter this does not play any substantial role in people's decision to visit the place. Perhaps the enormous success of "Hundertwasser" as a building has eclipsed Hundertwasser as a painter in the minds of people who may be more interested in novelties than in art. It could also be that as the creator and the building carry the same name, people may consider that to visit Hundertwasser's building is the equivalent of visiting Hundertwasser the painter, and they do not consider it necessary to make the difference explicit.

6.6.4 Conclusion

The frequency of reported fantasy at Hundertwasser is not very high, fluctuating in the vicinity of 20% across the survey. More than a "fantasy" the building is seen as a ludic object associated with the world of childhood. The type of "fantasy" associated with Hundertwasser is very close to the "marvellous" found at Neuschwanstein, only that this "marvellous" is of the domestic type: the idyllic home, the idealized paradise of childhood as remembered by the nostalgic: carefree, secure, full of play and laughter. Like Neuschwanstein, Hundertwasser is also low in fear, but whereas at Neuschwanstein this was due only to the "marvellous," at Hundertwasser this seems to be propitiated by function and

location. Again as in Neuschwanstein, familiarity with the setting does not appear to diminish its evocative power and a loss of uniqueness is seen as a circumstance that would diminish its appeal. However this applies only within the limits of the country; were the building to be located in different countries it would not only retain its appeal but could count on the approval of most of the sample. Considering that visitors often pointed out that Neuschwanstein should be unique in the world (except if built in fantasy-lands) this can be seen as an indication that the higher the fantasy and the less specific the function, the greater the need for uniqueness. Places serving a practical purpose not only appear less fantastic but also they are more readily acceptable as part of the visitor's own neighborhood.

LA "MAISON DES SHTROUMPFS"
Geneva, Switzerland

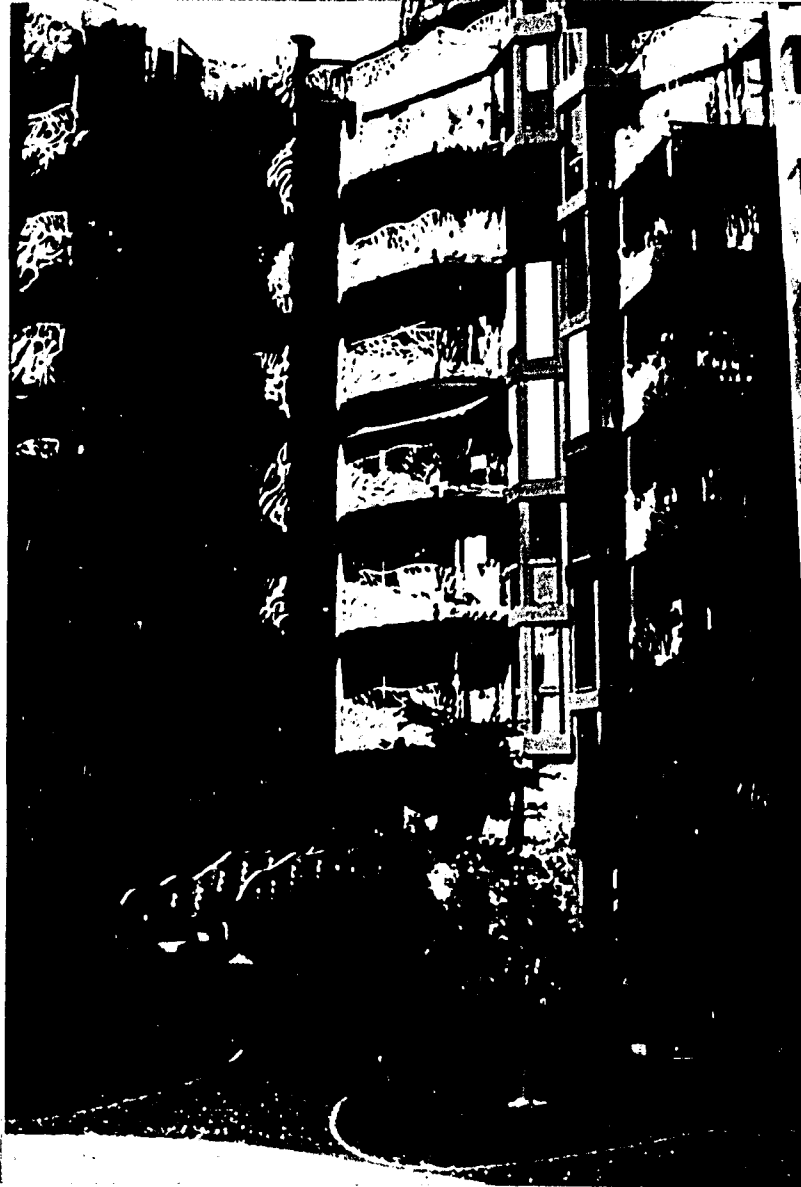


**Fig. 30. The embracing, highly individualistic "Schtroumpfs" facade
(Photo A, Montarzino)**

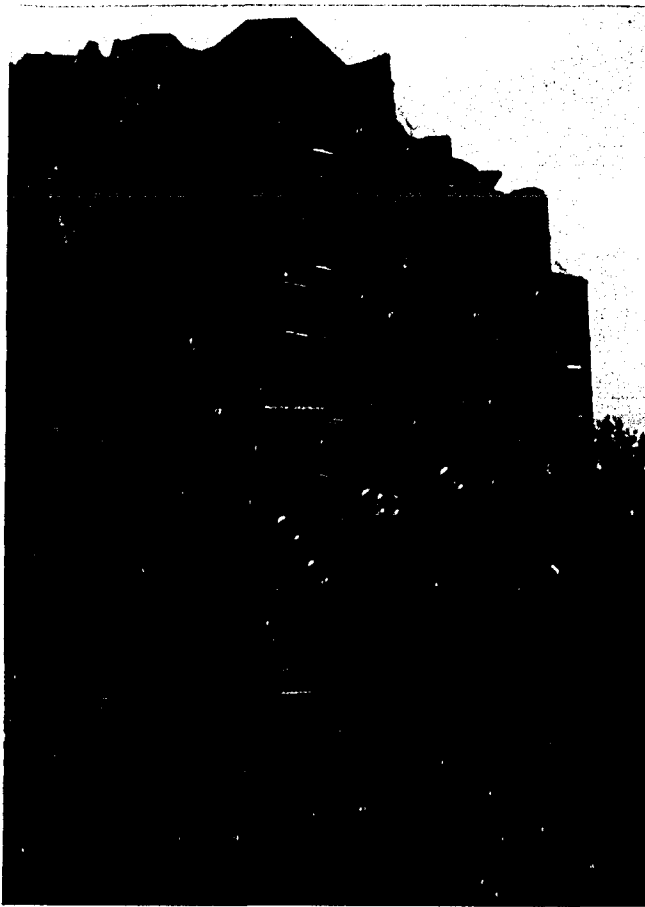
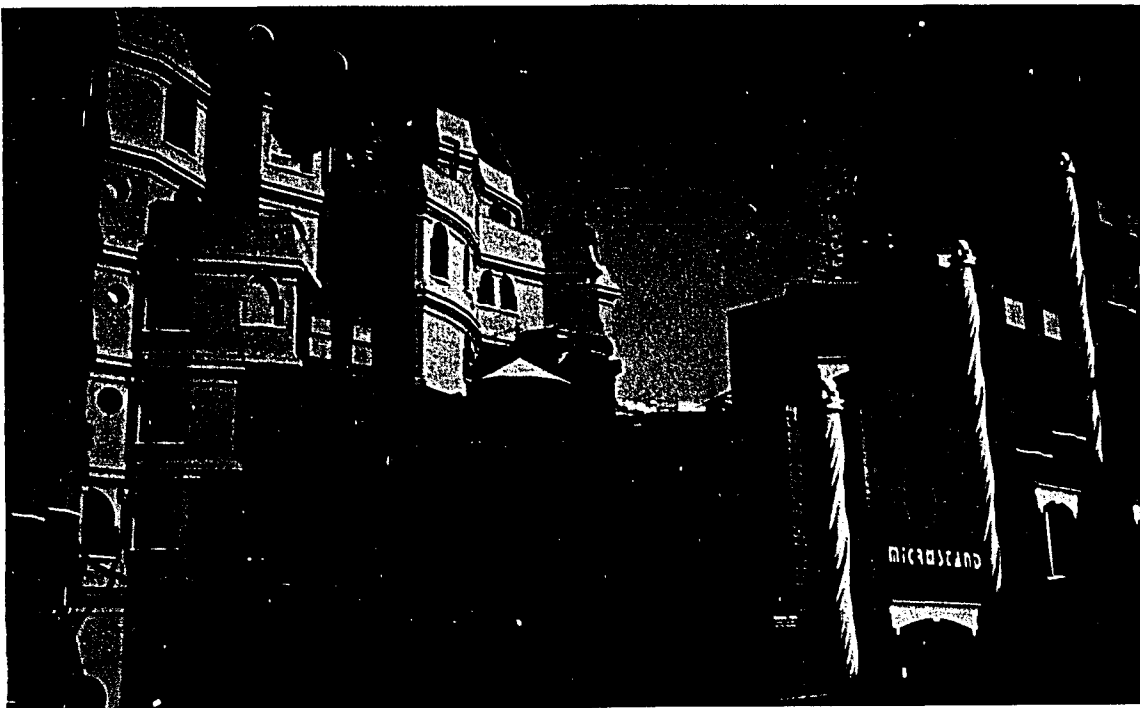


Fig. 31. The Mediterranean facade
on the pedestrian common space
(Photo A. Montarzino)

Fig. 32. The new buildings of the "Grand Schtroumpf; colorful and unabashedly post-modernist (Photo A. Montarzino)



6.7 THE "HOUSE OF THE SCHTROUMPFS"

6.7.0 The Setting

The Grand Schtroumpf, a housing complex consisting of four conspicuous buildings with a total of 175 apartments, started as a pilot project with the construction of the most distinctive of the four known as "The House of the Schtroumpfs." That first unit, finished in 1984, consisted of sixty-four apartments and was designed by a group of Swiss architects directed by Christian Hunziker. "Schtroumpfs," it should be noted, is the name under which the popular cartoon characters "Smurfs" are known in some Western European countries.

Just as is the case with Hundertwasser, the buildings, located in the sector known as Les Grottes in the city of Geneva, are owned by the Municipality. The three buildings which constitute the second stage [Fig. 32] have a similar appearance: an irregular volume defined by one continuous undulating facade with entrances and saliences which constitute the balconies of the different apartments. Columns shaped like long-stemmed bluebells serve as support for the balconies over one of the entrances while the other is framed by free-standing pillars looking like twisted ropes. Transparent external staircases and doors and windows painted in very bright colors give the ensemble a distinctive appearance. The buildings are organized around a pedestrian common space, where the seven story pilot building now stands in clear contrast with the rest of the complex. Unlike the other buildings (which have a continuous facade) the one under study presents two facades clearly defined. The facade towards the common space (Fig. 31), which bears a close resemblance to the Mediterranean constructions of Tunisia and ancient Berber villages, displays a good number of windows of different sizes and colors and columns painted in bright shades of red, looking like gigantic stalagmites. The other, which only resembles itself (Fig. 30), consists of "columns" of metallic windows painted in very bright colors and separated by pre-cast balconies of an intricate and unique design. A staircase-bridge with a continuous baluster as white and wavy as an embroidered collar complete the ensemble.

The building is surrounded by open space. The "Mediterranean" facade is oriented towards the center of the complex while the facade with the polymorphous balconies faces the street. A sunken plaza covered mostly with grass and sporting some very old trees (obviously respected as part of the project) creates a gentle amphitheatre in front of the latter. A low partial fence has been added lately to separate the sidewalk from the green space. At one extreme of the fence there is an arrangement of small bushes and benches used by residents and non-residents alike. The visitors, less numerous than at Hundertwasser, also come from the country and abroad.

In order to capture the impressions of people who had lived in or otherwise known the building for the longest period, the interviews were conducted on the grounds surrounding, or close to the oldest building of the complex, known, as indicated, as "The House of the Schtroumpfs." Given its length and the number of times it will be used in the text, this name is shortened to "Schtroumpfs" except when quoting interviewees who used the full name. The terms "New Schtroumpfs" and "post-modernist Schtroumpfs" refer to the buildings of the second stage, while "Grand Schtroumpf" and "Schtroumpf complex" is used to refer to the total complex.

6.7.1 Demographics

The "Schtroumpfs" is the setting with highest proportions of locals in the sample (60%); the rest are other nationals (5%), and visitors from Western Europe (20%), North America (10%), and Africa (5%). Among the locals, two sixth are either residents or relatives of residents who visit often, one sixth are residents at the new Schtroumpfs and three sixth are neighbors. According to the established criteria residents and neighbors were interviewed when on the house "grounds" engaged in some activity, e.g. sitting, talking or taking care of children. Appendix 5 gives a summary of the statistical data.

6.6.2 Results

Deciding to visit: motives and place image

Interest in the creator or creators is practically non-existent at the "Schtroumpfs." The designers had received some publicity from local newspapers and architectural journals but they are neither local nor professional celebrities. It is not surprising, then, that even in the few cases (10%) in which the visitors (students of architecture from abroad) knew the designers, the motif of the visit was much more often an interest in the place than in the designers.

Interest in the place and curiosity are, thus, the main reasons for visiting for nationals and foreigners alike: All nationals (5%), and two thirds of the foreigners said their reason for visiting was to see a "strange place;" the other third of the foreigners visited because they "felt curious." The city residents interviewed (5%) visited the place because they had heard of it, happened to be in the area and considered this a good opportunity "to go and see it." The neighbors (45% of the total sample), on the other hand, use the grounds of the house near the sidewalk as a local park or as a resting post in a neighborhood walk.

Perceiving the place

At the "Schtroumpfs," as at the other settings, the perceptions of the place are diverse: 45 % find it "amusing," "playful" and "colorful;" 25% find it "strange, "different," 20% "imaginative," but nowhere else did "fantasy" register such a low frequency, 10% only.

Perception and knowledge

As mentioned when dealing with settings such as Neuschwanstein, Cheval's "Palais Idéal" and Park Güell, the motives to visit as well as the perception of the place are to a great extent determined by whether the perceiver is a national or a foreigner, and whether the creator is a well known figure and, as a result of either one or both together, the type of knowledge the individual possesses. But at the "Schtroumpfs," due partly to the type of population, partly to one characteristic of the

building, viz. its name, the influence of "knowledge," even at the most rudimentary level, appears more clearly delineated.

