Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca

Vol. 7,
No. 19

# REVISTA IMPULSA DE UNIVERSIDAD LA SALLE CUERNAVACA

ISSN 2395-9207

Place / Space
Autonomy and Heteronomy in Architecture Theory *Jean Robert*

# REVISTA IMPULSA DE UNIVERSIDAD LA SALLE CUERNAVACA

ISSN 2395-9207

Universidad La Salle® Cuernavaca

Revista IMPULSA de Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca
**Proyecto PIN ULSAC**
AÑO 7 NÚM. 19 04 2019
ISSN 2395-9207



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REVISTA IMPULSA DE UNIVERSIDAD LA SALLE CUERNAVACA, AÑO 7 Número 19 enero-abril 2019 Publicación cuatrimestral editada por Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca AC a través del Área de Investigación. Nueva Inglaterra s/n, Col. San Cristóbal. C.P 62230, Cuernavaca, Morelos. Tel: (777) 3115525. Fax: (777) 3113528, www.ulsac.edu.mx. Editor responsable: Ofelia Rivera Jiménez. Reservas de Derechos al Uso Exclusivo No. 04-2014-040115130800-102; ISSN 2395-9207, ambos otorgados por el Instituto Nacional de Derechos de Autor. Impreso por Integrarte Publicidad, Camero 25-F, Col. Amatitlán, Cuernavaca, Morelos. C.P. 62410 Tel. (777) 3164620 (www.integrartepublicidad.com); el 30 de abril de 2019, con un tiraje de 200 ejemplares.

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## TEMA 2 Autonomy and Heteronomy in Architecture Theory:

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# Presentación

El Mtro. Jean Robert, cumple en este año 2019, 25 años de colaborar en la docencia de Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca. Arquitecto, urbanista, filósofo y prolífico escritor en diversas lenguas, durante estos años ha colaborado con su cátedra en nuestra Escuela de Arquitectura y con la Coordinación de Humanidades, además de tener una brillante participación en el Área de Investigación contribuyendo a la publicación de la Revista de Investigación "IMPULSA DE UNIVERSIDAD LA SALLE CUERNAVACA" con innumerables valiosos artículos en los que hace evidente su conocimiento acerca de la filosofía del pensamiento llamado científico.

Robert obtuvo el título de arquitecto con sólida formación de ingeniero de la prestigiosa Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (Instituto Politécnico Federal, ETH) de Zürich. En los años 1960, trabajó y estudió urbanismo en Holanda, país en el que estuvo muy influido por la acción de un grupo de activistas en lucha contra la invasión de Ámsterdam por el uso de automóviles. Desde este momento, entendió que las teorías urbanísticas en boga en aquellos tiempos eran equivocadas, porque privilegiaban al coche y reprimían los pies. En tanto urbanista, Robert se dedicó a abordar problemas urbanos desde la óptica del peatón y no del automovilista. Conoció a Iván Illich cuando éste acababa de escribir Energía y equidad y coincide con él plenamente en la afirmación de que "los transportes motorizados son la peor de todas las formas de explotación".

En 1972 se estableció en México, país en que sus encuentros con pensadores críticos y activistas como Iván Illich, John Turner, John McKnight y Gustavo Esteva fueron decisivos. Entre 1973 y 2014, enseñó en la facultad de arquitectura de la UAEM, en la que impartió una asignatura de urbanismo.

Desde 2007, Robert trabajó en la organización del seminario Iván Illich en Francia, que se celebró en Créteil (ex Paris X) en mayo de 2010. En 2012 organizó, en la universidad del Estado de Morelos, un coloquio conmemorativo sobre Iván Illich y nuevamente, en 2016, co-organizó con la UAEM un simposio sobre este pensador.

Su elevada estatura, su cabellera blanca y su actitud siempre crítica,

han sido marcas de su presencia en nuestras aulas. Jean Robert, es, además, un pensador andante en congruencia con sus reflexiones acerca de la proliferación de vehículos de motores de gasolina, que además de contaminar, no han conseguido cumplir con su oferta de movilizar más ágilmente a las personas y por el contrario han incrementado la brecha discriminatoria entre grupos con mayores o menores recursos económicos.

Como profesor de la asignatura de Ética profesional, para participar en la formación integral de nuestros estudiantes, ha estado siempre ocupado y preocupado por pensar y repensar en el conocimiento que dé lugar a una vida más humanizada, conciliada con el entorno natural enmarcado por la justicia, en especial hacia los pobres del mundo. Conversar con Jean Robert siempre conduce a aprender, a reflexionar, a pensar…

Dentro del lasallismo, Jean Robert ha cubierto con creces algunas de las virtudes del maestro lasallista que el Hno. Alfredo Morales[1] señala: la generosidad al regalarnos con sus ideas y reflexiones contenidas en sus discursos y sus textos, en cuanto era convidado a hablar; el celo, que conlleva a la pasión por lo que se cree y se piensa, fundamentado en una extraordinaria congruencia y autenticidad entre el decir y el vivir.

Entre los lineamientos del Modelo Educativo de la Universidad La Salle,

1. Alfredo Morales fsc. (2001) Pedagogía Lasallista. Pre-prensa editorial Bruño. Lima, Perú

también encontramos, al respecto del tema de la investigación que "La función de la investigación es una atribución de las IES, que tiende a la generación y difusión de los conocimientos científico, tecnológico y humanístico y, por tanto, a una comprensión mayor del contexto humano, natural y social, hacia su transformación desde su ser universitario".[2]

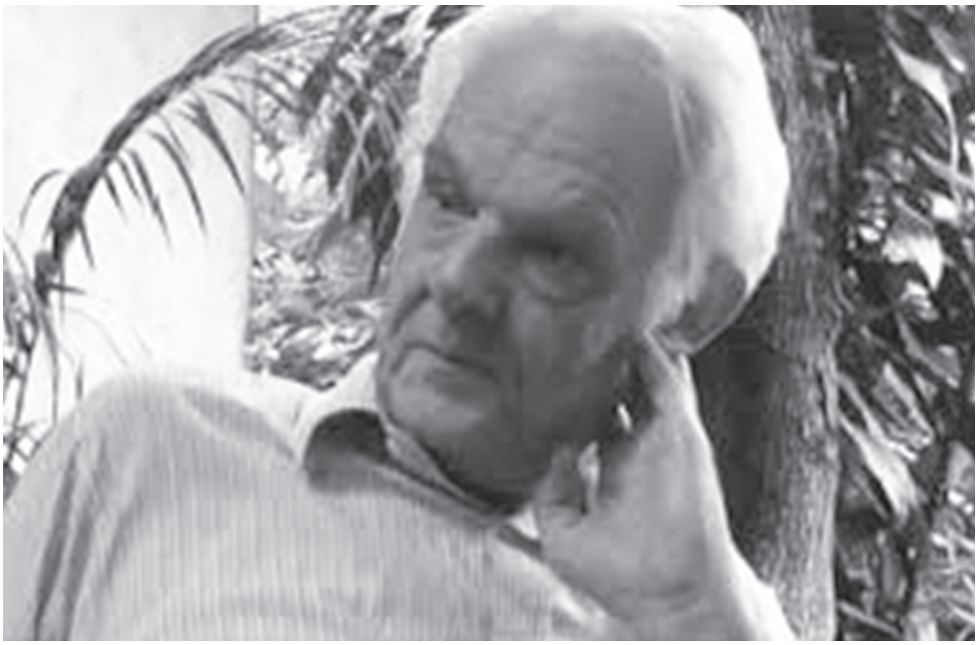
Se puede decir, con certeza, que Jean Robert ha cumplido con estas propuestas en su participación académica dentro de nuestras aulas.

Agradecemos al Mtro. Jean Robert, estos años de presencia que ha dejado una profunda huella en nuestra academia, esperando que nos siga enriqueciendo con sus conocimientos y con su comprometido ejemplo.

*Indivisa Manent*

**Mtro. Ángel Elizondo López**
*Rector*

2. Vargas J.A. fsc, et al (2013) Aprender saberes. Desarrollar proyectos y compartir capacidades y valores. Modelo educativo. Universidad la Salle. Cd. México.



# Editorial

La revista IMPULSA DE UNIVERSIDAD LA SALLE CUERNAVACA ha tenido desde sus inicios en el año 2013, el privilegio de verse enriquecida con las ideas plasmadas en los textos del Mtro. Jean Robert.

Estudioso apasionado del pensamiento de Iván Illich, Jean Robert, nos confronta en todo momento a situaciones y pensamientos que muchas de las aparentes comodidades y adelantos de la vida actual, nos hacen olvidar y hasta negar su importancia.

Temas como el uso de las herramientas actuales, los transportes, la educación y los servicios, llevan implícitos cuestionamientos severos

acerca de su auténtica utilidad y, sobre todo, de las encubiertas desventajas que contienen, al marcar más la diferencia entre el poder adquisitivo que existe entre diversos grupos sociales, que atenta contra la convivencialidad, señalada por Illich como una forma de encuentro social, equitativo y amable.

Políglota extraordinario, tuvimos que restringir sus contribuciones a la revista Impulsa, a las tres lenguas (español, inglés y francés) que autorizó el Consejo Consultivo para la Investigación de ULSAC. A continuación, se presenta una lista de los trabajos publicados por Jean Robert en nuestra revista IMPULSA de Universidad La Salle Cuernavaca, muchos de éstos escritos en inglés o francés (y en algunos números, de nuestra publicación, contribuyó con dos publicaciones).

- **Número 1 (abril 2013)**

Iván Illich: diez años, ya (Presentación del coloquio Iván Illich, Cuernavaca, CIDHEM 13 – 15 de diciembre 2012)

- **Número 3 (diciembre 2013)**

Goodbye to Tools: The historicity of technology

- **Número 4 (abril 2014)**

Los orígenes del desarrollo y de la mentalidad instrumental

- **Número 5 (agosto 2014)**

Le dérapage dans les systèmes est-il inéluctable?

• **Número 6 (diciembre 2014)**

La Rosa Blanca: Un episodio de la resistencia interna de Alemania

• **Número 8 (agosto 2015)**

Hugo de San Víctor e Iván Illich, colegas en la investigación sobre la ciencia por la gente

Conferencia Magistral. Primer Coloquio de Investigación ULSAC

• **Número 10 (abril 2016)**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

• **Número 11 (agosto 2016)**

El espectro del Estado de Inteligencia Perfecta

• **Número 13 (abril 2017)**

Le genre vernaculaire

• **Número 16 (abril 2018)**

Los pobres excluidos de la política... (Los pobres reinventan la política.)

Notes sur certain événement politique mexicain, d'un lecteur lambda à d'autres

(Notas sobre un acontecimiento político mexicano, de un lector a otro)

• **Número 17 (agosto 2018)**

La instrumentalización de la mirada y más allá. Un alegato por una ética óptica para la edad digital

Los números 19 y 20 han sido dedicados al trabajo temático de Jean Robert acerca de sus disertaciones sobre el tiempo, el espacio y la energía.

Cabe hacer notar, que estos trabajos fueron publicados por The International Journal of Illich Studies en 2017, al igual que en esta ocasión, en lengua inglesa, con la intención de hacerlos accesible a los estudiosos mexicanos del pensamiento de Illich a través de Jean Robert[3] y muy especialmente, de nuestra comunidad universitaria lasallista.

**En el número 19 (abril 2019) se abordan dos temas principales:**
PLACE/SPACE y AUTONOMY AND HETERONOMY IN ARCHITECTURE THEORY

**En el número 20 (agosto 2019)**
ENERGY & SPEED

Esperamos que este excelente trabajo de Jean Robert (que puede ser libremente consultado en los archivos del área de investigación y próximamente en el Repositorio Institucional de ULSAC) tenga eco en la formación de nuestros estudiantes y sea de interés entre los profesores de nuestra comunidad académica, despertando la misma pasión por su estudio que el pensamiento de Illich generó en Robert.

Mtra. Ofelia Rivera Jiménez
*Encargada del Área de Investigación ULSAC*
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3. Se reimprimen ahora con la autorización de su autor, Jean Robert Jean.

# INTRODUCCIÓN
# Investigaciones sobre lo (que parece) obvio

***Jean Robert***

El CIDOC (Centro Intercultural de Documentación) de Cuernavaca cerró oficialmente sus puertas en verano 1986, después de una memorable fiesta. La razón oficial fue un exceso de éxito comercial, lo que hay que entender como "peligro de transformarse en institución reconocida por las universidades americanas y europeas". Si seguía existiendo, CIDOC iba a perder su carácter de centro de estudios libres de alta calidad donde espíritus críticos de todo el mundo se daban

cita para discutir los efectos destructores de la sociedad industrial sobre el mundo natural y el mundo simbólico.

