



3 Transformation

THE ARCHITECTURAL JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR, MARY MIX Foley, writes of the “well-adjusted house,” by which she means the transplantation and consequent adaptation of European house types to the various regions of North America.¹ She mentions such accommodations as the British Tudor and Jacobean houses to fit New England and Tidewater Virginia, the peasant house of French Normandy to suit Louisiana, and the Spanish courtyard house to meet the semidesert climate of New Mexico. Each of these transplanted house types has diversified our regional architecture and enriched the American landscape. And yet, as each one of us knows from spending time in a place, every house needs continual adjusting, a process that regularly transforms space and ritually speaks of life.

Windows, Shutters, and Doors

“Look at this window; it is nothing but a hole in the wall, but because of it the whole room is full of light. So when the faculties are empty, the heart is full of light. Being full of light, it becomes an influence by which others are secretly transformed.” The ancient Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu thus expresses symbolically the potential for creativity, communication, and interaction radiating from the human heart. And at some level so it is with actual windows. Consider a stylish Georgian house in Edinburgh, Scotland.

THE GEORGIAN HOUSE

Windows tell us of life in the heart of a place. This window that is open at midday may have been closed earlier and may be closed again in the cool of the evening. As it is opened and closed, we learn that somebody lives there and is adjusting the house for comfort.