One type of attitude-shaping knowledge found at the "Schtroumpfs" is the "specialized" or rather the semi-specialized knowledge of the architectural student (likely to be very critical) and the specialized but not architecture specific knowledge of an art teacher. For a German student of architecture the building is:

interesting and I think the architects had fun designing it, knowing how much noise that was going to make and one has to admit that a lot of courage is needed to design something like this and go ahead with it. But I do not think that this is "architecture;" for me it is a hybrid of Moroccan vernacular and pastry decoration; it is the witch of Hansel and Gretel living in a condominium. But I imagine people like it since they built first one unit and then continued. But I do think it is rather gratuitous. Gaudi is also strange, but the language of his buildings is coherent and from the structural standpoint he was trying to innovate. This is just pure form. I have seen Hundertwasser in Vienna and that is not architecture either, but at least it was not designed by an architect. Besides, Hundertwasser is more relaxed; it is a pastry all right, or an enlarged decor from the puppet theater; but it goes with Vienna. It is a Viennese joke which has the essence of the Viennese soul: sugar and waltz, sentimentality and hypocrisy, all together (#7).

Another architecture student from Spain found it "interesting" but in his view

it lacks unity and it is a little too childish. Nevertheless, it is a proof that people were getting tired of glass boxes, no matter how refined or elegant they appeared to architects (#15).

An art teacher from the Ivory Coast also found it

interesting ... for Europe ... where grey, brown and 'crystal fumé' have been the predominant colors so [the Schtroumpfs are] like fire-crackers. [However,] the facades are a little too 'Pop;' one expects something more from 'real' [good] architecture. In fact it looks better in pictures, when one sees it more as an 'object' than as a work of architecture (#18).

A male resident who is an interior designer finds the Schtroumpfs "interesting, original, almost fairy-like, I would say, although it could

be even more so if the colors were more on the pastel side" (#14). Although he manifested his preference for "a more cubist type of architecture" he would not change his apartment for one in the new Schtroumpfs or elsewhere because

we have more light in these apartments and I have a terrace, not just a balcony. Besides, even if I like geometrical forms I have to admit that this building has more personality. My wife loves it, I don't do not think she would like to live with straight walls again, And the location is great (#14).

But "labels," expressions that people have heard over and over can color the way in which the building is perceived. In the interviews with neighbors who associated the building "with children's books" the association was often accompanied by a "that is why it is called 'La Maison des Schtroumpfs,' because that's what it looks like" (#2). A woman whose daughter lives in the building said that her grandchildren are quite conscious of living in a house that has a connection with the stories they read or see on TV but she added that "that may be due to influences from the outside, from hearing people saying "Ah, so you live in 'La Maison des Schtroumpfs'" (#2).

Sometimes it is simply the knowledge of another "fantastic" place which modifies the perception. A visitor from Canada found that it was surprising to see Europeans building this kind of things; one could understand it in the United States or on the Mediterranean, but not here in Geneva, of all places. To me they look more like apartments for Disneyworld (#20). And a visitor from Austria:

This house is original and different, but I prefer one we have in Vienna, Hundertwasser. Perhaps this is because I am an Austrian, but I think that Hundertwasser is more joyful; it looks like a game, a dolls' house, and one can think that the people living there are happy. This is more formal and serious; it is crazy but it is not playful; to me it looks like a sea-side resort where people dress like monkeys and like to live in a circus (#18).

Perceiving and living nearby: the neighbors

The idea that the building would be more fit as a sea-side resort is shared by one of the neighbors, who would like to see it "close to the

sea, on the Mediterranean or as an hotel, not in Switzerland, or at least not in Geneva" (#12). But most of the neighbors interviewed on the grounds of the buildings see it as an interesting addition.

A neighbor who often sits on the ground when she is taking a walk with her baby said:

I like the buildings, particularly the old one, because since it was built it has given so much character to this neighborhood; or more than just character, one can say; color and light also, and I would even say a touch of magic. You arrive here walking on streets that all look the same, and then it opens up to this. You see what I mean, it is like receiving as a gift a crystal marble, bright turquoise, blue and red, wrapped in sheets and sheets of dull paper; when you finally find it, you cannot believe your eyes. I know that some old people do not like it; they feel it is not serious. They say: 'but how will it be in forty years?' I personally think that the ones which will look awful in forty years because they are pretty ugly right now are many of the serious buildings. People seem to have respect for this building; the neighborhood is full of graffiti but you will not see one here. They have done some on the fence they put up not long ago, which is gray and boring, but not on the facade. I wonder if they will have the same respect for the new ones... I think they look expensive, much more expensive than the old one, but the old one looks more like an enchanted house. I have a six years old son who asks me 'why we do not live in *la Maison des Schtroumpfs*?' He says that our building is 'sad,' that he wants to have 'a Schtroumpf's house and a Schtroumpf's school because they are so beautiful.' And I guess the children of the buildings around here feel the same way; if you look at the at the windows and balconies across the street from here you see all kinds of gnomes and fantasy characters and I think that this is interesting. I have never seen people putting cubes in their balconies because they are fascinated by some concrete building across the street. I think that those details tell you something (#10).

Another woman who also comes from the neighborhood pointed out that she thought that

at the beginning many people thought it was crazy but they are changing their opinion. I don't know if you have noticed, but some of the neighbors in the old buildings now all kind of creatures in their windows. You can see them there and there (points); they also want to go 'Schtroumpfs' (#12).

Another neighbor, a retired man who sometimes sits on the benches, also referred to the ornaments that have been appearing in the windows and pointed out that the neighborhood was acquiring a 'Schtroumpfsy' identity: "it has become our reference point" (#17). As can be expected, not everybody is of the same opinion. A woman who has to pass in front of the buildings to go on errands and that day was sitting on the benches because she was wearing a new pair of shoes said that she was sitting

looking at the street, so I do not see those monsters; they have ruined the neighborhood and what it is even worse, ruined people's taste as well; look at the hideous garden gnomes or I don't know what that people have started to put in their windows [of the neighboring buildings]. It may be the children [who put the gnomes there ... but] they are dreadful ... and all that because of the Schtroumpfs (#11).

Neighbors often reported their children's wish to live in the Schtroumpfs. As one woman pointed out "I would not live here for my own sake, but for my son who is driving me crazy asking 'when are we going to move to the Schtroumpfs?'" (#16). Residents also mentioned peculiar reactions from children. Half of them reported to have been asked by the children of relatives if there was an empty apartment in the building so they could move in. But a woman resident of the new Schtroumpfs said that she often wonders how children really see the place; in her words

one day I was riding the bus back home and a little boy pointed at the building and said to his mother 'see, that is the Schtroumpfs, but the people who live there are like everybody else' (#19),

Perceiving and living in: the residents

In contrast to what occurs in Hundertwasser, the residents of the "Schtroumpfs" can be seen sitting or taking care of children in the green area with benches surrounding the buildings and they are quite willing to talk about their dwelling. Their view of the "Schtroumpfs" is, as can be expected, more as a place to live in than as a "piece of sculpture with living spaces" which is, often, the attitude of visitors. But the second aspect is by no means absent from their perception.

None of the dwellers interviewed deliberately chose to live in the building; they needed apartments -- in Geneva there is a considerable shortage of medium-priced dwelling units -- and the Schtroumpfs was one of the few housing units being built at that time. But living there has created an acute sense of the difference between their dwelling and a world of "right angle architecture" or, in the words of some residents, "the architecture of cubes." A woman living there with her young children finds it

surprising and pleasant; we were sort of sceptical at the beginning but now we realize that we had enough of cubes of concrete without any originality. One is always happy to come back home and that starts when you see the building; there is something joyous about it, which I don't know if everybody is able to see, but we do. And maybe it is the fact that the building is so different that has created a special relationship among us inhabitants; we get together, we organize activities. The fact that people come to see us all the time makes us to feel privileged. The interior is less original than the exterior but there are many things that are well done, like small windows in the children's room. But one gets used to the interior; one cannot get used to the exterior because it is aggressive although the northern facade [the Moroccan] is less aggressive than the southern (the "Schtroumpfs"). The southern facade, because of its color and variety of forms, is more difficult to get used to. I still look at it when I am outside and sometimes I say to myself 'Is this really a house? Our house?'. It also happens sometimes when I come home; you have the impression that you step out of one world at the sidewalk and you are about to get in into another. Of course it has its problems; you have your children coming to you and asking 'Mom, are we Schtroumpfs?' What do you answer to that? (#5).

Another female resident said:

When one comes here, at first, one feels that at least it is more than just cubes. And then one changes in a way one's way of living. The apartment has a special impact on the children; when they are asked to draw their house, they draw very strange things, and at school they are 'the children from the Schtroumpfs,' because their house is so different from everybody else's; I don't know if that will affect them in any way when they grow up, but now they are delighted (#3).

The subject of the "architecture Schtroumpfs" vs. the "architecture of cubes" was also mentioned by a male resident who pointed out that

living here makes us feel a little special; people come to see the building and I would not like to go back to living in a 'cube,' It is not a 'machine for living' but a building with personality; in a way, it is like an old house, with the advantage that it is better located and that inside it is more functional. The curved corners have not been a real problem for me; my furniture fitted relative well. And I cannot say that one really gets used to the place; one is reminded of its particularities each time one goes outside or to visit friends and one finds that one is glad to live where one lives (#19).

As the residents just quoted, others too had drawn attention to practical problems. A woman whose daughter lives in the Schtroumpfs pointed out that

the interior of the building is special too; many people had problems with the furniture because it did not fit [so] my daughter had to get most of hers new because the old one did not fit, but since she did not have much then, that was not really a problem. What she did not like was that at the beginning there were too many tourists or curious people and they did not respect privacy, they wanted to get in and look or they wanted you to take them in and show them around; that was really very annoying for her. People still come but now there are more Schtroumpfs, so they stop and take their pictures over there too (#2).

Perceiving of living in: the visitors

Seventy five percent of the sample, including the residents, who were asked whether, if they had a choice, they would select the Schtroumpfs as their residence, would like to live in the place. But as in Hundertwasser, the strange form of the facades can act as a deterrent particularly for older people. A man living in the neighborhood said that he would not like to live in it: "I am perhaps too old. I prefer more traditional dwellings; but the apartments have been a great success and people living there seem to be happy and proud of all the attention received" (#17).

Image and reality

Since the great majority of interviewees other than neighbors and residents learnt about the "Schtroumpfs" by word of mouth (only 25% mentioned having seen pictures and having a clear image) the level of disappointment at confrontation between image and reality is low (10%). For neighbors who saw it being built "to see it finished was a great surprise; at the beginning it was like any other building, but when I saw it finished, with those balconies and all that color, it was like like seeing an enormous butterfly getting out of its cocoon" (#10). Although not all neighbors were so lyric in their appreciation, all but one said that the building was better than they had expected.

Evocative power

The association of the setting with images seen in books, paintings or with sculpture is extremely varied, in fact the most varied among the sites, with very individualistic interpretations and as many irreducible categories as people who responded affirmatively (70%). The associations ranked from children's stories: "Alice in wonderland" to primitive images: "Indian totem," passing through "gift box," "collage," "art brut," "place for Disneyworld," "Greek landscape painting" and "nightmare." The associations to "other worlds" were relatively low (20%), most of them to illustrations in children's stories.

Place, feelings and context

Conversely, the associations with feelings (40%) is lower than at Hundertwasser, but of the same type, i.e. "joy," "playfulness," and "contentment." Dwellers often pointed out that what distinguishes the Schtroumpfs is "a way of living." Concerning the hypothetical perception of the settings, fear is as absent as it was in Hundertwasser. For the place at night, 35% of the interviewees thought that there were no noticeable changes between day and night and 45% saw it turning "a little more strange." Five percent thought it would produce some fear and the rest could not imagine. In the forest, just as Cheval's "Ideal Palace" was seen as "a temple," the Schtroumpfs was seen as a "holiday resort" by 30%, while 40% thought it would look more strange and 30%

could not define. As to finding the place by chance, 30% maintained that they would not "believe their eyes" and 60% that they would be "very surprised" and 10% thought they would find it "amusing."

Concerning the explicit question about fear, all except one were negative. That exception was a student of architecture for whom the fear was not inspired by the place but "fear of dreaming that I am designing something like this" (#7).

The Schtroumpfs and the Grand Schtroumpf

As pointed out in 6.7.0, the highly individualistic formal language of the first Schtroumpf building is quite different from those of the second stage which clearly reflect post-modernist influences. Opinions about the appearance of the buildings are divided. All the inhabitants of the first Schtroumpf pointed out that they prefer their old building and that provided that the surface and number of rooms were the same they would remain in the old building because "it is more interesting," "it has more personality," or because "the children love it." People living in the new buildings (10% of the sample) did not express any preference for one or the other. Among neighbors and visitors (70% of the sample) slightly more than half prefer the new buildings, mainly for the very bright colors of the metallic windows against the grey facade. Among the group who preferred the first building there were two professionals, an artist and an architect, and although neither of them was particularly fascinated by the building, they considered that the first Schtroumpfs was *comparatively* more interesting because it was less "interchangeable" than the new ones. The architect (an Italian) pointed out that in his view the old building is

more authentic. It is like something from the Middle Ages, a work of a craftsman. In my view it has more unity and it looks more finished. The new ones could be taken apart and re-ordered again and nothing would change; their individuality is only apparent; you move one or two things and they are all the same (#13).

Perception and weather

Half of the residents and a third of the neighbors spontaneously

mentioned factors such as the weather which could alter their perceptions. One of the residents said that light often changes the way in which the building is seen ((#3); another pointed out that in winter, when the trees have no leaves, the building appears "more witch-like" at night (#17), while another neighbor thought that the appearance of the building is particularly strange with snow (#10).

"Fantastic" places and neighborhood

The level of acceptance of the Schtroumpfs as part of the interviewees' neighborhood is high (70%), with only 15% rejecting it because they dislike it and 15% because of the places where the interviewees were living. A woman from Geneva rejected it because she thought their city should not have more than one Schtroumpfs; a man from the Ivory Coast thought that in his country it would be "a waste of money" and a man leaving in an old village thought that it would look out of place.

Defining the place in one word

Interestingly, it is not until asked to define the site with one word that fantasy related terms such as "fantastic", "a fantasy" or "fantasyful" started to be mentioned by the interviewees with some frequency (25%). "Imaginative," a term which can be related to fantasy but does not have quite the same meaning was chosen by 15%. Of the remaining sample, a third opted for terms emphasizing the buildings' peculiarities in relation to the environment: "different," "unusual," "original," and "eccentric," another third for terms referring to feelings associated with the building: "playful," "fun," and "joyful," and the last third associated the buildings with fashion: "trendy" and "fashionable."

The fantastic as a question

As in all the other settings, the percentage of interviewees who said that they considered the building "fantastic" was high (35%) compared with the responses mentioning fantasy in the rest of the questionnaire. For approximately four seventh of the people in this group "fantastic" meant "because it is full of strange forms" or because "it has

fantasy, it is not just a cube" For the other three seventh "fantastic" meant "because it is more like a house one imagines for Schtroumpfs than for people," or "because it is amazing, surprising, unexpected." Women saw the place as fantastic three time as often as men, and although this was not found statistically significant it may be indicative indicative of a trend often found in the other settings.

