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MAISONS D'ARCHITECTES, MAISONS D'ANALYSTES¹

If the problem is for each individual to forge their own path through the urban fabric at their own speed, then I'd say the question is as follows: After all, the problem is not only one of relationship to the urban fabric, i.e., to collectivity, but it seems to me that all it takes is for someone to say something, at a symposium for example, for us to have the feeling that space is ordered in such a way that we subjectively find ourselves excluded from it. From then on, we can only hope that there will be an ambulatory where we can start to circulate, to walk around, to try and recover a little (or else, of course, we tend to explode when we speak!). The question I'd like to ask would be: what kind of building could we ask the architects here to build, to be consistent with our symposium, for example? I mean, what would it look like? I see two essential features: the first would be that it should be marked by a diversity of shapes and volumes, reflecting the diversity of each individual. But we're well aware that if this were the case, we'd run the risk of being projected into a pavilion-style architecture (to each his own little house, and it's the charm of this one that nothing resembles the singularity of one more than the singularity of another). So, let's be more consistent and build a common building.

But what, beyond this diversity, could ensure the building's community? There would have to be a presence that I think is essential to remember here, because it seems to me to be the key to everything that is done in architecture: there would have to be the presence of the Other—in the Lacanian tradition, we call it the great Other—that is, the presence of a place that is common to us all and to which we do not fail to refer, if only in our questions, which, however singular they may be, are nonetheless fundamentally common. The question, then, is: how can this architecture make this presence perceptible, beyond the diversity of each of its inhabitants? Architects have been very good at answering this question by ensuring this presence, on the one hand through the essential dimension of verticality, which is why, even today, skyscrapers seem to be eminently satisfying constructions (I mean through the presence of this great vertical axis, beyond the singularity of housing, offices, shops, etc.).

¹Text of the 1985 Montpellier symposium on Architecture and Psychoanalysis.

And then, of course, there's that other presence, to which we're all sensitive, of the great Other (in its horizontal dimension, this time) of History, in our monuments. Only it's obvious that this one is a little more difficult to build. I once knew, and you're no doubt familiar with him, an architect who wanted to build false ruins in H.L.M. One might think that this construction, not far from here, that of Bofill, sought, if I may say so, to ensure

habitation inside what would be false ruins. I believe that architecture—and this is undoubtedly where psychoanalysts are concerned—is essentially metaphysical. That's why it readily triggers passion. However ignorant we may be, it's enough for us to be tenants somewhere, i.e. caught up in the question of place, for us to perceive this essentially metaphysical dimension, for we can think that what the first builders tried to do was nothing other than enclose, in their constructions, precisely Being itself.

I believe that space is fundamentally what we experience. There are several types of space, as was said this morning: ordered spaces, i.e. fields. But I believe that, subjectively, we all have the experience of what space primordially is, i.e. an expanse in which there is not the slightest vertical emergence to support our anthropomorphism, a kind of eminently de-realizing expanse for us—because we are still so unsure of our "hominization." So we perceive this space in terms of the ever-present threat of derealization, and it's enough for this space to be arbitrarily ordered by a point at infinity, for this sense of derealization to be replaced by the dimension of anxiety, of worry about what we're doing here, about what we're in the process of making here, and for us to seek to resolve this anxiety by planning: by digging out a place. In other words, this place will inevitably include the necessity, induced by this point at infinity, of the dimension of being, and the whole periphery, from that moment on, will be ordered like a field. In other words, urbanization is not absolutely essential. Urbanization is simply the all-too-clear revelation that, from the moment we make room for the place of being, the very place of the Other, it's enough for this space to become a civilized space for us. And I'd like to say that, in this respect, the architecture that seems to me to be the most successful, the most eloquent and the most eloquent, is always Gothic architecture, insofar as it bears witness par excellence (and I think everyone feels this) to the fact that it's never just a question of rhetoric. And that's exactly why it's not quite Greek. But it's through this rhetoric that the place of Being is effectively enclosed, delimited, and that I can eventually find appeasement in this place where my own subjectivity would for a moment be in unison with this Being. I believe that when architecture existed (because I'm not sure it exists today), it was always concerned with this type of problem.