Hasta 1975, se había podido esperar que, "en un sobresalto de libertad", como lo decía Jacques Ellul, gente pensante de todo el mundo iba a organizar "los grandes debates del fin del siglo XX". El siglo se terminó sin que estos debates tuvieran lugar.

Quizás no tuvimos el valor de dar "el sobresalto de libertad" que esperaba Ellul. Pero, más sutilmente, alrededor de 1985, algo cambió en la topología mental de la modernidad tardía. Para decirlo en pocas palabras, este cambio se manifestó como una transformación progresiva del lenguaje que permitía expresar lo que se consideraba verdadero y que Foucault designaba con la palabra epistemè, mientras Illich hablaba de "las certezas que constituyen los axiomas de nuestros teoremas sociales. Los lectores que fueron jóvenes inquietos en los años 1970 recordarán que, en estos años, términos escapados de ciencias nuevas, como la cibernética y la teoría de los sistemas (input, output, retroalimentación, caja negra, sistema y subsistema) empezaron a invadir el lenguaje común. En el CIDOC de los últimos años, era notable la presencia frecuente de Heinz von Foerster, el físico vienés que, mientras era secretario de las conferencias Macy, en las que se acuñaron varios de los conceptos de lo que parecía entonces una ciencia nueva, popularizó su nombre de cibernética (de una raíz griega, kuber, desigando el piloto)[4]. Lo que no podía prever

4. Ver Jean-Pierre Dupuy, "L'essor de la première cybernétique (1942-1953) », Histoires de Cybernétique, Paris : Cahiers du C.R.E.A. No 7, 1985, p. 9-139.

von Foerster, es lo que los conceptos de la cibernética y del análisis de sistema hicieron al lenguaje común al reflejarse en él e invadirlo. Empezaron a usarse menos los verbos, que expresan acciones, y a proliferar los substantivos, propensos a confundir lo que es con la probabilidad de que sea y a desaparecer la copula (el presente del verbo ser)[5]. El viento de libertad que había soplado sobre los primeros años  apartir de 1970 fue sofocado y asistimos al nacimiento de un "lenguaje" que prefiere expresarse gráficamente, en grafos, en algoritmos, en esquemas de nudos y flechas, más que en palabras carnales.

Para Iván Illich, el cierre del CIDOC en 1976, fue la ocasión de una autocrítica. Su análisis de la contra-productividad de las instituciones de servicios de la sociedad industrial (las escuelas, los transportes motorizados, la medicina) fue llevada a cabo bajo una luz excesivamente conceptual, lo que explica quizás su éxito en Francia, país amante de "la Razón". Poco antes de los años 1980, Illich se convenció de que los postulados (o axiomas) que sostienen nuestros teoremas sociales no son exclusivamente conceptuales. Son entramados de concepciones y de percepciones – de conceptos y de perceptos. El historiador en él entendió que los husos sobre los cuales se hilan los perceptos son enterrados más profundamente en los suelos de la historia que los telares sobre los que tejemos nuestros conceptos. En otras palabras, se reprochó haber dejado los sentidos físicos y sus percepciones fuera de sus análisis críticos.

5. Un amigo lingüista de Iván Illich registró algunos de los cambios que afectaron el lenguaje común después de la popularización de conceptos de la cibernética y del análisis de sistemas. Ver Uwe Poerksen, Plastic Words. The Tyranny of a Modular Language, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995 (1988).

Agotados los recursos del tiempo en él que sus libros se vendían en números de cinco o seis dígitos y se traducían en decenas de lenguas, lo que le permitía ser un anfitrión generoso en su casa de Ocotepec como en las casas que le prestaban o que rentaba en varias ciudades universitarias, Iván Illich decidió subsistir como filósofo itinerante, mendigo bebiendo de los generosos pechos de alma mater, peregrino o judío errante, como se definía alternativamente. Sabía que de varias universidades emanarían ofrecimientos de colaboración, pero antes de aceptar ninguno estableció las condiciones bajo las cuales las consideraría:

- No iba a someter a sus estudiantes a exámenes ni calificarlos formalmente.
- No impartiría más de una tarde de seminario por semana, de preferencia los viernes.
- No enseñaría en una universidad particular más de medio semestre al año.

El primer ofrecimiento emanó de la Universidad de Cassel, en Alemania, la Gesammthochschule, cuyo rector, Ernst Ulrich von Weizsaecker, lo invitó en dos ocasiones a dar un seminario de seis semanas. A principio de los años 1980, firmó un contrato con el departamento STS (Science-Technology-Society) de la facultad de Física de la Universidad del Estado de Pennsylvania que cumplió hasta el día de su muerte, el 2 de diciembre 2002.

El otro lado de estos contratos con grandes universidades, que le permitían mantener una mesa a la que invitaba a sus amigos, era lo que él llamaba su "proyecto de subversión de la universidad" que resumía así: "hacer bascular su centro de gravedad de las aulas a salones ubicados en casas particulares provistas de una cocineta para preparar los espagueti, de una reserva de vinos decentes y situadas a proximidad de una buena biblioteca (en el caso de PennState, la biblioteca Pattie, ahora Joe Paterno).

Durante sus primeros seminarios en PennState, Illich orientó el debate sobre lo que había faltado a sus tesis de los años 1970 sobre la contra-productividad de las instituciones de servicios. Un grupo de colegas o amigos de estudio se formó a su alrededor. Durante cinco años, Illich pudo ofrecer una pequeña beca a los que le ayudaron a mantener su mesa abierta, a organizar los seminarios, lanzar invitaciones y llevar sus propias investigaciones.

Los textos presentados en estos dos cuadernos de la revista Impulsa son mayoritariamente ejemplos de mis trabajos de aquellos años. El proyecto de explorar los "axiomas" que fundamentan nuestros "teoremas sociales" me interesaba sobremanera. Había pasado los primeros años de la decada de los 60´s como dibujante de día y estudiante de urbanismo de noche en la ciudad de Amsterdam, donde me involucré modestamente en un proyecto de "subversión del urbanismo" que buscaba volver a fundarlo sobre el poder de los pies y menos sobre la potencia de los motores. En los años 1980, mi contribución al cuestionamiento de los "axiomas que sostienen

nuestros teoremas sociales" fue en parte una revitalización de mis cuestionamientos de los años 1960. En aquellos años, los "teoremas" del urbanismo estaban todos centrados en torno a los vehículos de motor. El "axioma" subyacente me parecía ser que, en materia de circulación, la heteronomía – o sumisión a la regla dictada por otro – debía prevalecer sobre la autonomía, en este caso el uso de la fuerza de los propios pies. En Energía y Equidad[6] Illich había propuesto imponer un límite superior de 25 km/h a la velocidad de todas las formas de transporte de personas. En los años 1970, mi estudio de la literatura especializada – los Transport Studies - me reveló que, en una mega-ciudad equipada con un metro – como México, Paris, Nueva York o Londres – el promedio de velocidad sobre el día oscila alrededor de 15 km/h. Lo que logran los urbanistas en aquellas ciudades es acelerar a unos privilegiados – las "capitalistas de la velocidad" - obligando a los otros a la lentitud. La "velocidad" de la circulación urbana no permite ahorrar tiempo social, sino que promueve transferencias de privilegios de los pobres hacia los ricos.

Los números 19 y 20 de la revista Impulsa les ofrecen una serie de 18 ensayos que todos tocan, de cerca o de lejos, los agregados de perceptos y de conceptos que constituyen las certidumbres sin cuestionar – los axiomas como los llamaba metafóricamente Illich - con los que se construyen los teoremas sociales de la modernidad tardía. Los dividimos en cuatro secciones.

6. Ver Iván Illich, Energía y Equidad, en Obras completas, México: Fondo de Cultura, México 2006, Vol. 1

*I. Los "axiomas" subyacentes a las teorías de la arquitectura contemporáneas.*

Recordando que, durante varios años, había practicado la arquitectura en Suiza y en Holanda, consideré conveniente iniciar esta colección de ensayos con unas preguntas sobre éste oficio, las teorías que genera y los postulados subyacentes a estas teorías. ¿El arquitecto vuelve a sus clientes más libres o los vuelve esclavos de su diseño? Constaté que muchos teóricos de la arquitectura no suelen promover ámbitos de familiaridad fomentando la autonomía de los habitantes, sino que, al contrario, erigen la des-familiarización – el sentimiento de extrañeza - en principio-guía del diseño de casas cuyos habitantes tienen poco poder de hacerlas suyas (4 artículos, todos referentes a "la autonomía y la heteronomía en arquitectura").

*II. El **lugar** en la edad del **espacio***

Los artículos de mi autoría reunidos en el número 19 de la revista Impulsa dan testimonio de mi propia búsqueda de las certidumbres que son fundamentos de nuestros teoremas sociales. Recordemos que los axiomas o postulados son proposiciones que no se pueden demostrar pero que pueden servir para demostrar teoremas. El caso más famoso es el quinto postulado de Éuclides sobre las paralelas: por un punto exterior a una recta se puede trazar una paralela y sólo una a esta recta. Durante más de 2000 años, muchos trataron en vano de demostrar esta proposición, hasta que, a partir del principio del siglo XIX, varios matemáticos establecieron que un axioma como el postulado de las paralelas no puede ser demostrado, pero puede ser falsificado, negado, contradicho. En 1829, Nikolay Lobachevsky enunció un postulado que falsificaba el quinto postulado de Éuclides: "por un punto exterior a una línea se pueden

trazar una infinidad de paralelas a esta línea", lanzando así las geometrías no-euclidianas cuyos teoremas se verifican en una geometría diferente de la de Éuclides y es por ello calificada de geometría no-euclidiana. Lobachevsky quería poner en cuestión la idea de Kant que el espacio y el tiempo son a priori de la percepción de la realidad. Para él, son a posteriori: demostró que diferentes postulados o axiomas geométricos generan espacios diferentes.

El caso más conocido de un axioma en ruptura con la geometría euclidiana es el de Bernard Riemann: "Por un punto exterior a una línea no se puede trazar ninguna paralela a esta". Es el más conocido porqué engendró el espacio no-euclidiano que sirvió de marco a la teoría de la relatividad generalizada de Einstein. Ésta sección contiene ensayos que hablan de la emergencia del concepto de espacio abstracto en un mundo de lugares concretos, sensuales y hápticos o de la supervivencia de estos en un mundo dominado por el espacio.

Antes de dar por concluida la contienda entre los lugares concretos y el espacio abstracto, me he permitido un corto rodeo por la percepción del "aquí" de los antiguos griegos, que tenían un concepto de lugar (topos), pero carecían de un concepto de espacio abstracto, si se hace excepción de una intuición fulgurante de Platón en el Timeo (la idea de chôra) (7 artículos).

*III. Energía: un concepto que se escapó de los laboratorios e invadió el lenguaje común.*

A principio de los años 1980, pasé un invierno en la fría veranda del instituto de Física de la universidad de Marburgo, en Alemania, explorando en cierta forma las "papeleras" de ésta ciencia. Los libros que ya no eran parte del currículo de

la física habían sido depositados sobre los estantes de esta veranda. Muchos eran tan carcomidos por la humedad, los hongos y los gusanos que estaban bajo una interdicción de fotocopiarlos, así que copié a mano algunos vestigios de la física que engendró el concepto de energía y que, sin embargo, hoy, ya no es física oficial. Entre los físicos descartados del siglo XIX, me interesó particularmente la personalidad fascinante de Heinrich Hertz, cuyo nombre es recordado por las ondas "hertzianas". Excelente helenista, artista, humanista, Hertz pensaba dedicarse a las humanidades. Fue el "Bismark de la Física", Hermann von Helmholz, quien lo convenció que estudiara física con él. Una decena de años antes de que Einstein tomara éste papel, Hertz fue algo como el "niño prodigio de la física". Sin embargo, poco antes de morir de una apendicitis a los 37 años, Hertz se embarcó – como lo escribiera a su madre – en un proyecto que hubiera podido arruinar su "no tan mala reputación": quiso reformular los principios fundamentales de la mecánica sin introducir en ellos el concepto de energía. En otras palabras, quiso expurgar la física de la energía, por lo menos como concepto fundamental.

En 1982 en Berkeley, Iván Illich escribió un ensayo titulado "La construcción social de la energía". La argumentación era de orden lingüístico: cuando un físico se refiere a la energía, la designa generalmente por un símbolo, e, que tiene una pura denotación, algo como "la integral por el camino de una fuerza". En cambio, la palabra popular "energía" evoca cosas abundantes pero escasas, es decir de las que hay mucho, pero nunca en suficiencia. Tal palabra es destructora de todo sentido de la suficiencia (tengo mi porción y no quiero más). En mi propia investigación sobre la historia del concepto de energía, usé la distinción entre denotación y connotación que es la base del estudio de Illich.