Concerning the elements which makes it fantastic half of those who considered the building "fantastic" chose "the balconies, which look like masks and animals," and the rest were divided equally between "the balconies and the brilliant colors" and "the undulating forms."

The "fantastic" and familiarity

As on the other sites, familiarity with the place does not seem to diminish the interest of either residents or neighbors who go to the place regularly. As one of them pointed out "I cannot say that one gets really used to the place. One is reminded of its peculiarity each time that one goes outside or to visit friends, and one finds that one is glad to live where one lives" (#19).

6.7.3 Discussion

Just as Bomarzo, the Schtroumpfs is a setting in which the findings render a rather complex picture. The two settings are the most ambiguous of the six, as both are on the fringes of the fantastic, although Bomarzo is closer to the non-fantastic than is the Schtroumpfs.

"Fantasy" and function

The frequency with which the Schtroumpfs is linked with fantasy is on the average 16%, i. e. even lower than at Hundertwasser. The low frequency with which both these residential buildings have been perceived as "fantastic" appears to indicate that a building's function also plays a considerable role as to whether it is perceived as "fantastic". Despite their complex form, the fact that both buildings obviously were designed and are being used for such a common function as "dwelling" appears to incline the visitors to perceive them less frequently as "fantastic" than

places designed for more restricted purposes, e.g. Neuschwanstein and Cheval's "Palais". But, it can be argued that if the commonness of a function inclines visitors to perceive the place as non-fantastic then its un-commonness would produce the reverse effect, i.e. Bomarzo should be more "fantastic" than the Schtroumpfs and Hundertwasser, which according to the findings it is not. This issue is too complex to be addressed here but it will be discussed in detail in the conclusions.

The Schtroumpfs and its creators

As mentioned in the overview, the motives to visit as well as the perception of the settings are to a great extent determined by whether the perceiver is a national or a foreigner and whether the creator is a well known figure, and as a result of either one or both factors together, of the type of knowledge the individual possesses about the place. Concerning the role played by the creator, the Schtroumpfs ranks lowest. At Bomarzo we have seen an almost unknown creator becoming more and more relevant as the strangeness of the gardens prompted the visitors to use whatever scarce knowledge they had about him in an attempt to understand the place. But that was not surprising: Bomarzo was a garden for "personal use" in the original sense of the word, and it is an "expressionist" garden, whatever his creator wanted to express.

In contrast, nothing of the sort occurs at the Schtroumpfs. Here the creators count little before and during the visit. The obvious explanation is that the "Schtroumpfs" is the result of a group of architects' attempt to overcome what they considered to be "the ethnological mistake" of modern architecture. So the building is (as are most designed buildings) an expression of their ideas and feelings as professionals rather as individuals, in contrast to what occurs in Bomarzo and to an even greater extent in Cheval's "Palais." Moreover, as the architects here are not celebrities, it is not surprising that they do not play any relevant role either in the decision to visit or in the perception of the place, even when the perceivers are themselves architects or artists. As it could be expected then, there are no noteworthy differences between the perceptions of nationals and foreigners.

"Fantasy" and name

A factor that appears only at the Schtroumpfs and which in the perception of the fantastic may play a more important role than the one detected in this study, is the name of the place. At the Schtroumpfs it is reasonable to suspect that:

1. The plaster gnomes and other fantasy creatures that keep appearing in windows and balconies of neighboring apartments have to do more with the name "Schtroumpfs" than with the strange form of the building.
2. Part of the desire of children in the neighborhood to live in the building (as reported by their parents) may also be determined by the name, by the children's desire to identify themselves with characters they see on television or may have as toys. Were the building called "Hunzinker" (after its architect, in parallel with "Hundertwasser") or any other family name, would children then still wish to move in?
3. The inhabitants were the most thoroughly influenced by the name; sayings like "going Schtroumpfs" or "being Schtroumpfs" used by residents may not be simple forms of reference but an indicator of how the name has contributed to the creation of a sense of "difference" or "specialness". Moreover, for residents, from the time they move in, "Schtroumpfs" seems to become an indicative of a certain way of living, accentuated perhaps by the fact that they perceive their children as feeling "different" at school and returning home with strange drawings in their notebooks.

Analyzing the place it is difficult not to suspect that a change to a non-figurative name would have some neutralizing effect on the attitudes of the perceivers. A study in which two groups are presented with pictures of the same place named differently could provide insight into an issue that may not appear frequently, but which might not be irrelevant to the perception of architecture of this type.

The Schtroumpfs: a paradox of "fantasy" and familiarity

An interesting paradox at the Schtroumpfs is that it is the resi-

dents (and the children of the neighborhood, according to their parents) who see it as "fairy-like." Certainly a general finding of this study is most of the settings those who perceive a place as "fantastic" are more often those on the extremes of the spectrum of familiarity: first time visitors and neighbors. The peculiarity of the Schtroumpfs is that fantasy appear to concentrate only on the high familiarity extreme (dwellers) while showing a striking emptiness in the rest of the spectrum. A possible explanation is the already mentioned influence of the name and the "life-style" that the inhabitants seem to have found with the building. Since at the Schtroumpfs visitors and neighbors are not seen as obtrusive or as interfering with their lives, residents feel "privileged," without feeling harassed as seems to be the case in Hundertwasser. Moreover, it may well be that, by being the object of unobtrusive attention, they end up by seeing themselves as "different" by believing that visitors perceive them as such more than they actually do. It is as if they were feeding their own legend, finding it gratifying and pleasant, to the point that the attachment to their building continues despite the fact that the colors of the new post-modernist Schtroumpfs are making it appear less neat than when it was when standing in proud isolation.

Another possible explanation of the inhabitants' more frequent perception of the building as "fantastic" *vis-à-vis* visitors and neighbors is that the inhabitants, more and more attentive to the details of the Schtroumpfs' facade (of which they are, from their balconies, both participants and spectators because of its embracing curve), have somehow lost their image of the building as a whole. This attitude may be further reinforced by the inhabitant's more frequent use of the entrance on the "Schtroumpfs" facade, which with its involving curve favors concentrated rather than sweeping views. Neighbors and visitors, on the other hand, excluded from the interior "Schtroumpfs atmosphere" shared by the inhabitants, are more able to see the geometry of the building and it is obvious regularity behind the apparent diversity. Moreover, for neighbors and visitors the clearly utilitarian purpose of the building may reduce the appearance of "fantastic" more drastically than this does for the visitors at Hundertwasser, precisely because formally the Schtroumpfs is more

geometrical, more obviously "designed." At Hundertwasser there are many gratuitous elements: the dome, the sculptures, the inclined columns, the fountain with the zodiac signs. As one of the visitors pointed out, "gratuitousness" is part of the "fantastic," while rationality, even when expressed through non-geometrical form, is not commonly associated with it.

6.7.4 Conclusion

Although no thorough comparison can be made between Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs because of a basic difference in the population, it can be established that for the visitors Hundertwasser appears as more "fantastic" than the Schtroumpfs and this may be due to the predominance of the designed-rationalized elements of the latter compared with the more chaotic and playful aspect of Hundertwasser. Both dwellings, however, rank rather low in the perception as "fantastic" when compared to settings like Neuschwanstein, Cheval's Palais and Park Güell.

PART III

VII CONCLUSION: CAN ARCHITECTURE BE "FANTASTIC"?

Can architecture be "fantastic?" After analyzing the difficulties presented by the "fantastic" as a genre in the two fields in which it has reached considerable theoretical development -- literature and the visual arts -- and studying people's perceptions of places frequently labelled "fantastic" in architectural literature it seems quite clear that the answer to such a question cannot be a simple yes or no. Like the phantoms it often portrays, the fantastic in any realm is an elusive matter. Yet, through the confrontation of the theoretical insights gained in the first four chapters with the empirical data discussed in chapter V, it will be possible to provide an answer to the question whether architecture can be "fantastic."

7.1 Empirical research and the "fantastic"

The findings of the empirical research show that all but one of the six settings were perceived as fantastic by percentages of the population fluctuating between 40 and 20%. Moreover, in at least half of the settings "fantastic" came out as the most frequently named single feature. This means primarily two things: First, that the fantastic is not simply a quality residing in the architectural object, as assumed by architectural theorists, and second, that the "fantastic" in architecture is a complex phenomenon that needs to be properly defined.

7.2 Towards a definition of "fantastic"

As pointed out in chapter I, one of the main problems of the literature about "fantastic architecture" is the lack of any attempt at defining the term. In contrast, the theoretical contributions to be found in literature and the visual arts not only provide a much needed taxonomy but also new perspectives through which to re-focus the problem of the "fantastic" in architecture, where its existence has been either negated or statically conceived as a quality inherent in the architectural object.

7.2.1 Etymology, the "fantastic" and the "immaterial"

As pointed out in 4.8, the negation of the existence of "fantastic architecture" comes mainly from the architectural critic J. Joedicke (1962, c.f 1.2.2). In Joedicke's view "fantastic architecture" cannot exist because a fantastic idea, by the very process of transposition from the domain of the abstract to the tangible, loses its unreal character. For this reason he rejects the term "fantastic" in favor of "mannerism." But Joedicke could arrive at such a conclusion only by equating the "fantastic" with both the "unreal" and the "immaterial," and this is a questionable equation because of its restrictiveness, even when considered solely in relation to the traditional definition of the term.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, etymologically the term "fantastic" derives from the Latin *phantasticus*, "which concerns imagination," from the Greek *φανταστικός*, "able to produce the appearance of," from *φαντάζειν*, "to make visible." The problem is that from those origins, the fantastic ends up by having two main connotations, not necessarily compatible, or coherent. On the one hand, the term means "beings or objects which have been created by imagination; unreal, supernatural, fabulous;" and on the other it means "bizarre in form or conception, strange, wondrous" and also "unbelievable," "amazing," "what is set apart from the rules." In literature and the visual arts the fantastic is a genre which includes literary or artistic works which transgress the real by making reference to dreams, the supernatural, magic, terror or science-fiction. Thus stated, the term has two levels: one abstract, which refers to that which has been created by imagination (c.f. above "to make visible") and the other, more concrete, refers to what has attained certain qualities, i.e. strangeness which makes reference to worlds created by the imagination.

Therefore, from the detailed discussion in 4.8, we can draw several conclusions. First it is quite clear that Joedicke's rejection of the term "fantastic" is based only on the abstract side of the definition, taken in its narrowest sense. The use of the term "fantastic" applied to architecture cannot be dismissed solely on the basis of the apparent

contradiction between abstract and tangible reality. If architecture cannot be "fantastic," then neither can sculpture nor even painting. Still, the term "fantastic" is perfectly admissible in the theory of art.

Second, Joedicke's real reason to dismiss the term "fantastic architecture" in favor of "mannerism" is his view of "fantastic architecture" as a vacuous "formalism," disconnected from the "real" problems of present architecture. Sound as this judgement may or may not be, it pertains to another domain, which is the social function of architecture and whatever the relevance of this function, the two issues should not be confused or one used to eliminate the other.

Third, denying the existence of the "fantastic" on the basis of its contradiction with "tangibility" does not eliminate the problem. Because, if a painting depicting a fantastic scene cannot be fantastic by virtue of the "materiality" of the canvas and the pigments, it cannot be denied that, by virtue of its thematic references, it "looks" fantastic. This principle applies also to architecture. Architecture can "look" fantastic because, despite Vax's contentions (1963, c.f.3.1.2), architecture can be "referential," that its look like something else: an animal, a shoe, a gigantic vegetal growth.

Thus, from the purely semantic standpoint the possibility of the existence of "fantastic architecture" cannot be eliminated. However, this does not say much, because in order to be "fantastic" it has to be "fantastic" for someone, which is the point in which the architectural approach and the approaches from the fields of art and literature start to differ.

7.2.2 The three models of the "fantastic" and architecture

As pointed out in chapters I and II, architectural writers tend to see the "fantastic" as a quality inherent in the architectural object. In this model neither the observer nor the surrounding environment are seen as playing any substantial role. Art and literature theorists, on the other hand have shifted from placing the emphasis on the environment to placing it on the perceiver, in his experience, summarily, to seeing the

fantastic more as the result of the perception of observer than as a quality in the observed. However, there is an important difference between the model of the fantastic in literature and that of the visual arts. In the literary model the fantastic is rather seen as an irruption into reality of an event that we could not explain rationally, and which has the duration of that "hesitation" during which we decide whether or not what we perceive is real. As soon as this hesitation is superseded we can go in two directions: towards the uncanny or towards the marvellous. And because the fantastic lasts only as long as we hesitate between a reality and illusion (that is the "hesitation," which the theorists call "the fantastic experience") it is a fleeting genre. In the art model, on the other hand, the fantastic is primarily seen as an atmosphere of menace associated with the idea of evil, with what is feared because it can be seen as a reflection of the obscure forces that we carries inside ourselves.

Still, in both the art and literary models theorists have emphasized the fantastic as the genre and form which speaks through symbols, thus acquiring a diversity of "meanings," namely meanings varying from person to person, and to the same person at different times. Now the question is: How does this relate to architecture? How do the findings of the empirical research related to the models presented in architecture, literature and art?

7.2.3 Empirical data and the three models of the "fantastic"

According to the findings of the empirical study it can be said that neither of three models alone can explain the occurrence of the "fantastic" in architecture, but that each can be used to explain particular aspects of the architectural "fantastic." In general, it can be said that the architectural model, by centering the fantastic on the formal features of the architectural object, is too limited to explain the "fantastic" but has offered a point of departure by proposing the existence of the "fantastic" in architecture. The literary model, based on the irruption into reality of an event that contradicts natural laws, is, in principle, too far-fetched to be of immediate application. Certainly, as will be discussed later, "fantastic" architecture can be considered, following the literary model, to be a formal "disruption" in the trends of architecture at any given time, but this disruption is far from contradicting natural laws as proposed in the literary model.

Moreover, in literary or even pictorial worlds all types of transgressions are possible, but the architectural universe is subject to the same physical laws that govern the rest of the material world: *trompe l'oeil* techniques or concealed structural devices may provide the means to produce forms that appear to violate those laws, but mere appearance is as far as the transgression can go. As the empirical findings have shown mere "appearance" can trigger a "fantastic" experience. However, because in architecture the range of apparent violation of physical laws is more reduced than in art and literature more reduced are also both the possibilities of a perceiver to experience that instant of "hesitation" which is at the crux of the fantastic in literature and the duration of the "hesitation" for the simple reason that the reality behind the appearance can be more rapidly unveiled in architecture than in the other two domains. This explains why the "fantastic" experience of architecture by a perceiver in the real world is necessarily more difficult to achieve than for a literary character in a "fantastic" story. This may also explain why, according to the findings, the "fantastic"

experience in architecture depends to a great extent on factors such as surprise and the possibilities of a chance encounter of the place.