And if you take, for example, the no less fascinating but at the same time very disturbing work of Claude Nicolas Ledoux, you can see how it tried to articulate what Newton had just discovered as a manifestation of ordered *Presence*, of the gravitation of all satellites around a *Center*. Hence the idea that, in order to be harmonious, social organization should itself be conceived in terms of a type of gravitation that would take up cosmic gravitation, and I'd even go so far as to say that it seems to me that what we call functionalism, and which is still very important to us, has attempted to respond to this same attempt, to this same question, by using positivist logic, the logic of the "cosmos," as a basis.

As it happens, since we seem to be dependent on this functionalist architecture today, the difficulty is perhaps our rental difficulty: the logic in question excludes all reference to subjectivity (we don't ask for your opinion, it's just the way things are), but at the same time it also excludes the dimension of the Other, strangely enough, insofar as it postulates finitude. In other words, there's nothing else to go looking for, to go begging for, other than the immediate, short answer given by positivism. But if it's difficult today to live in places designed according to this principle, it's not so much because of the quality of the materials (for it's quite obvious that we design the materials ourselves; after all, we do exactly what we want with them), but because they leave no room for subjectivity other than the exterior, the outside. In other words, it's hard to feel at home once you're in this kind of cube, and this exclusion of the dimension of the Other, of the third party, in the construction and layout of the building, inevitably makes relations between inhabitants dual, in other words, paranoid. I don't see how you can function in this kind of building without at the same time finding yourself captivated in a mode of relationship that can only see the neighbor in the register of persecution: i.e. "what's he doing here?", which is obviously immediately referred back to oneself: "what am I doing here?". And, as we're wont to point out, these are buildings which, in an attempt to regain subjectivity, effectively encourage you to climb out of the window, or to go elsewhere; and, as has been so aptly put, to move around, without really knowing where you're going; unless, as we say, you're in the "secondary" (which is an absolutely fantastic, marvellous term), the second home... I'd also like to point out that there's a dimension I'd like to emphasize, and it's this: if it's true that architecture is primarily concerned with the attempt to enclose this great Other, in order to enable us to dwell, then architecture is not engaged in an activity of representation (as is the painting), but in an activity of presentation, since after all, this presence of Being is not there figuratively, imagined, but is very real in this enclosure. And it's easy to see that this Being is different depending on how it is presented. It's quite clear, for example, that the Being of a Gothic cathedral is not presented, and therefore not present in the city, in the same way as the Being of an architecture that must be called political. I was a little surprised that the question of Being was not addressed during these days. At the same time, it concerns Power, which, as we know, has the greatest relationship with this Being, since it is from there that it claims to exercise its faculties, its possibilities, even its all-power. And I think that the representations we have of political architecture (be it, for example, that of the Hitler era, or even today that which continues to be made in the so-called communist countries), we have indeed witnessed that this is indeed what it's all about. It's clear, then, that architecture isn't just a matter of giving something to read, but of exerting a constraint: architecture is eminently constraining, by which I mean that

it's prescriptive. You can't just do anything once you're caught up in a certain type of architecture... So let me take the liberty of being perhaps a little less serious, in appearance, to address this question: for an analyst, what would be not his space, but the field he would consider specific to his condition? If the analyst were an architect, or if he had to give recommendations to an architect, what would he ask him? Indeed, we have to answer.

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The first thing he'd certainly say to her is that what he's asking of her here can't be taken as a universal model, since it's not a question of inventing an architecture that would be prescriptive or constraining, but perhaps precisely an architecture that signifies, that gives or lends meaning.

The first question concerns the façade. When you look at what's been built next door, by Bofill for example, it's clear that it's all about facades—playing with facades. In other words, it's easy to see how the question of Being is approached in a certain way, because after all, we can also say that it's a moment that may have existed in our religious architecture (I'm referring to the Jesuit style, which wasn't invented at just any moment in our history, but at a time of religious crisis). So, here's something that essentially presents itself as "in front" (we don't care what's behind it!), and what counts above all is to be well-dressed, and as we look at each other in this drum, in this theater, it's all about being, for each other, decent people since they're also elegant.