El caso de los transportes ilustra el funcionamiento de la palabra "energía" en las conversaciones y en los artículos periodísticos: la gasolina es algo abundante de lo que nunca hay suficiente. La demanda de gasolina crece en la medida en que se construyen más ejes viales, más segundos pisos y más vías de pago. En las grandes ciudades, el resultado de todas estas medidas de mejoramiento de la velocidad es un promedio de aproximadamente 15 km/h, en un juego de suma cero en el que el tiempo que me hace ganar la velocidad no es más que la otra cara del tiempo que hago perder a los otros usuarios de las carreteras (2 artículos).

Dos conceptos son particularmente importantes para entender la mutación de las *fuerzas naturales* en un concepto que las transforma en un bien *escaso,* es decir *económico* y la transformación del sentido del *estar aquí,* donde mis pies pisan el suelo, en un concepto abstracto, hegemónico y desprovisto de suelo: hablo del concepto de *energía* y del concepto de *espacio.*

# INTRODUCCIÓN

## Research on (what seems) obvious

***Jean Robert***

The CIDOC (Intercultural Documentation Center by its acronym in Spanish) of Cuernavaca officially closed its doors in summer 1986, after a memorable party. The official reason was an excess of commercial success, which must be understood as "danger of becoming an institution recognized by American and European universities." If it continued to exist, CIDOC was going to lose its character as a center for high-quality free studies where critical spirits

from around the world gathered to discuss the destructive effects of industrial society on the natural world and the symbolic world.

Until 1975, it had been expected that, "in a shock of freedom," as Jacques Ellul said, thinking people from all over the world would organize "the great debates of the end of the twentieth century." The century ended without these debates taking place.

Perhaps we did not have the courage to give "the shock of freedom" that Ellul expected. But, more subtly, around 1985, something changed in the mental topology of late modernity. To put it in a nutshell, this change manifested itself as a progressive transformation of language that allowed to express what was considered true and that Foucault designated with the word epistemè, while Illich spoke of "the certainties that constitute the axioms of our social theorems. Readers who were restless young people in the 1970s will remember that, in these years, terms escaped from new sciences, such as cybernetics and systems theory (input, output, feedback, black box, system and subsystem) began to invade the common language. In the CIDOC of recent years, the frequent presence of Heinz von Foerster , the Viennese physicist who, while he was secretary of the Macy conferences , in which several of the concepts of what seemed then a new science, was popularized , was notable his name cybernetics (from the greek root kuber, designating the pilot)[7]. What von Foerster could not foresee, is what the concepts of cybernetics and system analysis did to common language by reflecting on it and invading it. Verbs began to be used less, expressing actions, and proliferating nouns, prone to

7. See Jean-Pierre Dupuy, "L'essor de la première cybernétique (1942-1953) », Histoires de Cybernétique, Paris : Cahiers du C.R.E.A. No 7, 1985, p. 9-139.

confuse what is with the probability that it is and the copula disappears (the present of the verb to be)[8]. The wind of freedom that had blown in the early 1970s was quenched and we witnessed the birth of a "language" that prefers to express itself graphically, in graphs, in algorithms, in knot and arrow schemes, rather than in carnal words.

For Ivan Illich, the closure of CIDOC in 1976, was the occasion of a self-criticism. His analysis of the counter-productivity of the service institutions of the industrial society (schools, motorized transport, medicine) was carried out in an excessively conceptual light, which perhaps explains his success in France, a country that loves "the reason". Shortly before the 1980s, Illich was convinced that the postulates (or axioms) that support our social theorems are not exclusively conceptual. They are frameworks of conceptions and perceptions-of concepts and perceptions. The historian in him understood that the spindles on which perceptions are spun are buried more deeply in the floors of history than the looms on which we weave our concepts. In other words, he reproached himself for having left the physical senses and his perceptions out of his critical analysis.

Exhausted the resources of the time in which his books were sold in numbers of five or six digits and were translated in dozens of languages, which allowed him to be a generous host in his house of Ocotepec as in the houses that lent him or that he rented in several university cities, Ivan Illich decided to subsist as an itinerant philosopher, beggar drinking from the generous breasts of alma mater, pilgrim or wandering Jew, as defined alternately. He knew that several universities would emanate collaborative offers, but before accepting any, he established the conditions under which he would consider them:

8. A linguist friend from Iván Illich registered some of the changes that affected the common language after popularizing concepts of cybernetics and systems analysis. Watch Uwe Poerksen, Plastic Words. The Tyranny of a Modular Language, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995 (1988).

- *He was not going to submit his students to exams or formally grade them.*
- *I would not give more than one seminar afternoon per week, preferably on Fridays.*
- *I would not teach in a private university more than half a semester a year.*

The first offer came from the University of Cassel, in Germany, the Gesammthochschule, whose rector, Ernst Ulrich von Weizsaecker, invited him twice to give a six-week seminar. In the early 1980s, he signed a contract with the STS (Science-Technology-Society) department of the Physics Faculty of the Pennsylvania State University that he served until the day of his death, on December 2, 2002.

The other side of these contracts with large universities, which allowed him to maintain a table to which he invited his friends, was what he called his "university subversion project" which summed up this way: "swing your center of gravity Classrooms in classrooms located in private homes with a kitchenette to prepare spaghetti, a decent wine reserve and located near a good library (in the case of PennState, the Pattie library, now Joe Paterno).

During his first seminars at PennState, Illich guided the debate about what he had missed in his theses of the 1970s about the counter-productivity of service institutions. A group of colleagues or study friends formed around him. For five years, Illich was able to offer a small scholarship to those who helped him keep his table open, organize seminars, launch invitations and carry out his own investigations.

The texts presented in these two notebooks of Impulsa magazine are mostly

examples of my work from those years. The project of exploring the "axioms" that based our "social theorems" interested me greatly. I had spent the early 1960s as a cartoonist by day and a student of urban planning at night in the city of Amsterdam, where I modestly got involved in a project of "subversion of urbanism" that sought to re-found it on the power of the feet and less on the engine power. In the 1980s, my contribution to the questioning of the "axioms that support our social theorems" was partly a revitalization of my questions of the 1960s. In those years, the "theorems" of urbanism were all centered on vehicles motor. The underlying "axiom" seemed to me to be that, in matters of circulation, heteronomy - or submission to the rule dictated by another - should prevail over autonomy, in this case the use of the strength of one's feet. In *Energy and Equity*[9] Illich had proposed to impose an upper limit of 25 km/h at the speed of all forms of transportation of people. In the 1970s, my study of specialized literature-the Transport Studies -revealed to me that, in a mega-city equipped with a subway - such as Mexico, Paris, New York or London - the average speed over the day ranges around 15 km/h. What urban planners achieve in those cities is to accelerate the privileged - the "capitalists of speed" - forcing others to slow. The "speed" of urban circulation does not save social time, but promotes privilege transfers from the poor to the rich.

Issues 19 and 20 of Impulsa magazine offer a series of 18 essays that all touch, near or far, the aggregates of percepts and of concepts

9. See Iván Illich , Energy and Equity , in Complete Works , Mexico: Fondo de Cultura, México 2006, Vol. 1.

that constitute the uncertainties certainties - the axioms as Illich called them metaphorically - with which the social theorems of late modernity are constructed. We divide them into four sections.

*I. The "axioms" underlying contemporary theories of architecture.*

Remembering that, for several years, I had practiced architecture in Switzerland and the Netherlands, I considered it convenient to start this collection of essays with some questions about this profession, the theories it generates and the postulates underlying these theories. Does the architect make his clients freer or makes them slaves of his design? I noted that many architectural theorists do not usually promote familiarity spheres by encouraging the autonomy of the inhabitants, but, on the contrary, they set off the familiarization - the feeling of strangeness - in principle-guide of the design of houses whose inhabitants have little power to make them their own (4 articles, all referring to "autonomy and heteronomy in architecture").

*II. The **place** in the **space** age*

The articles of my authorship gathered in issue 19 of Impulsa magazine bear witness to my own search for the certainties that are the foundations of our social theorems. Let us remember that axioms or postulates are propositions that cannot be proven but that can be used to prove theorems. The most famous case is the fifth postulate of Éuclides on the parallel ones: by a point outside an straight line, a parallel one can be drawn and only one to this straight line. For

more than 2000 years, many tried in vain to prove this proposition, until, as of the beginning of the 19th century, several mathematicians established that an axiom like the postulate of parallels cannot be demonstrated, but can be falsified, denied, contradicted In 1829, Nikolay Lobachevsky enunciated a postulate that falsified the fifth postulate of Éuclides: *" by an external point to a line an infinity of parallels to this line can be drawn"* , thus launching the non-Euclidean geometries whose theorems are verified in a geometry different from that of Éuclides and is therefore qualified as non-Euclidean geometry . Lobachevsky wanted to question Kant's idea that space and time are a priori of the perception of reality. For him, they are a posteriori: he showed that different postulates or geometric axioms generate different spaces.

The best known case of an axiom in rupture with Euclidean geometry is that of Bernard Riemann: *"For a point outside a line, no parallel to it can be drawn".* It is the best known why it engendered the non-Euclidean space that served as a framework for Einstein's theory of general relativity. This section contains essays that speak of the emergence of the concept of abstract space in a world of concrete, sensual and haptic places or of their survival in a world dominated by space.

Before concluding the contest between the concrete places and the abstract space, I have allowed myself a short detour for the perception of the "here" of the ancient Greeks, who had a concept of place (moles), but lacked a concept of abstract space, if there is an exception to a brilliant intuition of Plato in Timaeus (the idea of chôra) (7 articles).

*III. Energy: a concept that escaped from laboratories and invaded common language.*

In the early 1980s, I spent a winter on the cold veranda of the Institute of Physics at the University of Marburg, in Germany, exploring in some way the "wastebaskets" of this science. Books that were no longer part of the physics curriculum had been deposited on the shelves of this veranda. Many were so eaten away by moisture, fungi and worms that they were under an interdiction of photocopying them, so I copied by hand some traces of physics that engendered the concept of energy and that, however, today, it is no longer official physics. Among the discarded physicists of the nineteenth century, I was particularly interested in the fascin "hertzian" waves. Excellent Hellenist, artist, humanist, Hertz thought to devote himself to the humanities. It was the "Bismark of Physics," Hermann von Helmholz, who convinced him to study physics with him. A dozen years before Einstein took this role, Hertz was something like the "child prodigy of physics." However, shortly before he died of appendicitis at 37, Hertz embarked - as he wrote to his mother - on a project that could have ruined his "not-so-bad reputation": he wanted to reformulate the fundamental principles of mechanics without introduce in them the concept of energy. In other words, he wanted to expurge the physics of energy, at least as a fundamental concept.

In 1982 in Berkeley, Ivan Illich wrote an essay entitled "The social construction of energy." The argument was of a linguistic order: when a physicist refers to energy, he usually designates it by a symbol, and, which has a pure denotation, something like "the integral by the path of a force." On the other hand, the popular word "energy" evokes abundant but scarce things, that is, of which

there is much, but never sufficiency. Such a word is destructive of all sense of sufficiency (I have my share and I don't want more). In my own research on the history of the concept of energy, I used the distinction between denotation and connotation that is the basis of Illich's study.

The case of transport illustrates the functioning of the word "energy" in conversations and newspaper articles: gasoline is something abundant of which there is never enough. The demand for gasoline grows as more road axes, more second floors and more payment routes are built. In large cities, the result of all these speed improvement measures is an average of approximately 15 km/h, in a zero-sum game in which the time that makes me win the speed is no more than the other side of the time I waste other road users (2 items).

Two concepts are particularly important to understand the mutation of natural forces into a concept that transforms them into a scarce good, that is to say economic and the transformation of the sense of being here, where my feet step on the ground, in an abstract, hegemonic and devoid of soil: I speak of the concept of energy and the concept of space.

## Recovering A Sense of Place (2001)

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

***Jean Robert***

Though shadow-less space overwhelms me, I still dwell among traces of lost boundaries.

My flesh—the flesh of my "lived body"—still does not coincide with the charts of anatomy. Though a light imperative soaks the epoch, I cherish shadow.

The tracing of a bounding circle is the first act of founding a place to dwell. A "place" is not a portion of "space" enclosed by an arbitrary frontier. A place is "where it began" (cf Greek archein). It is a local, peculiar and unique union of landmarks and skymarks. I live among the traces of broken boundaries. Can I still trace boundaries?