Thus the concept of "fleeting fantastic" advanced by literary theorists is, along with "hesitation," quite useful to explain not only how "fantastic" places are experienced but also why the fantastic has apparently been so elusive for architectural critics. Moreover, some concepts such as the division of the fantastic into such categories such as the "marvellous" and the "uncanny" are useful to explain the peculiarities in the perception of different types of "fantastic" places.

Finally, the "visual arts model" based on the conception of "fantastic" as an "atmosphere of menace," where fear plays a preponderant role, is only partially applicable to architecture. The empirical study shows that the fear provoked by a "fantastic" architectural object is mostly linked to its surroundings and to the time of the day in which it is perceived, while the concept of "atmosphere" (but without the menace) can be used, albeit partially, to understand people's perceptions of some of the places studied. Another element of the model with some applicability to the "fantastic" in architecture concerns the role played by reason and "hybridness" in the perception of the fantastic. Finally, the concepts of marginality and familiarity have been useful in providing guidelines for research, although in this respect architecture also seems to follow its own patterns. These theoretical contributions to the elucidation of the problem of the "fantastic" in architecture are discussed in more detail in the course of this final analysis.

7.2.4 Formal characteristic and "fantastic qualities"

The empirical study presented shows that the "architectural model" of the "fantastic" is too limited. If the "fantastic" were a quality inherent in the architectural object, as maintained in the architectural model, then all the settings (which were selected among those traditionally considered "fantastic" in architectural literature) should have been perceived as "fantastic," if not equally then at least more evenly than they have actually been. Concerning this point, the fact that a setting

like Bomarzo, which has seldom failed to be classified as "fantastic" in architectural literature, is mostly perceived as non-fantastic indicates that the "fantastic" cannot be circumscribed to purely formal characteristics of the architectural object. This does not mean, however, that formal characteristics are irrelevant, for without a strange form any building would be like any other building and not very likely to be perceived as "fantastic." But "strangeness" of form is certainly not enough, for the perception of a place as "fantastic" depends on a number of other factors which may appear simultaneously or separately, depending on the place studied.

7.2.5 Intervening factors in the perception of a place as "fantastic"

The factors which along with "strangeness" of form intervene in the perception of an architectural object as "fantastic" can be classified in three groups:

a. Place centered, i.e., those factors which depend more on the place than on the observer:

- a.1 "referentiality" and evocative power;
- a.2 the function of the place; and
- a.3 the immediate environment and the time of the day at which the place is perceived.

b. Perceiver centered, i.e. those factors which rely on the previous experience of the perceiver:

- b.1. the image that the visitor had prior to the visit;
- b.2 the knowledge that the perceiver has of the place;
- b.3 the perceiver's familiarity with the place; and
- b.4 the perceiver's gender.

c. Circumstantial: factors in which chance may play a considerable role:

- c.1 the circumstances surrounding the perceiver's first contact with the place as well as a conjunction of chance with place and perceiver-centered factors.

It has to be noted here that, as pointed out in the Introduction, no attempts have been done to address cultural factors, for two reasons. First, cultural characteristics are difficult to precise, particularly in

a study dealing in an international population,. Although cultural researchers may, using common sense, admit that the French are different from Germans or Italians, when it comes to define what that "Frenchness" means not many of them would accept the task if their reputations were at stake.

Second, and for the reason just mentioned, to take cultural factors into account would have implied to reduce the number of settings to one or at the most, two and to limit each site to two "cultures" depending on how such category was defined, viz.: to study only Neuschwanstein as perceived by Germans and the French; or by Germans and the Japanese or Spaniards and Italians, or by college educated and non-college educated Germans or French or Italian. This would have perhaps permitted to establish with some precision the existence of cultural differences in the perception of Neuschwanstein between one group or the other but at the cost of information that is more valuable at this stage, such as that a strange form is not necessarily perceived as "fantastic" (Bomarzo) or that function may play a role in the perception of the "fantastic" (Hundertwasser and the Schtroumpfs vs. Neuschwanstein and the "Palais"). Thus, there is little doubt that the possible influence of cultural factors in the perception of the architectural "fantastic" is a subject that needs to be addressed in future research.

Place-centered factors

"Strangeness," "referentiality," "hybridness" and the "fantastic" in architecture

As pointed out above, a peculiar or strange form is not enough for a building or a place to be perceived as "fantastic." But without such a feature the probability of its being thus perceived is extremely low, as it becomes highly dependent on any number of fortuitous coincidences. In England, due to the shortage of accessibly priced housing, an architect was forced to buy an unused chapel in a cemetery, where he moved in with his family with the philosophical comment "At least we do not have problems with the neighbors: they are very quiet." Now, let us assume that

close to midnight the architect and his wife, clad in white, decide to take a stroll around their home. If an unaware passer-by happens to see them, the probability that he or she will experience an instant of "hesitation" mixed with fear is quite high. This means that, although none of the physical elements of the setting are unusual, a "fantastic" experience can take place. Does this make the place "fantastic"?

The answer is "no," for two reasons. First, because if we accept that the "fantastic" in architecture is a "fleeting experience" depending on the conjunction of extraordinary circumstances, with a low probability of recurring and in which the role played by the characteristics of the place is secondary, then any building can be "fantastic." But it is obvious that in such a frame the "fantastic" becomes so indefinable, arbitrary and subject-centered that it ceases to be a qualifier for architecture, becoming the common name for a myriad of discrete experiences or for the ever changing combination of odds that made the experience possible. Second, since this "fantastic experience" relies more on extraordinary circumstances than on the setting, it is obvious that it can also take place in nature. Now, whether nature can be "fantastic" or not is completely irrelevant to the present discussion. The important point is that when a "fantastic" depends so much on the fortuitous combination of circumstances and so little on the formal characteristic of the place as in the example discussed, then there is little doubt that it is the circumstances which should be qualified as "fantastic," not the setting in which the "fantastic" perception took place. In other words, in a "fantastic" occurrence which is mainly dependent on a very high number of odds, the term "fantastic" should be reserved to qualify the circumstances that made it possible rather than the setting in which it took place but which played only a minor if not insignificant role in it.

Thus, in order to be "fantastic" a place has to have some features contributing to the "fantastic" occurrence, and to do that the place must have "evocative power," that is be perceived as or associated with "something else," that something else being objects, living (or extinct) creatures, images from worlds which only exist in art (including

illustrations) or in literature or images from so heterogeneous aspects of reality as to create a "hybrid" puzzle. It also has to imply a "rupture" with the formal principles of mainstream architecture; an involvement of the perceiver's affects in the process of perception; a formal richness that allows sustained discovery in spite of familiarity; and finally the affordance of more than one "instant of hesitation" in the same perceiver. The point is that for the translation of such a "fantasy" into a formal language "strangeness" is not enough. To have the potential to be perceived as "fantastic" an architectural object has to be "referential," or more precisely "referential-fantastic." Although these two do not constitute different categories but gradations within the same one, the distinction between them is not irrelevant.

"Referential" is any building which resembles or imitates the form of something else. Thus, a doughnut shop (c.f. 3.2.1) in the form of a doughnut [Fig. 12] is referential since it obviously refers to the edibles made and/or sold inside. But "referentiality" is by no means a sufficient condition for the perception of a place as "fantastic." The empirical study shows that the gardens at Bomarzo are highly "referential" but not perceived as "fantastic." There seems to be two reasons for this: First, the visitors see the place as referring to images from reality, usually to one specific image rather than several, meaning that they do not see it as a hybrid but as a unity. Second, the place is so difficult to decode that the visitors turn their attention to its creator in search for clues which could help them to solve the riddle. But that focussing on the creator (which is often accompanied by historical references) "humanizes" the place, making it appear "mysterious" rather than "fantastic."

But a shoe repair shop in the form of a shoe, in addition to referring to the trade it serves, may evoke images from imaginary worlds, e.g. the tale of the old woman living in a shoe with her many children: if so, the building is not only "referential" but also has "evocative power" and this brings it closer to the "fantastic" since the object it evokes belongs to the world of imagination. Thus, a truly "referential-fantas-

tic" architectural object is one which looks as if it belonged to one of those "other worlds" which exist only in the imagination and which often violate natural laws, e.g the worlds of fairy tales and of science-fiction. And the more the architectural object refers to those of imaginary worlds, the greater the likelihood of its being perceived as "fantastic." Neuschwanstein, the most "referential" of all the settings in that sense, is also the one with the highest frequency of reported "fantastic" perceptions. But if Bomarzo shows that "referentiality" does not necessarily lead to "fantastic" experiences of perception, Cheval's "Palais" shows that the role played by "hybridness" is not negligible.

Still, "referentiality" is not the only quality contributing to the perception of a place as "fantastic". Visitors to the "Palais" often perceive it as referring to elements of reality, yet the overall perception of the place as "fantastic" is almost as high as at Neuschwanstein. The most plausible explanation is that Cheval's "Palais" is a hybrid, a building in which the alterations of scale, the mixture of styles, and the profusion and ungainly shapes of the creatures which ornate the facades all contribute to shape an architectural object in which the components are not fantastic in themselves (hence the realistic "referentiality"), but are perceived as such in the ensemble. Now, if that is the case, why is it that although the Schtroumpfs (which has two heterogeneous facades) and Hundertwasser (which has a number of heterogeneous elements) can both be considered hybrids, their perception as "fantastic" is rather low? The explanation for this particular phenomenon is to be found in a place-centered factor largely neglected in architectural literature on the fantastic, and that is function.

The fantastic and function

The low frequency with which the Schtroumpfs and Hundertwasser -- the two only residential buildings included in the empirical study -- are perceived as "fantastic" appears to indicate that a building's function also plays a considerable role for its being perceived as "fantastic." Despite their complex forms it is evident that both buildings were designed and are being used for such an ordinary function as "dwelling,"

and this may incline the visitors to perceive them less frequently as "fantastic" than places designed for more restricted purposes, e.g. Neuschwanstein and Cheval's *Palais*.

Although the relative importance of function in the perception of the fantastic must be taken cautiously at the present stage of knowledge, there is little doubt that it plays a role. For instance, it can be argued that if the "commonness" of a function inclines the perceivers to regard the place as non-fantastic then its "un-commonness" should produce the reverse effect, i.e. Bomarzo should be more "fantastic" than the Schtroumpfs and Hundertwasser, which according to the empirical findings it is not.

But, as indicated when discussing Bomarzo, it is possible to counter-argue that at the gardens the lack of real knowledge about the creator and the meaning of the gardens, that is the "unknown variables," are so strong as to nullify or transform into a "mystery" any sense of fantasy which could have been enhanced by a function which is not very uncommon but certainly less common than "dwelling." Still, another argument in favor of the importance of function in perception of this type of architecture could be Cheval's "Palais." The "Palais" is one of the settings most frequently associated with "fear." However, when the visitors were asked to imagine it in a forest and saw it, by analogy, transformed into a temple, the reported frequency of fear was very low. This means that even in potentially more threatening surroundings than the actual, the Palais could become less fearful only by a change in the perceived function. This seems to indicate that function may have more than just a secondary role, but as many other factors also intervene in the perception of these strange places, no definite conclusion can be reached in the present study.

In some cases the "fantastic" may be furthered by means of what can be called a certain "gratuitousness" in the design or uses of the place, that is by the presence of formal or apparently disfunctional elements, of exaggerations of one type or another, which seem to be

there for no other reason than whimsy. Among the settings studied Neuschwanstein and Cheval's "Palais" are good examples of this. Neuschwanstein served (if only briefly) as the residence of a mad king and now it stands, furnished and uninhabited, on top of its cliff. Certainly it can be argued that most castles visited today are uninhabited, but there is a considerable difference between most castles or palaces and Neuschwanstein. The former were built for utilitarian purposes, even if indulgence in luxury or desire to express power were often the main motivations. Neuschwanstein, on the other hand, was built as an escape from reality, or, rather, as a concretization of a dream world, and this is precisely what gives it that touch of "gratuitousness" that accounts for its difference. Similarly, Cheval's "Palais," required thirty years of work and it is not used for anything practical; it just stands in its plot for contemplation, a sculpture the size of a building rather than a building itself. By being "useless" they are seen as separated from everyday life and by that separation, turned into phantoms of buildings much more likely to be perceived as "fantastic" than their more rational counterparts.

Although a sample consisting of six settings is not extensive enough to permit any definite conclusions, a trend detectable in this study is that the frequency with which a place is perceived as "fantastic" is in inverse proportion to the relationship of its function with daily life, that is, the less quotidian the function of a setting, the higher its possibilities to be perceived as "fantastic."

The "fantastic," environment, time and weather

As pointed out in 1.2.5 Lancaster when defining "follies" hinted, without further development, at a problem that had escaped architectural critics of the "fantastic": that of context. If no buildings exists in the glorious isolation in which most architectural photographs present them then this is even more so for "fantastic" places. As the empirical research has shown, a place may be perceived as more or less strange because of its context. Thus, Cheval's "Palais" looks strange in a small French village but would not in the Burmese jungle; Park Güell looks very

unusual in its present environment but had the original plan of the "Colonia Güell" prospered it would by now be surrounded by other buildings designed by Gaudí thus perhaps appearing as strange to outsiders but rather commonplace to neighbors. At Hundertwasser some visitors pointed out that they would like to live there just because it is different from anything else, but that if most of the buildings in the neighborhood were like Hundertwasser then they would prefer a more traditional dwelling. Neighbors of the Schtroumpfs, on the other hand, liked the building because it offers an interesting alternative to "those rabbit cages one sees everywhere."

But the role played by the immediate environment -- including the weather and the presence or absence of daylight -- is perhaps most noticeable in the relationship of the place with fear. With the exception of Bomarzo (which, in fact, was not perceived as "fantastic") and the "Palais" (which provoked feelings of uneasiness), the settings studied were very rarely associated with fear in their actual surroundings and during the day. But when the interviewees were asked to imagine their reactions if they were to find the place at night or in the forest the associations with fear became more frequent.

When people were asked to imagine the place in the forest the frequency of virtual fear at Park Güell and at the "Palais" increased quite considerably, and if it did not increase more it was because at Park Güell this increase was counter-balanced by people often seeing it as becoming "magic," whereas the "Palais" was transformed into a temple. Thus, in both cases, an imagined placement of the setting in a different environment brought a change in perception through an envisaged metamorphosis of the function. At the other settings, with the only exception of Neuschwanstein, imagined changes in the immediate environment also brought changes in the imagined perception.

Weather conditions and the presence or absence of daylight were also seen as factors altering the perception of the place, only that

these changes were less dramatic than in the preceding case. Still, stormy weather, the presence of the moon or a special light were seen as increasing the strangeness of the place or even as propitiating its perception as "fantastic." The interesting point is that this type of information was volunteered by the interviewees themselves, and may be another indication of this type of architecture's sensitivity to environmental variations.

Perceiver centered factors

The "fantastic" and image.