In what would be the psychoanalyst's project, the facade would have to play a totally reduced, totally succinct role, by which I mean being barely visible, existing—because after all, it's not a question of creating a cave, or the fantasy of a natural habitat (there isn't any), and that's precisely not what it's about—but it would need, from the facade, just a few lines to remind us that it's a human habitat. A few lines, but which ones? Because if it's orthogonality that's so essential in architecture, it's organized around this concern to mark that the point is built at the end of two intersecting straight lines, and that from then on I can think of this point as occupying my place, and I'm its owner... This is something that psychoanalysis calls into question. So, if this façade is to bear witness to a human pre-presence through a few features, the question would then be how to choose those few features that could mark its specificity. Certainly, as some architects have thought of it, this would mean breaking the rupture between inside and outside, i.e., trying to arrange the fact that we can go from inside to outside without it being too delimited, or even without our being too aware of it; and of course, arranging the interior in such a way that it is not too prescriptive of the function assigned to us by modern constructions, which is obviously the function of work and reproduction. It's quite obvious that all we have to do is enter a home today to know that what we're being

asked to do is to pass through this place, having simply left a bit of our sweat in it, having left a few products in the form of our children, and then exit. It's obviously embarrassing, because it's a little too harsh, a little too obvious an interpretation of what the Other would ask of us. And if I know in too obvious a way what it wants from me, it's no longer the Other, I mean, at the same time I abolish its dimension. But, you may ask, for the analyst, what is this Other? Because if we read Lacan, we see that the Other doesn't exist, that the Other is ultimately just a place. So how, in this space, are you going to bear witness to this presence of the Other? I might try to answer in the following way: if it's true that the Other—as such—is sustained by a dimension of infinity, the architect's problem would be to inscribe this dimension of infinity in a closed space. I believe that this is an active preoccupation of architects, since we know that they have always been concerned with the question of the open: how to create spaces that are nonetheless open spaces. Of course, there are various solutions and possibilities

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to make this possible: if only by creating non-functional zones where everyone has to figure out what to do with them. People of my generation only need to have childhood memories to know that in the buildings they lived in, all the shadow areas, cellars and attics, were absolutely essential. Today, we're building cellars and parking lots that are brightly lit, and there are no attics - just flat roofs. So you'd have to ask the architect, who's certainly a man of art, how to make this presence present, and at the same time perhaps make this place quite pleasant, I'd say "livable". Nothing more, after all. It's a demand that obviously seems a little exorbitant today, because you only have to work in a place like this to know that all you're asked to do is go in the direction of the arrows. Some kids do their best to re-humanize it by making graffiti and breaking things, but it's a pity for the subject whose presence, after all, deserves better than that. And why do we force subjectivity to manifest itself only through this type of experience? Finally, to conclude, in the premises we have available in Paris as the *Freudian Association*, we've been lucky enough to be able to fit out a place that's not too unsympathetic to the spirit that's supposed to drive us. It's an old workshop, with a rather banal U-shape, but this shape is enough to ensure that its geometric representation doesn't immediately impose itself on the mind. It lends itself to the idea that there may be labyrinths, nooks and crannies, shadowy areas, it lends itself to exploration.

On the other hand, we have a glass roof—which is excellent. We didn't need to build a dome with a hole in the middle to let in the light. Under the glass roof we have a mezzanine which we leave unoccupied, empty, even when we're squeezed down a little, so that intuitively, there's a place there, this pre-smelling place, this place that's a source

of light perhaps (but I assure you we haven't hung any symbols on it) which is perfectly empty, except for the presence of one of our friends who records what's being said in the room. And I've already had occasion to point out that, instead of thinking that what we're saying is recorded successively on the tapes up there, all we have to do is imagine for a moment that we who are down here are merely articulating for each of us what is already pre-recorded on those tapes up there. From that moment on, we're aware of our alienation: it's indeed the Other who sends us our message. But at the same time, I'd say we find ourselves confirmed in the fact that, despite our modest means, we've sought to preserve this place of the Other in the professional space of psychoanalysts.