## Place in the Space Age[10] (2001)

*Jean Robert*

We were lying deep in the macchia, by the time you crept at us last. But we could nor darken over to you, light compulsion reigned [11].

To my ear, the title, "Place in the Space Age," has the same ominous ring as this excerpt from a poem by Paul Celan. We groped for obscurity, but we were struck by light. A light that does not admit its contrary would be unbearable. The very idea of day without a night, of a sun without moon and stars, of light without shadow, makes me shiver and painfully reminds me of the vulnerability of my inwards: such must be the light of the dissecting room. But I feel that the Lichtzwang,

10. This paper was originally shared at host Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown's Oakland Table, June 23, 2001.
11. Hamburger, Michael, ed. and transl., Paul Celan. Poems, New York: Persea, 1980, p. 235. German original on p. 234: Wir lagen / schon tief in der Macchia, als du / endlich herankrochst./ Doch konnten wir nicht / hinüberdunkeln zu dir, / es herrschte Lichtzwang.

the light compulsion of which Celan speaks is still more frightful. Against it, the dragon of the Book of Revelation is a naive metaphor for an unspeakable horror. The dragon hit the stars with its tail and turned them off. I feel that, to understand Celan's intuition, the apocalyptic image must be exactly reversed. The poet speaks of the extinction, not of light, but of darkness. As if the carrier of a merciless, global light would now threaten to erase all zones of shadow, all shades that protect tender, local existence.

I wrote this essay in the conviction that space has become the carrier of a conceptual light that exposes the hidden and the not yet, equalizes the interior and the exterior, and penetrates every nook of my home and my heart. It ends with a question: Where shall my friends and I find the courage to make our places in the age of space?

I have to confess that I have been a believer in a strange natural religion that doesn't worship Ge, Ra, Helios, Tonatiuh or Ouranos, the earth, the sun or the sky, or any of the elements, but space itself, as if it were the primordial element. The brand of believers in the religion that seeks ex- stasis—literally: a stand outside of any concrete inside—in space are called architects, or at least were they called so in my days. They designed houses as if seen from a distant shore; they built them as enclosures for universal beings that would maintain particulars at bay; they eliminated as vain ornaments all what was not as universal as space itself. They did not satisfy the desires of concrete persons, but the needs of human beings, as one of them, Le Corbusier said, "the same everywhere and in all times." They first reduced persons to the role of clients, the subjects of needs, and thought that this reductio ad absurdum exhibited Man's true primary relation to the world. Like the paintings of Mondrian, the

architects' pet painter, their designs eventually captured, beyond all accidents and singularities, the ideietic plastic powers of pure space. This caused them, again in Le Corbusier's words, "so intense an emotion that it could be called unspeakable," a state that, for him, was one of the roads to happiness. Can one say more clearly that, for this and other oracles and their Pythons, being muted by space was a religious experience?

Some of the space-struck guardians of the masters' teachings became in their turn my masters.[12] I was initiated in the sixties, at the "Sektion Eins" of Zurich's Federal Polytechnical Institute, the ETH. To tell you how the initiation process began, let me report on one of the first exercises. Provided with plans of a building by one of the Great Masters (beside the superstars F.L.)

Wright and Le Corbusier, these included Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, Walter Gropius, Max Breuer, Gerrit Rietveld and a handful more, down to the more local Max Bill), future initiates had to construct a hardwood reverse model of it. A reverse model is the three-dimensional equivalent of a photographic negative, an object in which the void appears as full and the full as void. This exercise and others of the kind had been devised in one of the highlands of Modern Architecture, the Bauhaus. All such exercises were meant to teach neophytes that space, and only space, was the substance that they had to learn to

12. Tom Wolfe, a non-architect but a talented ironist has made fun of these defenders of the sacred oracles and their claim to infallibility, calling their guardians or "Pythons" the compound, so I will try to spare offended susceptibilities. Wolfe, Tom, From Bauhaus to our House, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1982.

knead. Later, much later, meditating on that dissolution of matter and materialization of nothingness helped me understand why some architects of that tradition could not only feel at ease in American balloon-frame architecture, but even praise its material vacuity in their books! [13] Obviously, it is the closest thing to pure, immaterial space that the history of architecture can offer. However, I was not long to be intrigued by another recurrent question that no master could ever answer: why do certain clients of the architects develop such a genuine and profound hate for the space they had purchased, sometimes at rocketing monetary costs? [14]

As a common man, I was repeatedly confronted with situations that questioned my teachers' space worship and made me see again matter as full, and void as empty. I spent part of the years 1963 and 1964 in Amsterdam, as a draftsman in an architectural firm. Something remarkable, sad but strangely joyful happened. There were almost no cars in the city in those years, a "backwardness" for which Mayor van Hall felt ashamed in front of his European colleagues. He and the municipal council behind him (he had been a hero of the Dutch Resistance) wanted to catch up with Essen, Frankfurt or Milan: build roads to irrigate the city with vehicular traffic, a sign of economic development. This impending threat gave Amsterdam an atmosphere of delicate vulnerability, a quality that it was about to lose forever. I

13. Tschumi, Bernard, Architecture and Disjunction, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1997.
14. A particularly sad example is the depression and near bankrupcy suffered by Edith Farnsworth's, Mies van der Rohe's first American client, after she moved into her piece of pure space. Alice T. Friedman, "Domestic Differences: Edith Farnsworth, Mies van der Rohe, and the Gendered Body," in Christopher Reed, Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, pp. 179-192.

have not ceased to meditate about that awareness of an imminent loss, of something unique that would soon be gone forever, which pervaded the city during the hot summer of 1964. My colleague Hajo van Wering took me for nostalgic walks after work. One evening, he would lead me under a bridge from where we could catch a glimpse of the encounter of quiet pedestrian life with water, stone and sky that must have inspired Ruisdael. The next day, he had me climb on a church steeple to see how deftly the bell player hit the keys and hear how the crystalline music fell on a city still free from the racket of motorized traffic. It is Hajo who told me about the name by which very old families still refer among each other to their beloved city—Mokum, a corruption of the Hebrew word makkom, meaning a place where God has spoken His word, or a refuge for threatened folks.

In a joyful atmosphere of precarity, young people began to make things happen in the streets. One group called themselves Provo and wanted to provoke the municipal authorities into avowing their anti-pedestrian bias. To demonstrate the uselessness of cars, they put free, public bicycles in all street corners and were arrested for this. Another group compared Amsterdam with an apple and asked people to gather at its center. Several centers came into being through the ensuing gatherings. Alas, that popular resistance was crushed by Progress' war against people's commons, and Amsterdam ceased to be a makkom for pedestrians. I felt as if I were becoming schizophrenic. While I was initiated as a believer to the ecstatic powers of space, I was also increasingly seduced by the delight of streets, by smelly, shadowy, vibrant and, as I had just discovered, vulnerable street life. Full it

was, but not of the hardwood fullness of the reverse model. And what should I think of car traffic, after what I had lived through? Was it not the unavoidable corruption of "unspeakable space"? New questions assailed me: What is there in architecture that destroys streets? What is there in space that destroys places?

I finished my initiation and became one of them: an architect. Most of the places I had to make unspeakable can still be visited in the Swiss-French city of Neuchâtel, and the street that fell victim to my art is called Rue des Épancheurs: a mono-functional bank now stands where there had been the diversity of unspoken relations of mutual support among close neighbors. But I had given myself a limit. If I had not solved my riddle in two or three years, I would do something, perhaps take a trip.

I landed in Mexico in 1972. I rediscovered matter in the form of Mexican adobe, the unburnt, sundried brick of clay and straw. I was especially delighted to discover that, in the best adobe, the "straw" comes as donkey droppings. Lo, I first took adobes for primitive bricks! Self-made they were, but also more repair-intensive than the ones burnt in an oven until they turn red; unwieldy and heavier than hollow cement blocks, cheaper but less durable. It took me long to free myself from the reverse model. On one occasion, I dematerialized them into something—a space? —unspeakable for my neighbors' solid common sense. Well, I made an architect's house out of them. Su casa, mi casa.

It took me some time to grasp that these frail, irregular elements of

most Mexican village houses wanted to engender a kind of place of which no one had talked to me at the ETH in Zurich. When I touch the walls of my house I still feel the oozing of their lament, but now, I try to listen. I came to realize that it was a violence, almost a rape, to use adobe to generate space.

The whimpering adobes made me sensitive to the abuse of the word "politics," "city-" and even "community-building" when these activities transfer the merciless light of global space into people's places. I spent some time in libraries with my questions in mind and soon discovered that the belief in space is not only the myth of architects and city-planners. It has become the endemic superstition of the most modern, rational persons, one of the sueños de la razón that generate monsters of which Goya spoke.

I welcome this unique opportunity to come to terms with an old but rarely bespoken dilemma and to do it publicly. Perhaps it may help pose a new question: what happens to politics when and where space is prevalent?

## The Historicity of a Modern Certainty

Space is a historical critter. "One hundred years after Newton, space was taken for an a priori, while, one hundred years before him, nobody had known it." If these words of the German physicist and philosopher Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker[15] are true, Kant was wrong: space is not a universal a priori. It is not something evident that was present everywhere from the beginning.

Euclid did geometry without knowing space [16].

15. Quoted in Kvasz, Ladislav, "Was bedeutet es, ein geometrisches Bild zu verstehen?," in Dagmar Reichert, ed., Räumliches Denken, Zürich: Hochschlverlag AG an der ETH, 1996, p. 95.
16. Euclidean geometry is about the properties of figures traced on a surface, not about that surface or any other constructed space. Since Euclid did not know space, it is an anachronism to speak of Euclidean "space." Space is "retro-projected" into Euclid's geometry by stating, first that, in this geometry, the shapes of figures remain constant under motion and, second, that any "space" in which the shapes and functions of objects remain constant under motion is "Euclidean." For an example of this use of the term "Euclidean space," see Heelan, Patrick, Space-Perception and the Philosophy of Science, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, especially p. 41.

Weizsäcker's claim is startling. Here is a professional physicist who tries to convince us that before the birth of modern physics, a certain event took place and that event is nothing less than the birth of space! Expressed in a less dramatic and more technical fashion, he argues that space is a historical construct; he defends the thesis of the historicity of space.

However surprising it might sound, space, strictly speaking a perfectly homogeneous nothing, is a historical construction. As all historical constructs, it had a beginning and it might soon reach its end. These, at least, are the ideas that I propose to explore in this essay. But my arguments in favor of the historicity of space will also lead me to ask three lancing questions about the space- dominated society we have lived and still for a great part live in:

1) I want to understand how the notion of homogeneous space became a crucial element to develop modern management as it is taken for granted in technological society.
2) I will ask how the belief in "space" as an a priori of all perceptions has affected the much older notion of "place." A citizen's "home" meant the place beyond the threshold of which the commons started. Home stood to commons in a qualitative relationship that vanished when the threshold was reduced to a mere boundary that separates two domains of the very same "space."
3) Further, I want to recognize in which way the formal, abstract a priori of space affected the ethical and political perception of place as the outcome of reciprocal recognition and mutual devotion; as

the atmosphere people create when they dwell together in a spirit of hospitality.

These questions are generally met with stubborn resistance by most people who have spent more time sitting in schools, in traffic jams or behind computers than talking to their neighbor. They have learned to think of space as the ultimate enclosure. For them, existence is a routine in planned spaces and freedom is an unlimited expansion of these spheres. In 2001, when a computer freak says "space," he might well mean the multilayered container of hypertext in electronic nowhere. But for most alphabetized commoners, space still means *background space,*[17] the universal background of all particular existence, separate from them and yet ever-present in and behind them, somehow like the blank page behind the letters. What they call "space" has become so much part of the mental machinery that informs their perceptions that they lack the necessary distance to question it.

17. Schild-Bunim, Miriam, Space in Medieval Painting and the Forerunners of Perspective, New York, 1940. Modern background space—the mental machinery behind every painted scene—was absent from antique and medieval paintings. Even the Pompeyi painters, who knew various sophisticated techniques to evoke depth and farness, ignored it. These techniques, thus, are not antecedents of perspective. The words "absent" and "ignore" should not suggest that premodern painters did not know something that was discovered later. They rather adhered to their world in a radically different manner than modern men do. To this, Veyne, Paul, "The Roman Empire," in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, History of Private Life, vol. 1, states that no man could glare at the naked background behind the scenes that he was inhabiting, for there was no background. Bochner, Salomon, "Space," in Dictionary of the History of Ideas, New York: Charles Scribener's Sons, 1973, v.5, pp. 294-306 analyzes several ancient words for "place," "divinely protected place," "openness," "cleared land," "void," "freedom of movement," "absence of limits and hence of form" and concludes that classical premodern languages have an abundance of terms to designate "placeness" and "breaking away from a place," but none for what we call "space."