Visitors to "fantastic" settings usually have an image of the place prior to the visit and to the great majority those images stem from photographs. There is, however, another source of images which, without being as common as photography, appears to have a greater impact on the perception of a place as "fantastic." This source is Disney's "fantasy-lands," which deserve attention because they appear as an interesting hiatus between worlds of fantasy and the factual everyday environment that we consider to be the "real world."

Photography and the "fantastic"

Photography, i.e. the sophisticated art of contemporary photography, is a means of subtle deception and in architecture "the most solid of arts," this often surfaces as a disappointment. Most of us tend to accept photography as reproducing architectural objects as they can be seen by the naked eye by visitors standing on their two feet, when, in fact, what photographs present is an idealized version of it, a frozen instant captured from an advantageous if not rarely accessible point of view and in which undesirable features or details have been carefully fogged by filtering, or edited or avoided by the direction of the camera's objective. The most pathetic example of this type of deception is offered by tourists turning around a block, guidebook in hand and unable to find the building whose photograph they hold in their hands, because

from their pedestrian standpoint, all they can see are four pillars and an entrance door.

As could be expected, "fantastic" architecture is particularly sensitive to the photographic illusion. If Pre-Raphaelite painters (c.f. 3.1) tried, through a hyper-realist technique, to bring myths and ancient tales close to our world, photography, relying on the accepted principle of captured reality, has made the architectural "fantastic" appear more fantastic, thus creating illusion and deception. Empirical research has shown that visitors to settings which were known to them through postcards or snapshots taken by friends were less likely to feel disappointed and tended to perceive the places as "fantastic" more often than those visiting settings which a hard-selling tourist board has publicised through photographs of great technical virtuosity that avoid unpleasant features. The most evident examples of the latter are Neuschwanstein and Bomarzo.

Photographs of Neuschwanstein in books, tourist guides and postcards almost invariably show a dramatically zoomed view of the entire castle illuminated or perched on top of its cliff with an intensely blue lake in the background, or as if it were floating in mists, weightless, like the abode of a legendary sorcerer. Views of paths packed with tourists or of rooms with wall to wall rope fences to protect the furniture from the visitors -- that is, of those "details" always present in private or formerly private places open to the public -- are notoriously absent from the photographs used for postcards, travel agent brochures and tourist guides. Similarly, photographs of Bomarzo depict the most elaborate monsters, one at a time, and completely free of the fences installed to protect the sculptures from clambering children. It is not very surprising, then, that at both the most and the least "fantastic" of the sites people were equally disappointed.

These findings could be interpreted as an evidence that the "fantastic" pertains more to the domain of the two-dimensional image, whether a painting or a photograph, than to architecture, but such a conclusion

is too hasty. Concerning painting, it is true that a creator of fantastic paintings suffers no limitations in transgressing physical laws in the universe he depicts. It is also true that a painter can create a "fantastic" atmosphere using images of architectural artifacts that are, in themselves, commonplace. De Chirico's pictorial spaces are made of simple buildings, yet the atmosphere of menace is present, as if the unthinkable could materialize at any moment, as if something otherworldly was only seconds away from revealing itself. The question is: Do the observers of a "fantastic" painting experience the fantastic themselves? Or is it so that this can occur only through the observers' "entering" the picture, their merging with the scene presented in front of them? A painting can easily evoke "another world," but the observer's involvement with that world is not automatic. The painting may be "fantastic" but the observer's experience is not necessarily so.

Concerning photography, the situation is more complex. An individual looking at a sophisticated photograph of a "fantastic" place may experience an instant of hesitation or of incredulity in front of the apparent fact that an image which he/she thought could belong only to a "fantastic world" has, as shown by the photograph, materialized somewhere in our "real" world. And because photography had helped in presenting the building as more "fantastic" than it is, the individual may feel an urge to visit it. "Dreaming the fantastic is not enough: it has to be lived" said Harbison (1977, c.f. 1.2.6), and this appears to apply not only to the builders of the fantastic but to the visitors as well. People seem to experience the need to see for themselves, in three dimensions, the place they have seen in photographs to confirm that it "is real" or "is really so strange." Once on the site some will be disappointed, others find it merely interesting and others will perceive it as "fantastic" or even have a "fantastic experience." Others still will capture the "fantastic" a posteriori. Concerning the latter, empirical research has provided some evidence that selective memory may play a role in restoring the "fantastic" to a place which lost that quality at the time it was perceived. If the experience was not a negative one memory may brush away the unpleasant details allowing only the most outstanding to prevail. This may

also explain why visitors to highly fantastic places often argue that the place should maintain its uniqueness: to keep its fantasy the place has to keep its distance. So, it can be hypothesized that although the real object may appear less "fantastic" when confronted with the idealized image derived from a photograph, memory could later select those instances in which the building most closely approached that image and this re-created image will be stronger than would have been possible without the actual experience of the place.

But pending confirmation of this hypothesis from future research we are left with the true paradox of "fantastic" architecture and pictorial representation: To give an image, photography needs the place to be real, but, by capturing it in idealized conditions, it creates too many expectations and this often turns its immediate reality into a disappointment

"Fantasylands"

Although the phenomenon of "fantasylands" as a source of images only applies to Neuschwanstein, as a factor favoring the perception of a place as fantastic, the "Disney effect," as this phenomenon can be called, is to be found at other settings as well. At Neuschwanstein, an interesting phenomenon of reversal has taken place between original and reproduction. Walt Disney has reproduced Neuschwanstein in the "Magic Kingdom" because of its obvious fairy-tale qualities, and now many people who have visited or know about Disneyworld see Neuschwanstein as "fantastic" because it has been included in the Magic Kingdom. But the pervasiveness of the "Disney effect" can be even more subtle. Places like Park Güell, Hundertwasser or even the Schtroumpfs are seen by some visitors as "fantastic" because they imagine that they could fit in a "fantasyland" and if they do, then they must be "fantastic." The interesting thing is that the worlds of Disney are made of much more than fairy tales and cartoon characters; but if they are seen as synonymous with this type of fantasy it is mostly because they are an enclosure, a fenced-in territory where the often uninspiring and monotonous world of everyday life has

been replaced by a myriad of small universes born under the sign "surprise and discovery," with its own currency and obeying its own rules.

Whether these worlds can be perceived as "fantastic" from the inside is a problem that will be discussed later, since for the moment our interest in "Fantasylands" does not reside in their degrees of fantasy but in their significance as a rupture with the prevailing structures of the quotidian world. This rupture may be far from being of the "subversive" type envisaged for the fantastic by literature and art theorists. First, Disney's is a safe world, as Neuschwanstein is sugary. However, ruptures, whatever their type, seem to incite individuals to reflection, and in this sense the "environmental fantastic", whether building, garden or Fantasylands, may be more powerful than the merely pictorial, and more thought-provoking than radical critics are prepared to admit.

The fantastic and knowledge

Knowledge as an intervening variable in the perception of the "fantastic" seems to be peculiar to architecture compared to literature and art. This is not surprising, since even more than a "fantastic" painting or a sculpture, a "fantastic" building or place has a social history. A piece of architecture is not only part of the cultural heritage of a country, it is also enmeshed in its daily life. The empirical study shows that the greater the factual knowledge perceivers have about a place, the lower the possibility of their perceiving it as "fantastic." But this general trend is often modified, for knowledge is affected by two other factors: whether the creator of the place is an historical figure or a renowned professional or artist, and whether the perceiver is a national and if so, whether he/she is also a local resident or a neighbor.

When the creator is an historical figure or a renown artist, nationals who, in general, have learned about the creator or the person who commissioned the building at school, often declare that they visit the place not so much for its formal or architectural qualities as for its

interest as a historical landmark or as an expression of its creator's genius. As pointed out when discussing Neuschwanstein, this "historification" of the place may serve non-local nationals a double purpose: to avoid appearing as indulging in fantasy by visiting the place (for it may be that people are more likely to be ashamed if caught indulging in fantasy in their own countries than abroad) and, by rooting the building in history, to confirm its belonging to their own cultural patrimony. Thus, instead of being a "fantasy" one should be ashamed to visit, the building becomes a safe historical-cultural artifact worthy of receiving visitors from all over the world. Although this attitude of natives appears to confirm Borne's contention (1969, c.f. 1.2.4) that the creator of a "fantastic" place often becomes more important than his creation, the problem seems to be a little more subtle. Although a famous creator is often the motive for visiting (in some cases not only by nationals but also by foreigners), once on the site, creator and work appear so suffused that little by little the place starts taking preeminence.

Locals and neighbors, on the other hand, may possess the same knowledge about the creator as nationals but for them the place is part of their quotidian environment, so the creator is neither a motivation for visiting nor the frame of their perceptions. It is as if for locals the creator had become part of the place, appearing as a sort of continuum, as an indivisible unit where traces of his personality can be found without ever taking preeminence. It is also possible that as locals feel that their presence on the site is justified by their spatial proximity, they do not experience the other nationals' need to detach themselves from "fantasy" by means of "historical interest." In general, neighbors and residents are more prone to find a setting "fantastic" than other nationals and this leads to the other very idiosyncratic variable in "fantastic" architecture: familiarity.

The "fantastic" and familiarity

One of the common contentions found in literature and art criticism is that familiarity destroys the fantastic: repeated exposures are supposed to dull the perceivers' awareness and the "fantastic" ends up as just another undifferentiated element. However, the empirical study shows that, in this respect, "fantastic" architecture follows peculiar rules, for here what seems to destroy the "fantastic" is not "familiarity" but "commonplaceness." The more a setting is perceived as fantastic, the less willing do visitors appear to have it reproduced somewhere else. It is true that in some cases the perceivers' unwillingness to have a similar artifact in their own neighborhood originates in the unsettling qualities of the object, but more often the reason is a wish to preserve its uniqueness. This appears to confirm literary critics' contention that the "fantastic" must be marginal. In the words of Schneider (1974, c.f 2.7), if the fantastic becomes a recognized value "it would lose all its magic."

Familiarity, however seems to affect the "fantastic" in a very peculiar way, viz. one in which the maximum of "fantasy" perception coincides with both the lowest and the highest degree of familiarity. Although the reduced number of second and third time visitors is insufficient to draw statistically valid conclusions, the qualitative analysis seems to indicate that the curve of "degree of fantasy/frequency of visit" acquires the form of an inverted "U". People at the extremes of the familiarity spectrum, i.e. first time visitors and people living in the neighborhood or dwellers, tend to associate the settings with the fantastic while those in the middle ranges, i.e. second or third time visitors, tend to do the opposite. First time visitors -- often under the effects of surprise -- tend to perceive the place as "fantastic" while those very familiar with the setting often report either "fantastic experiences" or awareness of the place's fantasy-related qualities. Conversely, second and sometimes third time visitors tend to see them as merely interesting.

These findings, however, may be less paradoxical than would appear at first sight. While second and third time visitors may be developing an intellectual attitude towards the place, those who are familiar with it begin to concentrate on details to the point that the place as a whole becomes a subconscious background. In such a case any combination of fortuitous circumstances which present the place in a new light comes as a shock, as in the case of a newly illuminated Neuschwanstein. Moreover, it has to be noted, complete habituation to a "fantastic" setting may not occur given that, as the dwellers of the Schtroumpfs pointed out, one only has to go to visit friends or go to one's office every day to realize how different this building really is. Concerning the fantastic, then, familiarity plays a rather peculiar role.

The fantastic and gender

Although neither art nor literary critics have made any references to the fantastic and the perceiver's gender, the empirical study appears to indicate that gender may condition the perception of the "fantastic" in architecture. With the exception of Bomarzo and the Schtroumpfs (the less "fantastic" of the six sites), in all the other settings women tended to consider the place "fantastic" more often than did men, in many cases three times as often. Women were more prone to find the sites rich in evocative power and to be very explicit in describing their associations. They also more often reported feelings of fear, particularly in places like Bomarzo or Park Güell, although in these two places they attributed the fear to the general feeling that "all parks are frightening at night" rather than to the two places in particular. At the moment, however, these results should be taken rather cautiously, for two reasons. First, it is not possible to know whether the apparent penchant of women towards the "fantastic" is the result of women's proclivity to fantasy or of men's reticence to declare ideas that they may deem unmanly, including reporting feelings of fear. Second, although the difference in attitude towards the fantastic between men and women were often found to be statistically significant, in as many cases the values given by the calculation of Fisher's exact probability test were close to

significance but without actually reaching it. This has permitted the identification of trends rather than conclusive results. This particular point would certainly benefit from future research.

Circumstantial factors

The "fantastic" and circumstances

Literary theorists have often seen the "fantastic experience" (conceived as a "hesitation", a "momentaneous suspension of disbelief") as a structural element of the "fantastic" text. In architecture, this does not seem to be the case. The empirical study has shown that although people have often perceived a setting as "fantastic," the "fantastic experience" as propitiated by literary theorists is a rare occurrence, which depends on two factors, individually or together: an individual's first encounter with the place and a confluence of circumstances which can be external or internal to the individual. According to the evidence collected, the main trigger of a "fantastic experience" is the discovery of the setting by chance. The incredulity, apprehension, hesitation, in one word, all the theoretical components of the "fantastic," are likely to be present. Even in those cases in which the individuals know that the place exists but have only vague notions of where it is located, the "fantastic experience" can occur if they happen to find it unexpectedly. However, in our times of mass communication and efficient organization for almost everything, the kind of chance encounters mentioned (particularly of the first type) are likely to be rare when the setting is a well or relatively well known place. But in any case chance encounters are still possible, e.g. when the "fantastic" place is a garden built by a "bricoleur" or a major work not yet exploited by the tourist industry, such as the castle of the brothers Remoré (mentioned by Jakab, c.f 4.2).

But there are other possibilities for the occurrence of the "fantastic experience," which are independent of how well known the place is

or how familiar the visitor is with the place, namely when it occurs as a confluence of circumstances such as changes in the weather, a particular position of the moon, the unexpected presence of an animal or a sudden noise or a perceiver's state of absent-mindedness or even a vivid recollection of a strange story. It is clear then that the main component of this type of "fantastic experience" is unpredictability. Nonetheless it is different from the purely "circumstantial fantastic" exemplified by the case of the English architect living in the chapel of a cemetery. In that case the occurrence of the fantastic relied completely upon the circumstances; in the cases mentioned here, the structural elements of the experience are still the "fantastic" space and the observer, hence the probability for the occurrence of the "fantastic experience" is much higher.

With all these elements in place it is now possible to introduce some precision into two fundamental points: the difference between hesitation and fear in literature and art vs. architecture, and between the perception of the "fantastic" and the fantastic experience.

7.2.6 Fear, hesitation and the perceptual and experimental "fantastic"

As pointed out in 3.1, while literature theorists have tended to emphasize the fantastic as "hesitation," as a "momentaneous suspension of disbelief" resulting from the irruption of "another worlds" into our world, art theorists have more often relied on the notion of a fantastic "atmosphere" connected with fear. The notions of fear and hesitation have already been partially discussed among the intervening factors in perception, but as they are crucial concepts in determining the peculiarities of the "fantastic" in architecture vis à vis literature and art, they require further discussion.

Fear, painting and architecture

According to the empirical data, the concept of fear, so central to the "fantastic" in art, is not one of the structural elements, neither in the perception nor in the experience of the "fantastic" in architecture. The point to discuss here is that there are substantial differences

in the significance of fear in art and architecture, and that in the latter fear can preclude the "fantastic" altogether.

The first and obvious difference between painting and architecture lies in the fact that the atmosphere of menace that a painting can create with very simple elements is possible through wide range of possibilities of violating natural laws, the fixity of the image and a chromatic treatment impossible to achieve in architecture. The painter Giorgio de Chirico could turn ominous the atmosphere of a plaza with a solitary sculpture surrounded by simple buildings by painting the sky apple-green and emptying the space from human presence. In the real world environmental manipulation on such a scale is obviously impossible. It can be argued that artists have wrapped islands in pink plastic or colored the canals of Venice, but such events neither occur often nor do they necessarily produce a de Chirico atmosphere.

The second and more important difference is that fear in art is "safe," as it can only be the result of a virtual menace, while in architecture it may not be so safe. Whatever happens in a painting, the viewer is out of reach. The image may awaken his fears but he can always discard them as mere fantasies. In architecture fear is more immediate. In a building or a garden a "menace" is necessarily seen as "real" even if only in our imagination so that rather than to provoke a "fantastic" experience, fear is likely to provoke a flight from the place. So it would appear that in architecture a tension equivalent to fear in painting cannot go beyond apprehension or uneasiness.

It can be argued that there are many instances in which the "plasticity" of the fantastic, by allowing us to see in a place images that frighten us, will produce some kind of fear. Park Güell when seen at night may appear as a monstrous cemetery which the visitor would prefer to avoid. The work of an anonymous "bricoleur" discovered by chance may also produce some kind of fear because we may find "reasons" (regardless of how irrational they may really be) for experiencing such a place as unsafe: the builder may well be a tranquil senior citizen making use of

his free time, but he can also be someone hiding something that we imagine as misshapen as his creation. Or he can be a lunatic and his "fantastic" creations the waiting room of a final breakdown. And we may fear deviancy and madness because we know them to be the dark side of reason and that, as such, they journey with us as a dormant passenger. We can experience fear or just apprehension and uneasiness. But whether fear or just apprehension, whether the menace is real or just imagined the important point is that they take place in the real world, they are part of "our" circumstances viz. the circumstances of an image in a painting or a character in a novel. And real fear, or rather fear in the real world puts people in the situation of having to be on their guard all the time and if an individual has to choose between taking care of his integrity and appreciating a building there is little doubt what the choice will be. So it can be finally concluded that fear, far from being a condition for the "fantastic" in architecture, is a factor that can hamper its perception.

"Hesitation" and perceived and experiential fantastic

"Hesitation" is not only a crucial term in the "fantastic" in literature but in architecture as well, for it is central to the distinction between the "perceptual" and the "experiential" fantastic. Perhaps it should be recalled that according to the literary theorist T. Todorov (1973, c.f. 2.2) the "fantastic" (in literature) occupies the duration of the uncertainty or "hesitation" between the feeling that one is being a victim of an illusion of the senses or else that reality is suddenly controlled by laws unknown in the familiar world. As soon as this hesitation is superseded we can go in two directions: towards the uncanny or towards the marvellous. The "fantastic" is thus equated with a flickering experience of hesitation. Concerning architecture, the "fantastic" appears as less restrictive than in Todorov's definition, for empirical research shows that architecture can be both "perceived" and "experienced" as "fantastic," although the latter is less frequent.

We say that a place is "perceived" as "fantastic" when the perceiver associates it with, or sees it as if it belonged to, universes

that only exist, or are known to exist, in writers' or artists' or the perceiver's imagination. An affective engagement of memory and imagination is likely to be part of the process. Likewise, we can say that a place is "experienced" as "fantastic" when the perceiver, by discovering it by chance, or from a special angle or in special circumstances, "hesitates" between the feeling of being the victim of an illusion (seeing something that is not there or else the world is playing a trick) or that reality contains something that is extraneous to it, or at least, to what "reality" is in the subject's knowledge. From there we can go in two directions: either the hesitation is superseded and we return to "explicable reality," or we go towards "mystification." Although the probabilities for an occurrence of the latter are rather slight, they should not be discarded.

The meaning of "explicable reality" and of "mystification" are best explained by an example. Let us imagine a person who, ignoring the existence of Neuschwanstein, sees it illuminated at night from a distance of approximately two thirds of a mile. The castle looks, by any standards, so outrageously like a fairy-tale illustration that his or her reaction is likely to be "hesitation." Of course it can be argued that such a sugary image is the result of the mixture of sentimentality and hypocrisy of the Victorian era, but this is the type of images of "enchanted" castles that we still have in the West, so that should not be an issue here. So if the individual who experienced the "hesitation" can drive to the castle and gather factual information from a local resident, then the illusion will be superseded and the subject will return to "factual" reality. But if the person can neither move closer to the castle nor verify with anyone around whether such a strange construction is "really" there, then the hesitation is likely to turn into mystification: the perceiver can either conclude that in fact he/she was a victim of an illusion or else that something that does not seem to belong to this world was in that particular spot of the Alps. As soon as the individual acquires factual knowledge about the place mystification is likely (but not necessarily so) to be superseded and the individual will be back to "explicable" reality. Obviously, this return to "reality" does not pre-

clude the ulterior perception of the place as "fantastic": "fantastic" perception and experience, as defined above, are neither mutually exclusive nor interdependent, although the individual who had a "fantastic" experience is more likely to perceive the place as "fantastic" too.

7.3 "Fantastic architecture:" an architecture of affects, paradoxes and extremes.

One of the most striking results provided by the empirical study is the degree to which this type of architecture appears to engage the affects and imagination of the perceiver. Recall of cherished memories of childhood, upsurge of images of what an ideal childhood could or should be; reflections on the valor needed to create or to make dreams come true, queries about the mystery of the human soul and its longing for knowledge and meaning, or about the thin borderline between sanity and madness, about the monsters we carry inside ourselves: these are not the kind of mental activities in which we engage in our interaction with buildings belonging to mainstream architecture. In fact, it is as if "fantastic" settings were experienced more as art objects than as architecture, that is, created as objects without utilitarian purposes.

Although, as noted elsewhere, function is not irrelevant to people's perception of "fantastic" places, form and symbols, often perceived as having an evocative power, seem to have been the predominant variables and so much so that even in those cases in which function plays a decisive role in the perception of the place (Hundertwasser, the Schtroumpfs and Neuschwanstein), affects and reflective moods are constantly present. An important point to be noted is that the affective engagement in the experience of the place seems to occur independently of whether people perceive the settings as fantastic or not. Thus, it is clear that if there is any one term that can characterize the type of architecture studied, that is "architecture of affects," affects that can be said to reach beyond the "fantastic," the "imaginative," the merely "interesting" and the derogatory "gratuitous." This may be so because people's experiences of the architectural fantastic do not seem to produce a detached

functional-aesthetic evaluation but rather to lead to an introspection engaging their intellect as well as their feelings.

But this architecture of affects is also an architecture of paradoxes and extremes. As Jakab (1978, c.f. 4.2.2.) showed in her study, those who built it are either the very rich or the very poor. The people who perceive it as fantastic are those who are either very familiar or not at all with the place. In this type of settings a number of disparate situations seem to take place: A creator who is barely known becomes the central element in the perception of the place (Bommarzo); one who is widely known fuses into the place while the experience advances (Park Güell) while another is simply identified with it (Hundertwasser). A mad king's escape into fantasy becomes one of the state's most important sources of revenues from historical monuments (Neuschwanstein); an apartment building is perceived as "fantastic" by its inhabitants who, theoretically, should be used to it, but not much by visitors and neighbors who, theoretically, should be more surprised than they actually are (Schtroumpfs). People may be ashamed to confess indulging in fantasy but they visit the places by the thousands. They go to see them as architectural objects but talk about them as if they were works of art.

The explanation for both the engagement of the affects and the paradoxes may reside in part in the marginality of that type of architecture (which will be discussed later) and part in what literary theorists called the "plasticity" of the fantastic, in its unconscious appeal.

Literary theorists maintain that fantasies provide an "objective correlative" (c.f. 2.3) for some of our feelings, but that the analogies that we establish seldom become conscious since they are not only symbolic but "plastic," that is one episode may stand in for different experiences. This also correlates with Jencks's conception of strange architecture as a Rorschach test since its forms could be interpreted differently by each individual or even by the same individual at different times. So "fantastic" architecture is not only "referential" but plastic, and the confluence of these two factors appear to provoke in the per-

ceiver an upsurge of images and memories, creating a reflexive mood. The empirical study provides evidence not only of the multiplicity of associations, reactions and reflections that each settings seems to provoke in the perceivers but also of the extent of their plasticity, as some of the associations reported by the interviewees bore no apparent relationship with the place. On occasions the interviewees pointed out what they saw as the irrationality of their associations: "I just see (or think) this, but I cannot tell why." In other cases the reflections were provoked not by the form of the setting itself but by what the visitors saw as the creator's valor in creating forms that surely had attracted scorn and derision for their gratuitousness and strangeness. This type of reflection often reverts to the thinker himself, who ponders upon the realization of his own dreams and his own ways of facing life's challenges. In this sense the experience of "fantastic" architecture seems to confirm literary theorists' contention (c.f. 2.2) that one of the roles of the fantastic is to challenge our beliefs, and to make us see our world anew. And in this respect architecture seems to be closer to literature than to painting.

In literature the readers, by the very effort of visualizing or rather forming their own visual images of what is given to them in words, are creating and immersing themselves in a "fantastic" environment. In this immersion, the questioning of or the sudden revelations about similarities of or contrasts between the "fantastic" world of the narrative and the "real" world of the reader can occur simultaneously. Fantastic worlds in literature may be structures with their own logic and rules, but they have continuity, history, organization, just as the structures of the real world. In a "fantastic" painting we face a frozen moment. We may imagine and reconstruct a structure behind, but we may also be detained solely in the form. But in architecture, like in literature, we are immersed in an environment. The fantasy content of architecture is lived at the time of its creation and at the time of its interpretation, whether during the perception or afterwards by the effects of selective memory. But since even this architecture is a social art and inescapably humanistic at that, no matter how much these architectural objects evoke

another world they are ultimately, as the empirical study shows, playgrounds for the imagination from which final questioning reverts to the real world and the intricacies of the self.

But the factors discussed this far are not the only peculiarities of the "fantastic" in architecture. These factors characterize the perception of the architectural "fantastic" but do not by any means exhaust the issues involved in the "fantastic" in architecture and which need to be discussed, as they are also related to questions identified in Part I.

7.4 Fantastic spaces and architecture

Concerning the constructed "fantastic," be it building or garden, it often appears as a hybrid between architecture and sculpture. In fact, one of the controversial points concerning "fantastic" spaces has been whether any of them could be called "architecture" at all. If in order to be considered "architecture" a building has to comply with the three Vitruvian concepts of *Utilitas* (function), *Firmitas* (technology) and *Venustas* (aesthetics), then it is obvious that we are dealing with a very peculiar problem, for in the built "fantastic" one concept, *Venustas* either predominates over the others or appears to do so. In the work of "bricoleurs" this predominance is quite clear, although in the work of professional architects it may be more apparent than real, but in either case it is precisely that "predominance" what can make "fantastic" spaces look more like art objects (conceived without utilitarian purposes) than like architecture.

This is so because when not profusely ornamented, fantastic-looking buildings may replicate the form of something else: a shoe, an animal, a castle more appropriate for a medieval knight than for a 20th century dweller. Thus "fantastic" architectural objects are often approached by architectural critics (particularly those who find them useless or worse) as if they were sculptures but analytically, they are more architecture than pure art. First, the treatment of "space," which the painter suggests, the sculptor fills and the architect envelopes, is

treated in the ways of the latter. Second, function may not be the most remarkable aspect of the "fantastic," but is by no means nonexistent. It is true that "bricoleurs" often tend towards pure decoration, but even then there is a function, albeit a symbolic one, as in a monument. The objective is to commemorate something (often the creators themselves), to surprise, to amaze, to attract the attention, and the empirical research has shown that in a work such as Cheval's "Palais" those objectives not only have been reached but surpassed as the visitors actively engage their thoughts and affects in their perception of the place. In the works of architects, on the other hand, function is by no means neglected or sacrificed to form any more than in non-fantastic architecture. Finally, technology may be primitive in the work of bricoleurs (yet adequate for the purpose) but is often advanced in the case of professional architects. This means that the term "architecture" is not misapplied on the spaces under study. However, even if in principle these spaces can be called architecture, they may still be no more than marginal. The question is: need they be more than that?

7.5 The "fantastic" and marginality

The fantastic, if it is to be fantastic, has to be marginal. One of the common criticisms of Gaudí, or rather one of the arguments of his detractors to demonstrate the "worthlessness" of his strange architecture, was that he did not create a "school." However, if he had, his work today might not be so highly valued as it is. Anything, when becoming commonplace, loses part of its strength, for we convert it into a background. This is particularly so for the "strange," because of its very definition. Once it becomes "commonplace" it ceases to be "strange," thus reducing its "fantastic" potential.

As pointed out above (c.f. 7.2.5.b.3), familiarity with one particular building does not destroy the possibilities of the "fantastic" because, although the individual may be used to it, it remains "exceptional," "different" from its surroundings. But if a building style becomes commonplace or part of a whole environment with similar characteristics, then fatigue from over-stimulation and the subsequent screening

out are likely to reduce the entire place to a background. So it is easy to suspect that if Koh (1983, c.f. 1.1) has proposed to introduce "fantasy" in the mainstream of architecture it is because he did not go beyond seeing a "need," without any ulterior consideration. Because deprived of its marginality, domesticated, the dragon becomes a house dog, and supporting such a bulk for the benefit of few hysterical barks is not a very intelligent option. If, as Koh claims, we do need fantasy in our environment, it seems now evident that such a need cannot be satisfied without taking into account the paradoxes that its satisfaction involves.

7.6 Fantastic architecture: a "downfall" into matter?

This far, fantastic architecture has been discussed in relation to an individual's possibilities to perceive/experience it as such. But there is a still more elusive aspect to it, namely, what art and literary critics have referred to as "the blessing and the malaise involved in the fulfillment of desire."

In Harbison's view (1977, c.f. 1.2.6), one of the most dramatic aspects of fantastic architecture lies precisely in the contradiction between the desire to convert a dream into reality and the act of seeing it become real; it is the "déchirure" implied in the attempts to concretize the phantoms that rescue the spirit from everyday drudgery, to cover the gap existing between the "world" imagined and what it becomes once it materializes. As pointed out earlier, Joedicke (1962, c.f. 1.2.2.) has taken this to the extreme of postulating that in the very transposition from "fantasy" to reality the "fantastic" is destroyed. While Joedicke's extremist position can easily be refuted (c.f. 6.1) Harbison's argument deserves some consideration.