## A Historical Critter...That Might Come To An End

As I already suggested, the realization that space is historical implies that it had a beginning and therefore might now approach its demise. This idea would hardly have upset people a generation ago. It would just have seemed ludicrous to those who had labored at high school math and abstruse to those who commuted between home and work. By the twentieth century, the reality of Cartesian, three-dimensional space within which all movement happens had become a "given." This made it impossible to recognize space as an epochal critter.

However, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the innocent certainties about everything's enclosure, or, as Foucault would say, renfermement in space, is no longer as absolute as it was at the time of Sputnik. Since then, the status of space as a natural given has started to become questionable. Doubts have arisen from two sides. On the

one hand, the transition from instrumental to informational techniques, from the government of people to the management of populations has weakened the intuitive certainties supporting "modernity." On the other hand, historians have assembled much evidence for the thesis that abstract, a priori space only became part of popular wisdom long after Newton's time. This two-pronged threat to the belief that space is the natural box that contains all that exists can either invite me to a new liberty or strengthen a new tyranny.

It can free you from the naive dream that space can be made inhabitable—that is, that women and men can found their dwelling in planned space—and make it easier to stress the perversity of any nostalgia for a comforting cage. But it can also make me crash into a virtual "space" in which the far and the close, the center and the periphery, the self and the other, collapse into a wired erehwon in real time.

The "something" still called "space" has no tactile qualities, no orientation, no smell, no taste, no memories. It is immune to the colors or shadows, the rhythms and sounds of anything immersed in it, while it strips both things and persons that it encloses of their aura. Yet, I attempt to persuade you that this no-thing is a social construct that characterizes a period of history—modernity—a period that I propose to dub "the space age." The space age is the epoch in which the Cartesian coordinates of mathematics and physics have become the ultimate beyond of all reality. It is the period of history in which schools and highways have induced most people to reduce the world's inexhaustible perceptual richness to a system of measurements of relative distances [18].

18. Poincaré, Henri, La Sience et L'hypothèse, Paris, 1968, pp. 77-94. At the dawn of the 20th Century, this mathematician and physicist expressed his conviction that the "Euclidean" (or better: Cartesian) space of classical mathematics and physics is not identical with the "spaces" of our perceptions. Cartesian space is a highly artificial construct.

Let's summarize: space that Kant took for an a priori of perception, is a relatively recent mental construct. That means that there is a "before" and an "after" its invention. The invention of space is perhaps one of the great watersheds of history: modern men cannot recover the perceptual modes of the men who lived before that invention, nor could these possibly understand the vision of the generations who came after. How deeply strange our space age is to the premodern mentality is manifest in the visceral rejection of its enclosures by people recently engulfed by it. For instance, a Mexican peasant's confidence that any object that has touched the soil is free to be taken as a commons, often survives long after he has become a mason in the capital; hence the so frowned upon custom of many urban migrants to let whatever they no longer need fall to the ground to be picked up by others. Finally, for the modern mind, universal background space is the non- transcendent beyond of all reality.

## Disciplined Agnosticism and Asceticism

To pursue this inquiry into a modern certainty, I had to practice a discipline that I name space agnosticism. By this term, I mean an ascetical effort to disentangle myself from the aggregate of notions and perceptions foisted by the enclosure of all realities into the homogeneous space of science and management. In a world of highways, airports, educational precincts and penitentiary wards, this enclosure is technogenic—either generated or enforced by technology. It is why the practice of agnosticism among the certainties of the space age calls for an asceticism with its technologies. While I cannot abstain from being involved with motorized wheels that numb my feet, with wires that cancel distance, with TV that looks everywhere from nowhere, I still can cultivate a skeptical attitude and resist becoming their slave.

I am by far not the only doubter, but it has become necessary to distinguish doubters from one another. Indeed, space skeptics are of two kinds. On the one

side, the irreflexive net-surfers, science fiction addicts, New Age mystics and system managers wired to virtual reality have abjured the space age without even being aware of it. On the other side, those whose skeptical view on space is rooted in historical study have been my guides.

Patrick Heelan, a philosopher and a physicist is one of them. According to him, the still dominant concept of the twentieth century, space, is a product of technological mediation and visual education.[19] He argues that great painters like van Gogh and Cézanne have understood that nobody naturally sees in the space of linear perspective, but rather in a strange geometry that "curves" all straight lines and is perhaps non-Euclidean.[20] Heelan also explains why space agnostics are so few: educated modern man fiercely resists the revelation of the arbitrariness of his certainties.

The philosopher of science Yehuda Elkana claims that every form of thought is "space specific", e.g. that it is determined by the kind of "box" within which it was generated.[21] He examines how different spaces—the lab, the emergency ward, a museum, a cinematographic studio—generate characteristic forms of knowledge and he understands that these spaces all stem from the same "universal and context-free institutional assumptions," which, for him, ought to be the main theme of research into the illusory obviousness of space.

19. Heelan, Patrick, A., Space Perception and the Philosophy of Science, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. The visual space is not Euclidean. It is rather "hyperbolic" or "Lobachevskyan." But, what is Euclidean space if Euclid knew no space but figures?

20. Contrary to what happens in Euclidean geometry, motion (and changes of size) in non-Euclidean space affects the shape of figures. According to Heelan, the visual space is such. See Heelan, Space-Perceptions..., op. cit., pp. 41, 57-77, 98-128, 281-319.

21. He is the chief editor of Science in Context, and has dedicated a whole issue of this journal to this idea: 1991, Vol. 4.1, "The Place of Knowledge: The Special Setting and Its Relation to the Production of Knowledge." See also Sennett, Richard, Flesh and Stone, New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1994, and "Something in the City: The Spectre of Uselessness and The Search for a Place in the World," in Times Literary Supplement, 22, September 1995, pp. 13 - 15. Modern institutional spaces delete the flesh of experience. They are not inhabitable places.

However, Elkana seems unaware of the fact that any space planned for a modern professional institution, be it medicine, education, government or social service is radically heterogeneous to any place created by the very act of inhabiting it. For instance, he is insensitive to the radical difference between a monk's cell and a lab. The first is a place engendered by daily gestures fitting a community rule, while the second is a technogenic space needing professional control. In contrast to most modern precincts, the monastic cell, the guild chapel and the little red school-house are eminent examples of places that owe their existence and atmosphere to the stance and relation of persons.

Space agnosticism takes still another form with Ladislav Kvasz.[22] For this mathematician, physicist and epistemologist, space is inseparable from the concept of "projective equivalence." Imagine that, sitting at your table at night, you observe a cup and its shadow under your lamp's light. As you near your eye to the source of light, the shapes of the cup and of its shadow tend to overlap. If you could see them from the exact point occupied by the lamp, their overlapping would be perfect: the cup and its shadow would then be projectively equivalent. In general, two figures are said to be projectively equivalent if there is any point from which they can be seen to overlap. This point is called the "center of the projection." Its construction, Kvasz argues, always defines a special subjectivity. For instance, if one of these figures is a real object and the other a drawing on a surface, the center is the eye of a Renaissance painter practicing linear perspective. From this subjective vantage point, Renaissance painters constructed an ideal space in which they computed point by point the projection of real objects and then pretended

22. Kvasz, Ladislav, "Was bedeutet es, ein geometrisches Bild zu verstehen?," in Dagmar Reichert, ed., Räumliches Denken Zürich: Hochschlverlag AG an der ETH, 1996, p. 95-123.

that what they had drawn was what their eye had really seen. This is how linear perspective could become the paradigm of the visual representation of reality and even of objective observation for centuries. It inaugurated a thought style for which only what could be compressed into a constructed space was real. According to Kvasz, all further applications of the principle of projective equivalence are examples of the diversity of mental boxes in which space can enclose reality. He comments on Gérard Desargues's projective geometry, Lobatchevsky's non-Euclidean geometry and then the way Beltramy, Cayley and Klein successively verified it in projectively equivalent Euclidean surfaces. For Kvasz, every one of these conceptual feats bears the seal of an epochal form of subjectivity.

The Dutch philosopher Jan Hendrik van den Berg, creator of a radical form of phenomenology that he calls "metabletics,"[23] the doctrine of changes, is interested in the form of subjectivity that, he suspects, accompanies every kind of space. Since the same specific subjectivity informs an epoch's construction of space (if there is one!), the style of its architecture and the kind of illness that people suffer (sic), broad connections can be traced between these apparently separate realms. So, van den Berg sees a correlation between the demise, starting in the eighteenth century, of the inside-outside relationship that was typical of the Baroque style in architecture, the emergence of non-Euclidean geometries,[24] and, at (about) the same time, the first clinical description of a neurosis under the name, "the English malady."

23. van den Berg, Jan Hendrik, Metabletica of de leer der veranderingen, Nijkerk, Netherland: Callenbach, 1974 (1956).
24. The date of the first publication on non-Euclidean geometry is 1829. It was a work in Russian by Nikolay Ivanovich Lobachevsky, followed in 1837 by a work in French ("Géométrie imaginaire") and, in 1840, by a book in German (Geometrische Untersuchungen zur Theorie der Parallellinien). Lobatchvsky was rector of the University of Kazan. His ideas were rooted in his opposition to Kant, who maintained that such ideas as "space" and "time" are a priori. For Lobachevsky, space was an a posteriori concept. He thought that he could evidence it by demonstrating that different axioms can generate different spaces.

Catherine Pickstock, a theologian, approaches the modern obsession with space from a completely different side. She interprets it as equivalent to the sophistry that Socrates denounced in the Phaedrus.[25] While they were walking along the river Ilissus, outside of Athens, young Phaedrus pretended to entertain Socrates with a discourse on love that he had learned by memory from a scroll. Socrates teased him into confessing his sham and had him read instead of feigning to converse. Then Socrates improvised two discourses, one that mocked the Sophists who reduced speech to an equivalent of written language and another, genuinely spoken, that celebrated the logos as an analogy of love. Contrary to the first, the oral discourse of Socrates established a concrete relation with Phaedrus and also with a well in which they bathed their feet, the nymph that inhabited that well and the season's perfumes.

In 1574, in the introduction to his Logike, Peter Ramus [26] wrote that his "lytle booke" was to be more profitable to the reader than all the years spent studying Plato. What he proposed was a "calculus of reality" in which all topics were divided in successive and ordered stages, beginning with the most general and progressing towards the more particular. These stages were mental boxes that immobilized objects in their definitions and excluded the comprehension of knowledge "as an event which arrives." [27] According to Pickstock, Ramus's calculus of reality is the subjection of logic to spatial thinking. Space, she points out, has become a pseudo-eternity which, unlike genuine eternity, is fully comprehensive to the human gaze, and yet supposedly secure from the ravages of time. Without genuine transcendence, space must be absolute. This absolute is also the result of an attempt to bypass human temporality and subjectivity, and yet, it generates its own phony time and subjectivity. "Sophistic

25. Pickstock, Catherine, After Writing. On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.
26. Ramus, Peter, Logike, Leeds: The Scholar Press, 1966 (1574).
27. Pickstock, Catherine, After Writing..., op. cit., p. 51.

spatialization" propagates the illusion of an unmediated apprehension of facts and has, as such, become normative in science and, above all, in its vulgarizations. The mechanical manipulations made possible in Cartesian space provide modern man with an all too seductive facility. If he takes this facility for "the real," he is led to imagine that the ease and predictability of operations within that artificial sphere exhibit his true, primary relationship to the world. Every one of these space agnostics focuses on a certain aspect of the historicity of space. Space, for Heelan, is a product of visual education and technology. Once constituted, according to Elkana, it confines people into mental crates whose remarkable differences mask the fact that no matter how diverse the rules governing their construction, they are boxes that box them in.

This form of enclosure leads to the spatialization of thought: according to Kvasz nothing that remains unenclosed is considered real. Since space includes the self, the distinction between interiority and the exterior collapses. In the analysis of van den Berg, through this collapse, a new form of subjectivity comes into being, a subjectivity that knows no interiority, that is "soulless." Finally, Pickstock claims that space functions as a pseudo-eternity: to people uprooted from soil and place, it provides the phony insurance that something will remain when everything else has passed away. Seen by these authors, the invention of space seems to be concomitant with the birth of the modern sense of the self and its relation to the other. But they say little about the steps of this invention.