The crucial implication of Harbison's argument is that when the dream world is made "real" its object gets trivialized, for the satisfaction of this desire involves the immersion of the object in the milieu which the fantasy was aiming to surmount. Thus, both the fantastic creator, by giving a material form to the dream, and the visitor, by trying to "see" this dream, destroy the perfection it had when it was no more

than a mental image. Now the question is: is any human endeavor free from this "trivialization of creation?" Do not the Scriptures say that even God was dissatisfied with one of his creations: "And the Lord was sorry that he had created man on the earth" (Gen. 6.6)? If, then, matter is such a dangerous element, is it not too much to expect no contradiction from a "fantastic" builder?

Perhaps what needs to be said is that, of all types of creation, the "fantastic" in three dimensions is one in which the contradiction between the imagined and the real appears more clearly, first to its creator, then to its perceiver. Concerning the creators, biographical data permit hypothesizing that they have, perhaps unconsciously, tried to escape the contradiction by means of the artifice of extending their work over a lifetime. Because if the work does not end, if it is continuously in the making, then it can sustain the illusion that perfection will be attained in due time. It also keeps the dreamer dreaming the same dream, avoiding that instance in which, the greatest desire satisfied, an unbearable sense of emptiness comes to nest in the heart, draining the world of color and hope. This description may apply more properly to "bricoleurs" than to professional architects, but the latter are by no means alien to dedicating their life to a particular work and Gaudí is a clear example of this.

For the visitors to the built "fantastic" the contradiction is not between dream and realization but between image (most often a two-dimensional one conveyed by a photograph) and the architectural object as seen in three dimensions. The irony at this stage is that the two-dimensional image of the "contradictory fantastic" achieved by the builder attains the level of "perfect fantastic" for an individual who is looking at it in a photograph, captive in the ambiguous realm of the two-dimensional picture. But the visitor probably ignores this irony; for him the drama of "materialization" starts when he feels that the image is not enough, that that "fantastic" has "to be lived;" that like Saint Thomas he needs to see and touch to believe that the seemingly impossible has been made a concrete and tangible reality. In times when architecture

means primarily aesthetics and function guided by purpose, efficiency and gain, to see it converted into what seems to be pure whimsy is something that defies the accepted rules. This cannot but further its aura of "irreality," which in turn increases the desire of the holder of the picture "to see" an object which the picture says exists which according to the rules should not.

Upon visiting the place, if the picture image the visitor had was achieved by forcing the place to appear "fantastic" by means of photographic devices or tricks (c.f. 7.2.5.b.1) the "real" object may then fall short of his/hers expectations. But as the builders, the visitors may have their ways to recover the "fantastic." Where neither selective memory, distance or uniqueness come to its rescue, its shocking or affect-engaging aspects probably will. The empirical study shows that although visitors who perceive the places as non-fantastic may outnumber those who do, very seldom do people report "indifferent" experiences. Visitors, neighbors, dwellers may like or dislike a place, perceive it as "fantastic" or not, but almost invariably they "feel" it, they think about it and in the process reflect about a myriad of matters: the "other" architecture, the life of the creators, even the human condition and their own lives. As a visitor to Hundertwasser remarked: "what other architecture can do that?"

Moreover, the materialization of the "fantastic" may be much more enriching than the supporters of the idea of contradiction would grant. Because what the built "fantastic" may lose in "fantasy" it gains in the strength of the image it produces. Most people do not need or even want to see the "fantastic" artifacts often. It seems to be enough to visit them once or a few times. What counts is to know (and be assured through at least one visit) that they do, in fact, exist.

Thus, as there are no real reasons to consider the "materialization" of the "fantastic" as a dramatic "downfall" into matter, there seems to be little reason to attribute materialization to desire, for there seems to be in the very act of materializing the fantastic (whether

directly, by means of building it or indirectly, by visiting it) a kind of inevitability which cannot be the product of desire but rather that of the human mind. For it is the mind which first and foremost gravitates toward matter because matter is what makes the world in which the mind can develop. If the arms of the Cromagnon man had been changed into wings in some sudden and phenomenal mutation, then neither the mind nor the world we have would exist. Thought, without the ability of the hands to convert matter into objects on which the mind can dwell to think new thoughts and new objects, will soon sink into nothingness. By materializing its creations the mind insures its own development towards a new potential, and the "fantastic," as its creation, inevitably follows this path.

If the material "fantastic" were just a product of desire, then a two-dimensional fantastic would suffice. By making it three-dimensional the mind insures that contradictions are exacerbated and their impact enlarged, and that as a consequence a myriad of reactions will take place where more univocal meanings could be expected. Had Cheval painted his dream image of his "Palais Idéal" he would probably have produced no more than some naive picture that not even his descendants would bother to keep. Had Cheval gone on dreaming without building in order to preserve the "purity" of his fantasy, not one of the visitors who go to Hauterives each year would be pondering, as the empirical research shows, about subjects such as the sense of destiny, of beauty, of awe in a built space. Thus, the most dramatic aspect of the realization of the "fantastic" into matter may not reside in the contradiction between image and its concretization, but in its being an inevitable consequence of the human mind existing in the material world.

7.7 CONCLUSION. "Fantastic" Architecture: a psycho-environmental issue

After confronting the theoretical aspects of the fantastic with the findings of the empirical study we can conclude that the "fantastic" in architecture is a flickering genre which results from the conjunction of architectural qualities and an observer's perception and/or

experience; thus, it does not reside solely in the object, as often maintained in architectural literature, nor primarily in the subject, as appears to be the case with art and literature. As mentioned, the architectural "fantastic" is unstable: its chances of being perceived/experienced as "fantastic" vary from person to person, or for the same person at different times. Thus, strictly speaking it cannot be said of an architectural object that it is fantastic: it only can be "fantastic," i.e. it can have the "potential" of becoming fantastic, and that potential resides in the object's referential or hybrid form and in its power to evoke worlds that exist or are known to exist only in writers', artists' or the perceiver's imagination.

However, whether that potential is realized in the perceiver depends not only on the object's formal qualities, but often on its function and its surrounding environment as well as on factors concerning the perceiver himself, such as his knowledge about and his familiarity with the place, or even the image he had prior to the perception/experience. For all these reasons the term "fantastic" as a qualifier of architecture cannot be written without quotation marks. There is no such thing as fantastic architecture, but "fantastic" architecture exists. Thus it would probably be more appropriate to talk about an "architecture of fantasy," or as suggested by one of the interviewees at Park Güell, to relate it to what literary critics call "magic realism."

The term "magic realism" was introduced by the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier when searching for a concept "broad enough to accommodate both the events of everyday life and the fabulous nature of Latin American geography and history" ("The Reader's Encyclopedia," 1988, p.602). Carpentier, who was much influenced by French surrealism, saw in magic realism the capacity to enrich our idea of what is 'real' by incorporating all dimensions of the imagination, particularly as expressed in magic, myth and religion. .

This term fits well the type of architecture under consideration since all the settings studied mix the common, represented by conven-

tional architectural elements, and the fabulous represented by strange, hybrid or evocative elements, i. e. elements which seem to pertain to "other worlds." Thus, the exterior of Neuschwanstein looks like an illustration of a fairy tale but its interior is a mixture of Byzantine, Baroque and the academism of the end of the nineteenth century; Park Güell is a setting which in some sections is not very different from other parks whereas in others it is an explosion of strange forms and colors; Cheval's "Palais Idéal" combines giants and monsters with images of common buildings such as a mosque and a Swiss chalet. Hundertwasser looks like a toy but has an ordinary function, just as the Schtroumpfs which looks like a geometrical arrangement of organically growing inert materials; Bomarzo is a garden of monsters purporting to be a classical temple dedicated to the memory of a cherished wife. Moreover, like the literature of "magic realism" this architecture has the power to enrich or question reality according to the evidence provided by the empirical research.

Furthermore, the term "magic realism" has two advantages over "fantastic." First, it eliminates the problem of the "flickering" or "unstable" genre. In "magic realism" the magic or fantastic can peacefully coexist with realism in one indivisible unit. Second, the term applies equally well to places such as Bomarzo, which are perceived as "extraordinary" or "mysterious" without being "fantastic," as to Neuschwanstein which is perceived as "marvellous." But the term has some disadvantages as well. First, the denomination "the architecture of magic realism" should be transformed, for semantic rigor, into "magic realism in architecture," which at second sight, is not fundamentally different from "architecture of fantasy." Second, in order to understand the meaning of this label applied to architecture the reader must have some knowledge of the homologous literary genre. Third, given the two disadvantages just mentioned, the use of the term could easily be criticized for being an unnecessary extrapolation.

The term "architecture of fantasy," on the other hand, which has the advantage of being unambiguous, does not adequately reflect the

dynamic quality represented by an architectural object's potentiality of "becoming" fantastic. The same could be said for qualifiers such as "bizarre" and "eccentric," which have the additional limitation of alluding only to oddity. Finally the term "fantastic," which reflects the dynamic quality mentioned above has the disadvantage of carrying its quotations marks everywhere, in addition to demanding lengthy explanations to dispel misconceptions about the term. So whether this architecture is called "fantastic," or "of fantasy" or "of magic realism" may just be a matter of preference, since the implications and the disadvantages of each term are practically the same.

Still concerning labels, it has been argued that the term "architecture" is too honorable to designate buildings which look like hybrids between architecture and sculpture. As demonstrated, the term architecture can be used to designate "fantastic" buildings, but an architecture which fits into none of the acknowledged movements can be but marginal, for architecture is a continuum and the "fantastic" is a collection of individualities which, like the biological hybrids, leave no descendants.

But perhaps the last thing "fantastic" architecture needs is to be considered "Architecture" for it is precisely from its "marginality," its sombre humor and its oddity that it can be more useful to us than many a conventional building could ever be. Because it is from its standing as an outsider that this "architecture" can make us realize how often the finest architectural rhetorics can end in sheer environmental boredom and how often the alleged rationality of some buildings proves to be, on a second glance, no less irrational or capricious than an odd feature.

This is why any invitation to architects to dot the environment with well-intended fantasies should be treated with circumspection. The architecture of fantasy is the exception, often built by the exceptional and the eccentric, and by becoming commonplace part of its ability to convey messages by means of its shocking qualities will definitely be lost. This does not mean that architects should abstain from using "fantastic" imagery if they feel so inclined since the presence of "fantas-

tic" spaces seems to have an enlightening function and an affective impact upon its perceivers. The caution is against attempts to create, in times avid for novelty, a school of mild environmental fantasists capable of neutralizing the "shock function" of the strange by distributing it over a wide surface.

Although a similar "shock function" can be attributed to fantastic literature and art, only architecture, by making the fantastic spatial, by rooting it in reality, can give it a weight that neither of the others can provide. This is why the alleged paradox that the fantastic loses strength when becoming real has to be questioned. For by materializing in three dimensions what the "fantastic" loses is not its force, but the unlimited possibilities of manipulation of the dream, the literary and the pictorial worlds. And if we feel more uncomfortable with "fantastic" architecture than with literature or art, it is not because we necessarily consider it to be an eyesore, or because we really despise its creators' indulgence in fantasy. After all, in our every day life we, knowingly or not, engage in the materialization of fantasies each time that we are persuaded to buy a product by a glamorous advertisement. But the difference may be that whereas the latter makes us believe that contentment or happiness will come with the possession of the product in question, the creations of a fantastic builder may remind us that we all carry our shadows with us and that in facing madness and death we are alone. So, what we ultimately find so unsettling in those strange buildings may be no more than to see reflected in concrete, brick or stone the specter of our own fears.

It is not surprising then that professional architects hesitate to give the name of "architecture" to spaces which in addition to carrying multiple and obscure meanings seldom can present a sensible or plausible solution to what Joedicke called the "crucial problems of architecture." But concerning this last point the question is: why should it? We all eat, but we are not all in the fields gathering food. Moreover, what ultimately distinguishes humans from animals is not their capacity to give sensible responses to the problem of habitat (in that animals seem to

solutions that even now, years after Modernism's proclaimed death, any architectural act without a facade as flat as a mirror or unaccompanied by a manifesto proposing to save humanity from one or the other of its dreads, is regarded as shameful formalism. It is true that fantastic builders indulge in "aesthetics" but this much maligned attitude is not very different from Modernism's infatuation with function.

In fact, one of the arguments forwarded by the advocates of Modernism was the lower cost achieved by buildings devoid of ornamentation and conceived according to "rational" principles. However, as Bonta (1979) pointed out, this alleged rationality was not exempt of a "romantic fascination" with constructive systems, and in many cases apparently rational solutions proved to fall short of their claim when subjected to economic analysis. Yet, the problem with Modernism does not reside so much in this type of draw-backs but rather in its theoretical legacy: the required subjection of any architectural act to the principle of the prevalence of function, even when what is being built is an attempt to escape the dreariness of the environment it has created.

This is also why fantastic architecture should remain a marginal genre. For neither its function nor its *raison d'être* is to contribute with yet another perfect geometrical form to our myth of Rational, Efficient Man, but rather to see, beyond labels and oddities, the face of what we, in the name of that myth, have been brought out to despise: fantasy, irrationality and darkness, that other Janus' face of Rational Man.

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APPENDIXES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1. NEUSCHWANSTEIN: Statistical data

Percentages and total number ()

1-Demographics

Nationals		Foreigners		
Locals	others	Europe	N. America	Japan
.5 (1)	.15 (3)	.35(7)	.40 (8)	.5 (1)

2-Number of visits

1st	2nd,	+2	locals
.80 (16)	.10 (2)	.5 (1)	.5 (1)

3-Motives for visiting

Historical/creator	Int.in place	Curiosity	As Locals
.20 (4)	.50 (10)	.25 (5)	.5 (1)
Nationals (3)	--	--	(1)
Foreigners (1)	(10)	(5)	--

4-Perceptions

Fantasy related	History related	Imaginative	Folly
.40 (8)	.20 (4)	.30 (6)	.10 (2)
Men (2)	(3)	(4)	(1)
Women (6)	(1)	(2)	(1)

5-Images

Pictures	Read heard	Others
.90 (18)	.10 (2)	--

6-Image vs. Reality

Disappointing	Better	Same
.40 (8)	.20 (4)	.40 (8)

7-Neuschwanstein vs. the other castles built by Ludwig II

Visited the other castles	Interested only in Neuschwanstein	Does not know yet
.40 (8)	.40 (8)	.20 (4)
O.T. (6)	--	--
I.V. (2)	(8)	(4)

Note: O.T.: Visitors in organized tours
I.V.: Independent visitors

8-Evocative Power

Fairy tales/ Disneyworld	History	others	none
.35 (7)	.30 (6)	.5 (3)	.30 (6)
Men (2)	(3)	--	(5)
Women (5)	(3)	(1)	(1)

9-Other Worlds

Imaginary Worlds	None
.55 (11)	.45 (9)
Men (4)	(6)
Women (7)	(3)

10-Feelings

Admiration	Strangeness	Disgust	Cannot define	None
.20 (4)	.35 (5)	.5 (1)	.20 (4)	.30 (6)

11-Other environments and Fear

Night				Forest			Chance	
Fear	Magic	surpris,	none	Fear	Uneas,	None	Disbelief	None
5(1)	.20(4)	.15(3)	.50(10)	n/a	n/a	n/a	70(14)	30(6)
Men --	(1)	(2)	(7)	n/a	n/a	n/a	(6)	(4)
Wom (1)	(3)	(1)	(3)	n/a	n/a	n/a	(8)	(2)

Note: n/a, non applicable. Neuschwanstein is already in a forest.

12-Fear (specific)

Fear	none
5 (1)	95 (19)
Men --	(10)
Women (1)	(9)

13-Place in Neighborhood

Accepts	Rejects		
	out place	lose uniqueness	is a folly
.15 (3)	.30 (6)	.40 (8)	.15 (3)
Men (2)	(4)	(2)	(2)
Women (1)	(2)	(6)	(1)

14-Define in one word

Fantastic	Interesting	Folly
.35 (7)	50 (10)	.15 (3)
Men (2)	(6)	(2)
Women (5)	(4)	(1)

15-Fantastic as a question.

Literal	other Worlds	No
.30 (6)	.30 (6)	.40 (8)
Men (2)	(2)	(6)
Women (4)	(4)	(2)

APPENDIX 2. CHEVAL'S "PALAIS IDEAL": Statistical data

Percentages and total number

1-Demographics

Nationals		Foreigners
Locals	Others	Europe
.5 (1)	.75 (15)	.20 (4)

2-Number of visits

1st	2nd,	+2	Locals
.80 (16)	.10 (2)	.5 (1)	.5 (1)

3-Motives for visiting

Historical/ the creator	Interest in the place	Both	As locals
.45 (9)	.35 (7)	.15 (3)	.5 (1)
Nationals (8)	(4)	(3)	(1)
Foreigners (1)	(3)	--	--

4-Images

Pictures	Read, heard
.90 (18)	.10 (2)

5-Image vs. Reality

Disap.	Better	Same
.5 (1)	.55 (11)	40 (8)

6-Perceptions

Great work by one man	As a place	
	Fantastic	Disturbing
.50 (10)	.35 (7)	.15 (3)
Nat. (10)	(4)	(2)
Foreign, --	(3)	(1)
Men (6)	(3)	(1)
Women (4)	(4)	(2)

7-Evocative Power

Real worlds	"Other" worlds		None
	Imaginary worlds	Dreams	
.15 (3)	.25 (5)	.20 (4)	40 (8)
Men (2)	(1)	(1)	(6)
Women (1)	(4)	(3)	(2)

8-Other Worlds

Other Worlds	None
.45 (9)	55 (11)
Men (2)	(8)
Women (7)	(3)

9-Feelings

Admiration	Uneasiness,	Cannot define
.25 (5)	.60 (12)	15 (3)

10-Other environments and Fear

Night			Forest				Chance	
Fear	Uneas,	Others	Fear	Temple	Fantast	Others	Disbelief	Shock
.45(9)	.35(7)	.20(4)	.20(4)	.30(6)	.25(5)	.25(5)	70 (14)	.30(6)
Men (2)	(6)	(2)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(4)	(6)	(4)
Wom (7)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(1)	(8)	(2)

11-Fear (specific)

Fear	None
45 (9)	55 (11)
Men (2)	(8)
Women (7)	(3)

12-Place in Neighborhood

Accepts	Rejects	
	Too disturbing	Others
.35 (7)	.60 (12)	.5 (1)
Men (5)	(4)	(1)
Women (2)	(8)	--

13-Define in one word

Fantasy-like	Imaginative	Unique	Strange	Others
.35 (7)	.15 (3)	.15 (3)	.20 (4)	.15 (3)
Men (3)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(2)
Women (4)	(1)	(2)	(2)	(1)

14-Fantastic as a question.

Literal	Other Worlds	No
.25 (5)	.50 (10)	.30 (5)
Men (3)	(4)	(3)
Women (2)	(6)	(2)

APPENDIX 3. BOMARZO: Statistical data

Percentages and total number ()

1-Demographics

Nationals		Foreigners	
Locals	Others	Europe	L. America
--	,45 (9)	,50 (10)	,5 (1)

2-Number of visits

1st	2nd,	+2	Locals
,85 (17)	,10 (2)	5 (1)	--

3-Motives for visiting

Historical /creator	The strangeness of the place	Curiosity	As locals
,15 (3)	,60 (12)	,25 (5)	--

4-Perceptions

Esoteric Hermetic	Mysterious	Others
,30 (6)	,30 (6)	,40 (8)
Men (5)	(2)	(3)
Women (1)	(4)	(5)

5-Images

Pictures	Read heard	Others
.45 (9)	.40 (8)	15 (3)

6-Image vs. Reality

Disappointed	Better	Same
35 (7)	.5 (1)	60 (12)

7-Evocative Power

Literary	Mystery/fantastic stories	None
.20 (4)	.40 (8)	.40 (8)
Men (3)	(3)	(4)
Women (1)	(5)	(4)

8-Other Worlds

Imaginary Worlds	Worlds of the past	None
.5 (1)	.25 (5)	70 (14)
Men --	(3)	(7)
Women(1)	(2)	(7)

9-Feelings

Melancholy,	Wonderment	None
.50 (10)	.15 (3)	.35 (7)

10-Other environments and Fear

Night			Forest			Chance		
Fear	Uneasiness	None	Fear	Uneasiness	None	Disbelief	Surprise	None
.50(10)	.30(6)	.20(4)	.40(8)	.50(10)	.30(6)	.30(6)	.40(8)	.30(6)
Men --	(6)	(4)	--	(5)	(5)	(3)	(3)	(4)
Women(9)	(1)	(1)	(8)	(1)	(1)	(3)	(5)	(2)

11-Fear (specific)

Uncanny	None
.40(8)	.60 (12)
Men --	(10)
Women (8)	(2)

12-Place in Neighborhood

Accepts	Rejects	Indifferent
.70 (14)	.20 (4)	.10 (2)

13-Define in one word

Mysterious	Decadent	Capricious	Others
.25(5)	.30(6)	.10(2)	.35(7)

14-Fantastic as a question.

	Literal	Other worlds	No
	.20 (4)	.10 (2)	.70 (14)
Men (3)		--	(7)
Women (1)		(2)	(7)

APPENDIX 4. PARK GUELL: Statistical data

Percentages and total number ()

1-Demographics

Nationals		Foreigners		
Locals	Others	Europe	N. America	Japan
.30(6)	.15 (3)	.35 (7)	.15 (3)	.5 (1)

2-Number of visits

1st	2nd,	+2	Locals
.70 (14)	--	--	.30 (6)

3-Motives for visiting

Historical/ the creator.	Interest in the place	Curiosity	As locals
.30 (6)	.35 (7)	.5 (1)	.30 (6)
Nationals (3)	--	--	(6)
Foreigners (3)	(7)	(1)	--

4-Images

Pictures	Read, heard	As locals	Others
.60 (12)	.10 (2)	30 (6)	.5 (1)

5-Image vs. Reality

Disappointed	Better than in pictures	No difference	Problems of security	None
10 (2)	.40 (8)	.20 (4)	.15 (3)	15 (3)

6-Perceptions

Fantasy/ imagination	Strange	Place for creative thinking	Others
.35 (7)	.20 (4)	.40 (8)	.5 (1)
Men (3)	(3)	(3)	(1)
Women (4)	(1)	(5)	--

7-Evocative Power

Fantasy related		Others	None
Tales	Sci-fi		
.40 (8)	15 (3)	.15 (3)	.30 (6)
Men (3)	(3)	(1)	(3)
Women (5)	--	(2)	(3)

8-Other Worlds

Imaginary Worlds	Masquerades, fairs	None
.25 (5)	.15 (3)	.60 (12)
Men (2)	(2)	(6)
Women (3)	(1)	(5)

9-Feelings

Admiration	Surprise wonderment	Various	None
.20 (4)	.20 (4)	25 (5)	.35 (7)

10-Other environments and Fear

Night			Forest				Chance	
Fear	Uneasiness	None	Fear	Strange	Magic	None	Disbelief	None
.45(9)	.40(8)	.15(3)	.20(4)	40(8)	.30(5)	.15(3)	.65(13)	35(7)
Men --	(7)	(3)	--	(5)	(2)	(3)	(6)	(4)
Women(9)	(1)	--	(4)	(3)	(3)	--	(7)	(3)

11-Fear (specific)

Fear	None
30(6)	.70 (14)
Men (1)	(9)
Women (5)	(5)

12-Place in Neighborhood

Accepts	Rejects	Indifferent
.65 (13)	.20 (4)	--

13-Define in one word

Fantasy related	Imaginative	Others
.35 (7)	.40 (8)	.25 (5)
Men (3)	(4)	(3)
Women (4)	(4)	(2)

14-Fantastic as a question.

Literal	Other Worlds	No
.35 (7)	.40 (8)	.25 (5)
Men (4)	(3)	(3)
Women (3)	(5)	(2)

APPENDIX 5. HUNDERTWASSER: Statistical data

Percentages and total number ()

1-Demographics

Nationals		Foreigners		
Locals	others	Europe	N. America	L. America
,10 (2)	,10 (2)	,70 (14)	,5 (1)	,5 (1)

2-Number of visits

1st	2nd,	Locals
,85 (17)	,5 (1)	,10 (2)

3-Motives for visiting

Historical/ creator	Interest in the place	Curiosity	As locals
,5 (1)	,50 (10)	,35 (7)	,10 (2)

4-Images

Pictures	Read heard	Locals
,50 (10)	,40 (8)	,10 (2)

5-Image vs. Reality

Disappointed	Better	Same
5 (1)	.15 (3)	80 (16)

6-Perceptions

	Fantasy	World of childhood	Imaginative Exciting	Awful	Others
	.10 (2)	.40 (8)	.30 (6)	.5 (1)	.15 (3)
Men --		(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)
Women (2)		(5)	(2)	--	(1)

7-Perceiving of living

Would like to live			Do not know	No
Friendly	Ecological	Different		
.30 (6)	.10 (2)	30 (6)	.10 (2)	20 (4)

8-Evocative Power

	Illustrations in children's books	Toys, doll-houses	Disneyworld	None
	.25 (5)	.30 (6)	.10 (2)	.35 (7)
Men (1)		(2)	(1)	(6)
Women (4)		(4)	(1)	(1)

9-Other Worlds

	Imaginary Worlds	World of Childhood	None
	.10 (2)	.35 (7)	.55 (11)
Men	(1)	(2)	(7)
Women	(1)	(5)	(4)

10-Feelings

	Joy of childhood	Fun.	Friendliness	none
	.35 (7)	.25 (5)	.20 (4)	.20 (4)

11-Other environments and Fear

Night			Forest			Chance	
Magic	More Surprising.	Sane	Magic	More surprising	Sane	Disbelief	Surprise
.10(2)	.75(15)	.15(3)	.20(4)	.60(12)	20(4)	.55(11)	.45(9)
Men --	(8)	(2)	--	(7)	(3)	(5)	(5)
Women(2)	(7)	(1)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(6)	(4)

12-Fear (specific)

	Fear	No
	5(1)	.95 (19)
Men --		(10)
Women (1)		(9)

13-Place in Neighborhood

Accepts	Rejects
.75 (15)	.25 (5)

14-Define in one word

Ludic	Fantastic	Creative/imaginative
.50 (10)	.25 (5)	.25 (5)
Men (6)	(1)	(3)
Women (4)	(4)	(2)

15-Fantastic as a question.

Literal	Other Worlds	No
.30 (6)	.35 (7)	.35 (7)
Men (4)	(3)	(3)
Women (2)	(4)	(4)

APPENDIX 6. THE "MAISON DES SCHTROUMPFS": Statistical data

Percentages and total number (>)

1-Demographics

Residents	Nationals			Foreigners		
	Grand Schtr, residents	Neighbors	Others	Europe	N, America	Africa
.20 (4)	.10 (2)	.30 (6)	.5 (1)	.20 (4)	.10 (2)	.5 (1)

2-Number of visits

1st	2nd,	+2	Locals/residents
.40 (8)	--	--	.60 (12)

3-Motives for visiting

	Interest in strange place	Curiosity	Were in the area	As locals/residents
	.20 (4)	.15 (3)	.5 (1)	.60 (12)
Nationals	--	--	(1)	(12)
Foreigners	(4)	(3)	--	--

4-Perceptions

	Amusing	Strange, different	Imaginative	Fantastic
	.45 (9)	.25 (5)	.20 (4)	.10 (2)
Men (4)		(2)	(3)	(1)
Women (5)		(3)	(1)	(1)

5-Perceiving living at the Schtroumpfs

Like/would like		No	
Residents	others	Residents	Others
.30 (6)	.55 (11)	--	.15 (3)

6-Images

Pictures	Read heard	Others
.25 (5)	.75 (15)	--

7-Image vs. Reality

Disappointing.	Better	Same
.10 (2)	.5 (1)	.65 (13)

8-Evocative Power

Various images		None
.70 (14)		.30 (6)
Men	(6)	(4)
Women	(8)	(2)

9-Other Worlds

Imaginary worlds		None
.20 (4)		.80 (16)
Men	(2)	(8)
Women	(2)	(8)

10-Feelings

Joy, playfulness	None
.40 (8)	.60 (12)

11- The Schtroumpfs and the Grand Schtroumpf (preferences)

	Prefers Grand Schtroumpf	Prefers Schtroumpfs	Same	None
	.40 (8)	.45 (9)	.10 (3)	.5 (1)
Dwellers		(4)	--	--
G.S. Dwell,	--	--	(3)	--
Others	(8)	(5)	--	(1)

12-Other environments and Fear

	Night			Forest		Chance	
	More strange	None	A resort	More Strange	Cannot define	Disbelief	Surprise
	.5(1)	.45(9)	.50(10)	.30(6)	40(8)	.30(6)	70(14)
Men	--	(4)	(6)	(3)	(3)	(4)	(2)
Women(1)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(5)	(2)	(4)	(6)

13-Fear (specific)

	Fear	No
	5 (1)	.95 (19)
Men	--	(10)
Women (1)		(9)

14-Place in Neighborhood

Accepts	Rejects	
	Out of place	Dislikes
.70 (14)	.15 (3)	.15 (3)

15-Define in one word

Fantastic	Imaginative	Different	Playful	Trendy
.25 (5)	.15 (3)	.20 (4)	.20 (4)	20 (4)

16-Fantastic as a question.

	Literal	Other Worlds	No
	.10 (2)	.25 (5)	.65 (13)
Men --		(2)	(8)
Women (2)		(3)	(5)

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