## *An Idea and Its Proto-ideas*

The origin of modern scientific concepts often loses itself in a magma of non-scientific ideas that some philosophers of science call proto-ideas. The task of tracing phylogenetic lines of the concepts back to their sundry proto-ideas is often an exercise in inspired guesswork. For example, Ludwik Fleck sees a proto-idea of the Wassermann reaction (a blood test invented in 1906 to diagnose syphilis in the lab) in the premodern belief that the "carnal scourge" was a corruption of the blood.[28] I confess that I have sometimes dreamt of searching history for proto-ideas of space and I present here some of my guesses. In the best case, every one of my findings summarizes a specific aspect of the improbable assemblage that was to become space.

Focusing on special things looking forward, the body protected or hidden, as in a cave or a bush, might be the hunter's prototypical posture. Selecting a field of vision in which something special is expected to surge reenacts, in a way, the hunter's directed gaze.[29] When this act is performed by a person sitting in a chair in front of a page, as I am in this moment, it is sometimes called "research."

28. Fleck, Ludwik, The Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1935].
29. Wartofsky, Max, "Sight, Symbol and Society: Towards a History of Visual Perception," in Annual Proceedings of the Center for Philosophic Exchange (SUNY) 3(1981):23-38. "One may argue that seeing things in front of one is hardly a cultural or historical phenomenon, since binocular vision throughout the vertebrate kingdom is in the main forward-looking. That is true. But the visual posture which is culturally and historically derived from this biological constraint is the unnatural one of watching from a fixed position. [...] The determination of a scene as a frame visual plane becomes a dominant object of visual activity only with the historical introduction of pictorial and theatrical representation in a certain form. Moreover, I would suggest that the introduction of drawing and painting on a surface, i.e. a two-dimensional representation, is a radical means of transforming human vision into the pictoralized mode. For what becomes the object of vision is then what appears as if on a picture plane: the world comes to be seen as picture-like; and the variation of pictorial styles then acquires a general purchase on the shaping of visual perception." (p. 34).

Comparable to the protection of the body's rear part, but laden with its original symbols, is the act of looking through a window.[30] Another proto-idea of space might be the capacity to describe a territory without acknowledging any contiguity between a "there" and the describer's "here." In other words, map-making must entail an essential aspect of the space idea. While pondering this, remember that Roman and medieval "cartographers" did not draw maps in the modern sense, but itineraries. [31] Itineraries speak of successive steps on lines of contiguities and not of the surface of territories represented as seen from above.

Among the Antique proto-ideas of space, the horizon deserves a special mention. Though it designates an individual's subjective view of the limits of her field of vision, it has its origin in the local and communitary perception of the "world's limits." These limits defined, inside, a homogeneous realm of familiarity, the domain of a "we," while whatever lay beyond or outside them was in a way or another considered taboo Koschorke[32] has shown how the subjective notion of a limit of the visual field that moves at the walker's pace resulted from the progressive disembedding of people from their native boundaries. According to L. and R. Kriss-Rettenbeck and I. Illich, [33] it was a call

30. Horn, Hans-Jürgen, "Rescipiens per fenestras, propisciens per cancellos. Zur Typologie des Fensters in der Antike," in Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 10, 1967, pp. 30-60.

31 An itinerary or itinerarium is a description of the relevant features of the road between here and there with indications of the time it takes a walker to go from one to the following. Itineraria have no "depths," they do not attempt to represent a territory. The best known Roman itineraria were the itineraria Antonini and the itinerarium Alexandri. The Peutinger table is a 13th Century copy of a lost Roman map.
ogar 'Weltkarten' waren für die Römer Wegeverzeichnisse. Keine originale römische 'Weltkarte' wurde erhalten. Es existiert aber eine Kopie aus dem 13. Jh. von einer solchen 'Weltkarte" nl. die Peutingersche Tafel. The first Christian itineraries such the Itinerarium Burdigalense and the Itinerarium Hierosolymitanum gave pilgrims indications over the successive stages of the roads to the Holy Land. See Grosjean, Georges und Kinauer, Rudolf, Kartenkunst und Kartentechnik vom Altertum bis zum Barok, Bern, Stuttgart: Verlag Hallwag, 1970.

32. Named after the Greek verb horizeo, I separate, I divide, recalling the crest of the mountains that separates the small world of our valley from the others, the horizon was originally a world limit. Koschorke, Albrecht, Die Geschichte des Horizonts. Grenze und Grenzüberschreitung in literarischen Landschaftsbildern, Munich: Suhrkamp, 1990.

33. Kriss-Rettenbeck, Lenz and Ruth, and Illich, Ivan, "Homo Viator: Ideen und Wirklichkeit," in Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck and Gerda Möhler, eds., Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen, Munich, Zurich, 1984, p. 10-22.

to the experience of "spatial heterogeneity"—a lived contingency in God's hand that launched the great medieval pilgrimage movement—and contributed to make the subjective experience of limits, walking with the walker, everybody's experience. For some space agnostics, the invention of linear perspective is the true birth of space.

According to Koschorke, perspectivist space was engendered at the end of the fourteenth century by the introduction of the horizon into the womb of Renaissance painting in Northern Italy.[34] The pictorial "horizon," however, was no longer the crest of the mountains or the bottom of the heavenly vault but the abstract line of the points at which the viewer's eye would meet his feet, were he to reach them, an impossible feat. In other words, the horizon was now the mathematical construction of the infinite on a finite surface.

In the twelfth century, words on parchment had started to be separated by clear intervals, an innovation that made silent reading possible. The new hiatus over which the eye had to jump from word to word is perhaps another proto-idea of space. Isn't it thinkable that the hollowing of the density of the written page by these regular gaps opened the way to the idea that the letters are mentally detachable from their material support that now looms between them? In other words, did this technical innovation lead to the later idea that the text and the page are separable? [35] In fact, it did not take scribes very long to detach the now separated words from the rugose and smelly skins that had been their supports for millennia and to transfer them to the more sterile surface of paper pages.

34. Koschorke, Albrecht, Die Geschichte des Horizonts..., op. cit., see also Panofsky, Edwin, Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art, Stockhol: Almqvist and Wiskel, 1960.
35. Illich, Ivan, In the Vineyards of the Text, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993.

However, it took long for the space idea to seep into popular language. Until the time of Shakespeare, "space" was still emphatically a lapse of time. It indicated a reprieve or one more opportunity. It also designated expanse: the openness of ground, sea or sky, or the room still left for you in a crowded place. People lived in a world that God had created by separating Heaven from Earth and Day from Night without needing a box to hold them.

It seems that "space" could not become a universal container until the concentric transparent planetary spheres of Antiquity dissolved into elliptical orbits, routes along which planets moved around the sun and the sun itself became just one more star in a dimensional universe. Space could not become predominant before the harmonic cosmos dissolved into the world system. But then, it took just a few generations for this drab abstract critter to be taken for granted, embellished by poetry and exalted as an attribute of God. Space had become the crate of the world, the supreme enclosure.

## The Ultimate Enclosure and The Propagation of Scarcity

When I think of enclosure, what comes to mind is the enclosure of pastures that turned commons into private space. Or I think of the specialized spaces where children, the sick, and the mad are put to be among themselves. However, all too often, people forget that the replacement of self-governed commons by managed space provides the ultimate rationale for this fundamental aspect of modernity. The enclosure of being itself within space is at issue for us: the historical event in which space came to be conceived as an a priori.

The enclosure movement has alternatively been dubbed a "war against

subsistance,"[36] the "tragedy of the commons,"[37] the "demise of people's moral economy,"[38] or the "social construction of scarcity."[39] All these definitions also apply to the enclosure of all enclosures: space. Space impoverishes local realities up to the point of perceptual starvation; it expropriates people from their common sensual apprehension of the world; it severs the economy (oikonomia = the ruling of a house) from all concrete oikos (house); it contributes to the propagation of scarcity as the prevalent modern experience. Yet, the fact that space is the acquired perceptual deficiency syndrome at the root of the experience of scarcity[40] has still not been publicly recognized.

An important historiographical truth has been overlooked thus far: the invention of space is the other side of a yet untold history. While historians celebrate the successive achievements that made the modern mastery of space (and the control of people by that mastery) possible, another story, one of successive losses, must also be told. Sometimes, when I try to tell this story, I have the impression that a priori space is an endemic disease. It is a strange malady, because those who are infected by it in turn affect reality, render it shallow, cause it to dwindle and fade, make it uninhabitable for themselves and for others. Above all, I get the impression that things and people lose their relatedness to each other and fall apart.

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36. Muchembled, Robert, Culture Populaire et Culture des Élites dans la France Moderne, XVe - XVIIe siècles, Paris, 1978.
37. Polanyi, Karl, The Great Transformation, New York: Rinehart, 1957 [1944]. Hardin, Garrett, Baden John, ed., Managing the Commons, San Francisco: Freeman, 1977.
38. Thompson, E.P., The Making of the English Working Class, New York: Pantheon Books, 1964.
39. Dumouchel, Paul, "L'ambigüité de la rareté," in Paul Dumouchel and Jean-Pierre Dupuy, L'enfer des choses, Paris: Seuil, 1979.
40. That scarcity is the symptomatic modern experience has been argued by: Dumouchel, Paul, "L'ambigüité de la rareté," op. cit. and Achterhuis, Hans, Het rijk van de schaarste. Van Thomas Hobbes tot Michel Foucault, Baarn (Netherland): Ambo, 1988. Nonetheless, none of these authors has seen that the history of scarcity runs parallel, or better, "anastomosically," to the history of space.

## Inquiries into the Obvious

I have started out on an inquiry into something that most of my contemporaries consider much too obvious to be questioned. It has led me to follow the reasoning of half a dozen thinkers especially skeptical of the given, "natural" character generally attributed to space. In doing so, I have untangled some of the steps by which this mental artifact came into existence. Yet, does the acknowledgement of its historicity drive it back into inexistence? In other words, is space agnosticism the belief in the non-existence of space? No, space cannot be wished away any more than scarcity can. Airports, highways, hospitals, educational enclosures, supermarkets, jails, city halls, the radical monopoly of vehicles on urban streets, up to suburban residential areas and their well mown lawns are all outcomes of space management. Planned spaces are scarce by definition. Space, virtually the ultimate field of deployment of the market forces has become "projectively equivalent" with the economy and the viewpoint from which they are seen to overlap is scarcity, the iron law of modernity.

Erewhile, we have looked at several of the possible historical ingredients of the space concept and called them proto-ideas. I invite you now to a diametrically different exercise. The space concept has reorganized aspects[41] of a perception that, in other times and places had been configured in radically different manners. This new organization is so specifically western and modern that

41. Fuchs, Thomas, Die Mechanisierung des Herzens. Harvey und Descartes - Der vitale und der mechanische Aspekt des Kreislaufs, Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1992. Contrary to Kuhnian paradigms and Fleckian thought styles, aspects can be seen as being in or of the things themselves. The multiplicity of possible—and even contemporaneously perceived—aspects is an expression of the perceptual and conceptual inexhaustibility of reality. However, to fully adopt the Fuchsian, "Chinese" view of simultaneous aspects would lead us to a non-linear exposition resembling Ts'ui Pên's endlessly bifurcating novel in Borges, Jorge Luis, "El jardín de caminos que se bifurcan," in Prosa Completa, Barcelona: Bruguera, 1985 (1953), pp. 163-173.

I am almost ready to argue that it is a nutshell for all that is western and modern. I see it as a radically unique way of fragmenting, configuring and monopolizing experiences which in other times had been part of the human condition that is of an essentially localized existence.

Is there a way to name these localized experiences which does not subject them to the monopoly of spatial thinking? And if so, does the chosen name stand for something that can claim some ancestry of space? Or on the contrary, would such a claim be illegitimated because it would cloak the Western specificity of the space concept? Faced by this conundrum, I have decided to give this experience the name, places.

Fully aware of the many dictionary meanings of place, I also know that German Ort, Platz or Fleck, French lieu, endroit or localité, Spanish lugar, sitio, ámbito all have their own, characteristic fields of meaning and that no two overlap. Consequently, I understand that, by using the English word place as I do, I coin a technical term.

The use of an old, meaningful word to designate something which stands in contrast to a new certainty is almost unavoidable when researching the birth of the obvious, especially when these are undertaken on the basis of historical distancing. An example is the adoption of gender, a term that until two or three decades ago had a meaning in grammar and only there. Then, gender started to be used to name a reality that was so much taken for granted that it had needed no name: the fact that there are women and men. Gender has thus been used to stress a historical perception of this fact that is radically different from modern sex. Sex, universal and contagious, is a secondary

characteristic, noticeable as protuberances in the jeans or under the blouse, affecting standard human beings. Gender, vernacular and local, different in every valley, is an interplay of feminine and masculine domains, of masculine and feminine activities that engender unique styles of living. Is, perhaps, place to space what gender is to sex?

## Recovering a Sense for Place

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

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Remember that I wanted to tell a still untold story. Or to retrace the history of the losses that accompanied the conceptual conquest of space. This history is made of stories about vanished places. Yet could it be, or is it too farfetched to hope, that the telling of the story can also lead to a certain recovery of the lost sense for place?

Imagine that you step back in history in the manner of a crawfish and see the ingrained certainties of modernity wane at your sides. When the certainty of a priori space becomes hazy, what are you going to see? To answer "places!" is just to name. What is there, under the Liberty of movement and openness are certainly going to be there, but also orientation and limits, without which there is no orientation. The essence of these experiences is perhaps the frequency

of complementary pairs of opposites: open and closed, far and near, free and bound, visible and hidden, now and not yet. Many of these pairs mirror the human body's asymmetries: right and left, fore and back, up and down. Or relate my body to the world: the center of the world under my feet, and the horizon. Others are material: the firmness of the soil versus the thinness of the air.

Still others become manifest in motion. Mechanical locomotion in space unleashes a succession of fleeting images in a never-ending dream, like the "landscapes" through a train window. But walking from place to place unveils the substantial depths of the visible world, brings things into my body's presence "in the revelation of their materiality."[42] The walker's movements bring existence which was at best potentially there (in thought or in memory) into the realm of his perceptions. It is by my movements that objects facing me reveal their hidden face and become seizable and that things presently behind the horizon will unveil themselves. Conversely, nature seizes me in her motions. The world is an experience of mutual seizure, Bachelard wrote, and this mutual seizure of two vis-à-vis is another aspect of being in places.

What I see is complementary with what I can, Merleau-Ponty added.[43] What I see cannot be disembedded from what I can reach, seize, taste, smell, hear; no ideal image can be abstracted from these powers and their challenges by nature's moves. It is only by a kind of ellipsis that one can say that the senses "overlap" in a joint action, for they were never severed in the first place. In this joint perception or synasthesia, things are present before any hypothetical

42. Bachelard, Gaston, Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter, Dallas: Dallas Institute of the Humanities and Culture, 1983 (1956), p. 6.
43. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, The Primacy of Perception. Northwestern University Press, 1964, pp. 162 ff.

reduction of their perception to separate "sensorial data": eyes eavesdrop, words enlighten, feet see and the nose touches the body's aura. Synaesthesia is another aspect of the perception of places.

## Histories of Places

I could now multiply the stories of places, each illustrating a certain aspect of what it means, to be in a place: asymmetrical complementarities, mutual seizure, synaesthesia. Some would be meaningful for you but I fear that others would be so remote from your experience that, instead of evoking possible places, they would just sound weird. I confess that, for years, I have searched the works of such authors as Mircea Eliade, Georges Dumézil or Joseph Rykwert for stories about the founding of places in ancient times. I believed that the effect of estrangement of these intimations from lost worlds would be to stress, in comparison, the strangness of modernity. See, for instance, this account of a founding ritual around 1500 B.C. as recorded by the Rig-Veda, India's oldest book of religious precepts: "He who wanted to found a place had first to start a fire with embers taken from a peasant's hearth. This fire—the fire of the earth, of the peasant or of the house-lord—had to be round." [44]
Then, the Rig-Veda goes on, the founder stepped eastward. When he stopped, with stones he marked a square on the soil: the hearth for a second fire. The round and the square fires are in a relationship that conjures up the one existing between the earth and the sky. If the first fire is round, it is not because the earth is a globe, but because the line of the horizon is approximately a circle in the middle of which one stands: the visible earth is a circle. The same in

44. Dumézil, Georges, La Religion Romaine Archaïque, Paris, 1966, p. 308.

all directions, a circle cannot orient. A cross in a circle expresses the union of earth and heaven. Then the founder steps backwards as a crawfish until the middle of the distance between the two fires, counting his steps. He then faces the South and makes again as many steps as he has made backwards. There, he establishes a third fire, smaller than the first two and which, the Rig-Vida expresses, "must be formless."

This story reflects the way immigrants from the Iranian plateau in what is now India engendered dwelling places more then three millennia and a half ago... or at least how Georges Dumézil understood it in the twentieth century A.D. I have loved this story and, above all, the way Dumézil told it, showing how the three proto-Hindu fires foreshadowed the three main castes of Hindu society, and, beyond, the division of the prototypical (and hypothetical!) Indo-European society into three basic orders: the priests, the warriors and the cultivators. However, trying to tell it at the first Oakland Table made me wake up from these historical reveries: I came to realize that it was as strange, there, as an okapi in Jack London Square. Interesting story if well told, but about as familiar as the living chimera (part giraffe, part zebra, part donkey) would be there.

More than a millennium later, the Greek and Roman versions of foundation rites were like dromedaries. Still too bizarre to really surprise, as the sight of a camel in Harrison Street would induce passersbys to think that a circus is arriving in town.

The Greeks called the primordial figure of a cross in a circle temenos, the Romans called it templum. It was the original orienting device resulting from

an act of foundation. In Rome, the haruspex contemplated the templum of the future city in the sky, somatized it and expectorated it on the soil, where it became the visible sign (also called "templum") of the union of heaven and earth (a hierophany) that instituted an inhabited place. [45] A place was limited in extension but opened to the cosmos, it touched the heavens like a tree with its branches and had roots in the underworld: it was a topocosm. But displaced okapis and dromedaries are meant to be seen in zoos and menageries, not in an Oakland neighborhood. The danger of illustrating the characters of places with such remote examples is that they might induce the listener into antiquarian nostalgia or, worse, into the belief that ancient rituals can be revived under modern myths. Any attempt to reenact place founding rites in space is like establishing a reservation for the last Ohlones behind the Mayor's house.
Nonetheless, doesn't the following story ring a distant bell? It is about the Greek gods Hestia and Hermes, the gods of dwelling and of hospitality.

In its polarity, the couple Hestia-Hermes[46] expressed the tension which is proper to the pre-spatial asymmetrical complementarity. This needed a center, a fixed point from which directions and orientations could be defined. But it was also the locus of motion, and that implied the possibility of transitions, of passage from any point to any other. Hestia and Hermes were the gods of the domestic domain. They were also the symbols of the gestures of women and men and of their interplay. One could only be understood through the other. For instance, it is only in relation to Hestia that all the different aspects of Hermes's activity became coherent. Hermes made mobile, Hestia centered.

45. Rykwert, Joseph, The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.
46. Vernant, Jean-Pierre, "Hestia – Hermès : Sur l'expression religieuse de l'espace et du mouvement chez les Grecs:, in Jean-Pierre Vernant, Mythe et Pensée chez las Grecs: Étude de Psychologie Historique, 2 vol., Paris, 1974, pp. 155 - 201.

Hestia's place was the hearth, whose deeply rooted stone was a symbol of constancy. Hermes's place was near the door that he protected from his companions the thieves.

Hermes's characteristics and activities are the asymmetrical complements of what Hestia is and does. But, no more okapis or dromedaries. The places that interest us here are the ones that can be saved from the monopoly of spatial truths. The ones that can be established in inconspicuous niches and protected from the contagion of space. Humble, without folkloristic appeal, they have nevertheless most of the characteristics that places have and space does not have. So let us dedicate this essay to Jerry's table. Let it be a place. From such a place, three or four can question the radical monopoly of space that transforms people into packages to be transported, citizens into clients to be served, neighbors into numbers.

## Hestia and Hermes: The Greek Imagination of Motion and Space (2001)

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

*Jean Robert*

"You live among men's and women's beautiful dwelling places"
On the foot of the big statue of Zeus in Olympia, Phydias represented the twelve Olympian gods. Between Helios, the sun and Selene, the moon, he arranged them in six couples: Zeus-Hera, Poseidon-Amphitrita, Hephaistos-Charis, Apollo-Artemis, Aphrodite-Eros and Hermes-Hestia.[47]

Hestia and Hermes are not husband and woman, nor brother and sister, nor mother and son either. They are neighbors, or better: friends. Where Hermes loiters is Hestia never far. Where Hestia stays, Hermes can appear at any moment.

47. Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Hestia—Hermès. Sur l'expression religieuse de l'espace et du mouvement chez les Grecs:, in Jean-Pierre Vernant, Mythe et Pensée chez las Grecs : Étude de Psychologie Historique, 2 vol., Paris, 1974, pp. 155 - 201.

In its polarity, the couple Hestia-Hermes expresses the tension which is proper to the archaic representation of space. Space needs a center, a fix point from which directions and orientations can be defined. But space is also the locus of motion, and that implies the possibility of transitions, of passage from any point to any other.

Hestia and Hermes belong to very archaic, pre-Hellenistic representations. Hestia is the hearth. In modern Greek, istia still means the hearth or the household. The name Hermes comes from herma(x), hermaion or hermaios lophos, heap of stone. Before he became an Olympian god, Hermes was the personification of lithoboly, the gesture of throwing stones on tombs. He was the heap of stone or the wooden pole on a grave, but also the phallos. Hermes unites death and fertility in one figure.

Hestia and Hermes, personifications of the hearth and of the protecting grave are the gods of the domestic domain. They are also the symbols of the gestures of women and men and of their interplay. Through that interplay, the house becomes a unique place in the world, a topos in a cosmos. Hestia and Hermes allow us a glance into Greek domesticity. In their interplay, we can understand something of the Greek household and its works and of hospitality. "You live both on the surface of the soil, in the beautiful dwelling places of men and women, and you are filled with mutual philía,"[48] said a Homeric hymn.

Hestia and Hermes are the Epichthonian gods, the gods of the dwelled soil. They are everywhere where people make fire, trace limits, build walls and a roof over their heads. Together, they are the gods of orientation and of the tracing of limits.

48. Jean-Pierre Vernant, op. cit.

Hestia sits in the middle. She stands still, but she is ubiquitous. Hermes, the quick one, can never be caught, like Mercury. He never appears where he is expected and reigns over the space of travelers. Hestia embodies the gestures of settling down, of enclosing and of keeping. Hermes manifests the gestures of opening, trespassing, and speaks of mobility and of the encounter with the other. He is the god of transitions.[49] He keeps guard on doors and limits, the entrance of cities as well as crossways and has for this reason many heads: Hermes trikephalos, tretrakephalos. Since graves are doors to the underworld, he is in necropoles and cemeteries. He accompanies the souls of the dead to the Hades: Hermes psychagogos, psychopompos. He is the protector of thieves, but he also protects houses from thieves. He is the messenger between gods and humans: Hermes angelos.

All those different aspects of Hermes's activity become only coherent in relation to Hestia's. Hermes makes mobile, Hestia centers. Hestia's place is the hearth, whose deeply rooted stone is a symbol of constancy. Hermes's place is near the door, that he protects from his companions the thieves: Hermes pyloros.

Hermes's characteristsics and activities are the asymmetrical complements of what Hestia is and does. Hestia personifies the charis, the force or the "spirit" of the gift. Since "gifts make friends" and facilitate the encounter with strangers, should not Hermes, instead of Hestia be the god of gifts?

Hestia reigns over the cycles of festive meals within the oikos. During these meals, the oikos was, so to speak, closed upon itself. The ones who sat at a

49. Arnold van Gennep, Les Rites de Passage: Etude Systématique des Rites. Paris: 1909.

common table were often called homokapoi, the ones that breathe the same smoke. Strangers had no access to it, and it was said that the food taken during these Hestian festivities was poisonous for them. But there is a verb which is formed after the name Hestia: hestiain, which means to receive a stranger into the closest circle of the house, there, where no stranger can be accepted. The guest had to squat before Hestia, the hearth, and through this act he ceased to be a stranger. He was taken into the hierarchy of the oikos.

Yet, there was another, "equalitarian" form of hospitality which was placed under the sign of Hermes. The Greek name that refers to it is xenos, which means the same as the Latin word hostis: the one with whom gifts and countergifts have been exchanged and who is therefore "equal." Xenos is the stranger who is not integrated into the domestic hierarchy, but received as an equal. Originally, it's an oriental, not a Greek concept, proper to a world of caravans and itinerant merchants.

## Asymmetrical Complementarity

At every step of our analysis, we have acknowledged a polarity, or better an asymmetrical complementarity between constancy and change, center and periphery, the closed and the open, the interior and the exterior. That complementarity shapes all places, as well as the condition of their occupants. We are introduced into a world where by telling me which place you occupy and how, you tell me who you are. Neither term of the polarity can be understood alone, but always only in complement to the other. The tension between these two poles mirrors itself even in the definition of everyone of the terms: there is a Hestia in Hermes, a Hermes in Hestia. As we have already seen with

the paradox of hospitality. Hermes's activities can always be interpreted in a Hestian light, and vice-versa. In this Hestian light, activities like bartering, buying and selling, which are Hermes's prerogatives, can be seen as extensions of the logic of the gift, over which Hestia reigns.

Inversely, Hestia reigns over keeping activities in the house. In Hermes's light, these activities look like an accumulation, an interpretation that became widespread in classical times, where the granaries of the polis, managed by men, were called the Hestia Koinê. So Xenophon compared Hestia with the bee queen, "that stays in the middle of the beehive and sees that honey be well kept." He gives the cells of the beehive the same name that was given to the chambers in which precious goods were kept: thalamoi. As Hestia Koinê, Hestia becomes the symbol of the accumulation of power of the city and of the union of their inhabitants around their granaries.

## Hestia and Hermes in Greek Philosophy

Plato gives us a striking example of the absorption of Hermes by Hestia. Hermes is, you remember, the stone heap, the wooden pole on graves. As such, he personifies the central pole of a house, the stem of the big tree in the house patio or the phallos. Hestia is the stone of the hearth, that roots the house into the soil, but also the column of smoke that relates the underworld with the sky. Plato lets the two figures merge into one. Hestia is for him the axis of the world. He plays with—etymologically not quite founded—homonimities, allowing himself to compare Hestia with the pillar (histiê), the mast of a ship (istós), the woman at the loom, whom he called histia. In the Republic, he compares Hestia with the spinning Goddess Anankê, who sits at the center

of the universe and whose spindle's motion regulates the revolution of the heavenly spheres. Anankê also means necessity, or the erected phallus. Plato even invents two poetic etymologies for Hestia: ousia, the essence, and hosia, motion.

Hestia, who is originally the principle of stability, becomes here the principle impetus of all motions, as if she would give birth to Hermes himself. Hestia's philosophical priority reminds us that the peculiar place which the house can only be brought forth by the woman, because she is it, who gives birth to the living body. Since myths are much older than philosophical ideas, this predominance can be a reminder of a time which gave women a kind of prominence.
For the Greek, space and motion were not the neutral concepts that they are today. They were loaded with the asymmetrical complementarity between female and male domains: they were gendered.

## The Historical Interpretation of a Myth

Now we can go to ancient Greece, and try to interpret dwelling relations in terms of the asymmetrical complementarity that we saw at work in a fundamental myth, rather than in the light of the neutral space of modern planning. But before this, we must reflect on the use of myths in the interpretation of social realities. Beate Wagner-Hasel, a German historian, writes in this respect: "...the analysis of myths never 'allows to draw conclusions on effective relations' but only to interpret the leading symbols of a society." [50]

50. Beate Wagner-Hasel, "Das Privat wird politisch. Die Perspektive 'Geschlecht' in der Altertumswissenschaft," in Ursula Becher u. a. (Hrsg.), Weiblichkeit in geschichtlicher Perspektive, Frankfurt a. M., 1989, pp. 11 - 50.

Yet, this interpretation of symbols can prevent us from colonizing the past with our certainties. We must avoid, B. Wagner-Hasel writes, to co-opt the past as the model or the origin of the present. On the contrary, we must meet it in its otherness and be ready for the almost unimaginable.

The unimaginable is a society shaped by gender, a category that Ivan Illich choose as the title of a book (...) and by which he means an articulation of social spaces following gendered categories, without stipulating a priori hierarchies and relations of submission. [51]

When one looks at society through the prism of gender, he is led to speak of the relations between men and women in a way that does not reduce them to a discourse about their position but rather considers "the gendered occupation of spaces."[52]

Relations of domination can arise, but they must be studied on the background of gendered spaces. They must be considered different from the power relations which characterize modern disgendered space. The moments in which relations of domination are instituted or transformed must again be matched with changes in the gendered occupancy of spaces and of its symbolic meaning. Such moments are for instance the introduction of the alphabet or, close to us, of motorized transportation, which is the foundation of modern forms of power.

This understanding opens, following B. Wagner-Hasel, to a new conception of old history, namely to "a conception of society which is not organized following

51. Beate Wagner-Hasel, op. cit.
52. Ibid.

the categories of law, economy, politics, the religious and the social, private vs public."[53]

In another essay, we will check this by contrasting the homeric house with the house of the classical polis in the 5th century. In the meantime, the meaning of alphabetic writing underwent a fundamental change The myth of Hestia and Hermes allows us to look at modern space as it were from the other end of the glass. We begin to glimpse by means of which go and fro between the present and the past, 'to-day' can be a matter of historical inquiry.

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53. Ibid.

# A Sense of Place: Some Historical Symbols, Myths and Rituals of "Placeness" (2001)

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

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He who wanted to found a place - the Rig Veda tells us - had first to start a fire with embers taken from a peasant's hearth. [54] This fire - the fire of the earth, of the peasant or of the houselord - had to be round.

Then, the founder stepped eastward, making as many steps as his 'rank' or varna[55] allowed him. When he stopped, with stones he marked a square on

54. Julius Pokorny, Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, Bern/Munich, 1948-69. Hearth: Pokorny I, 571, ker-, 'brennen' glühen, heizen'. Zweifelhaft, lat. carbo. Ahd herd, as. herth, ags. heord, 'hearth'. (Abstract: hearth would derive from the Indoeuropean root ker- meaning 'to burn). Hestia: Pokorny, I, 1170: ues-, 'verweilen', wohnen, übernachten'; ues-ti-s, 'Aufenthalt'. Gr. haesa ep. Aor. (stets mit nychta verbunden) 'zubringen'. mit unerkl ärtem a-Vokalismus, asty, 'Stadt', astós, 'Städter', asteios, 'städtisch'. got. wisan, 'sein, bleiben'. (Abstract: The word hestia - Greek for hearth - would derive from the Indoeuropean root ues- , 'to abode', which also gave the archaic Greek word for city and town, asty, and perhaps the old Germanic word for 'to be': wisan - viz. popular Dutch: wezen).

55.Pokorny, op. cit., 1161, ueru, 'Schützer, Schirmer'(Varna would come the Indoeuropean root ueru, the protector). See also Georges Dumézil, La Religion Romaine Archaïque, Paris, 1966, p. 308. 56 Pokorny, op. cit., 1161, ueru, 'Schützer, Schirmer'(Varna would come the Indoeuropean root ueru, the protector). See also Georges Dumézil, La Religion Romaine Archaïque, Paris, 1966, p. 308.

the soil: the hearth for the second fire. The round and the square fires are in a relationship that conjures up the one existing between the earth and the sky. If the first fire is round, it is not because the earth is a globe, but because the line of the horizon is approximately a circle in the middle of which one stands: the visible earth is a circle. The same in all directions, a circle cannot orient. The implied meaning of that, is that nobody (no body) can gain orientation from the earth alone. He needs signs in the sky. The square fire is the fire of the sky. It is not equal in all directions: it has four corners. Between them, the two median lines draw perpendicular axes: a cross, whose branches indicate the cardinal points.

A cross in a circle expresses the union of earth and heaven. The Greek called such a figure temenos,[56] the Roman called it templum.[57] It was the original orienting device resulting from an act of foundation. Let us suppose that the templum is drawn now, exactly between the two fires: the west-east line is the inversion of the sun's path in the sky, the north-south line is the partition between earth and heaven. Like the founder's body, space knows now back and fore, up and a down. But the templum cannot be just drawn by the hand. It must be 'acted out' by the founder's body.

Indeed, the story could almost finish here: very roughly, a place has been established, or, shall we rather say that a sense of 'placeness', on earth and under the sky has been embodied? The west- east axis recalls which

56. François Anatole Bailly, Dictionnaire Grec-Français, 1904 (1899), p. 1913: temenos, 1. primitif, portion du territoire qu'on réservait au chef, enclos servant de résidence. 2. Portion du territoire avec un autel ou un temple. (1. Primitive meaning: part of the territory that was allotted to the chief, his precinct. 2. Part of the territory occupied by an altar or temple).

57. Pokorny, op. cit., I., 1064: temp-, 'dehnen' ziehen' spannen',Erweiterung von *ten-, tempos, Spanne, 'drehen, wenden, spinnen'. Lat tempus -oris, Schläfe (von der dünn gespannten Haut). Lat. templa, die gespannetn Querhölzer auf denen die Spindeln kommen, contemplari, 'atenes blepein', tempto temptare, 'betasten, befühlen, angreifen, untersuchen, auf die Probe stellen'. (Templum comes from the hypothetical Indoeuropean root *ten- meaning 'to stretch').

relationship is prior to all the others. With the two primordial fires, the two poles (the 'up' and the 'down') of any place have been, so to speak, 'thrown together'. [58] A place on the earth - Greek ge - is rooted in the deep soil - chthôn - and open to the sky - ouranos. 'To throw together' is what the Greek verb symballein means, from which our word symbol comes.

Most symbols for a place combine an intimation of rootedness in the deep soil with a hint of openness to heavens, an image which can almost literally be inversed in openness to the deep soil, rootedness in the sky. One such symbol is the powerful tree, whose trunk conquers the height and unfolds a crown of endlessly ramifying branches which are like roots in the sky. Sucked by the earthly roots, the juices of the deep soil climb through the trunk and imbibe the sky. Or inversely: the 'roots of the sky' collect the sky's powers and bring them down to earth, so two opposed flows cross themselves, so to speak in the trunk, 'symbolizing' a double dependency between earth and heaven.

The straight climbing smoke column of the sacrificial fire, that conveys the smell of libations to the gods is an immaterial tree and another symbol for a founded place. Abel's sacrifice was blessed with a straight column because it was agreable to God. His brother's column could not rise, and the envious Cain killed Abel. The Hebrew tradition made of the cursed sacrifier the founder of cities and of agriculture, so to found a city and to domesticate nature (both

58. Georges Dumézil, op. cit., pp. 308 - 9 "Les deux feux axiaux, qui se trouvent sur une ligne ouest-est, séparés par des distances variables selon le varna du sacrifiant, ont des missions et des signalements distincts. L'un, appelé garhapatya, ou feu du grhapati, du 'maître de maison', représente sur le terrain le sacrifiant lui-même, avec ses attaches familiales et économiques. Il est l'origine et support de tout; c'est à partir de lui que sont allumés les autres feux et, s'il s'éteint, le sacrifice ne peut être continué, alors que, si l'un des autres feux s'éteint, il peut, lui, servir à le réanimer (...). L'autre feu axial, à l'est du premier, est appelé ahavaniya ou feu des offrandes, proprement '(ignis) aspergendus', et c'est lui dont la fumée porte aux dieux les dons des hommes(...)" (Abstract: The two axial fires, the first round and the second square, were called respectively garhapatya (or fire of the grhapati, the householder), the other ahavaniya, fire of the offerings. The garhapatya was the primordial fire from whose embers the others had to be started.

actions are expressed, in Greek, by the verb oikodomeo, to tame, to domesticate or break a land open for building or planting) is always a precarious enterprise, threatened by the world's essential contingencies.

In the gentile traditions in change, cities were to be founded by certified founders and the brother that died was the one who had failed to perform the rite. While Yahweh was prayed for his grace, the gentile gods were acted upon by precise rituals.

Yet - the Rig Veda goes on - the earth-sky relationship, though complete, is not stable in itself. It is exposed to internal and external dangers: the north wind or an ennemy from the south, or inner dissention between brethern. Weather[59] and war[60] : it is to that double danger that Hobbes still referred to with the word 'warre', the war of all against all, which settles in grim times (in the dies mali), "like bad weather," says Hobbes.[61]

So, after the first sacrifice on the sky's square fire, the founder steps back at mid axis and then goes as many steps to the right as he has gone backwards. He starts a third fire which, according to tradition, must be 'shapeless' and is

59. Pokorny, op. cit., I, 81, ff.: au(e)-, aue(i)-, ue-, 'wehen, blasen, hauchen'. Gr. aos. ue-dro-, vermutlich in anord. verdr, 'Wind, Luft, Wetter', as. wedar, 'Witterung, böses Wetter' (The word weather - German Wetter - supposedly comes from the Indoeuropean root au(e)-, meaning 'to blow', from which 'wind' also derives).
60. Pokorny, op. cit., I., p. 1133: ueis, 'drehen' auch bes. für flechtbare Ruten, daraus gebundene Besen und dgl. ; uoiso-, Rute. Aisl vichr', Wirbelwind (*uesura-, lit. víesulas ds., russ. vichat'), 'erschüttern, bewegen'. (The word 'war' supposedly comes from the Indoeuropean root ueis, meaning 'to whip'. Though not deriving from the same root, the words weather and war both express the same idea: to whip, wipe violently, shake, disrupt a balance - see also the root of Gr. polemos, same meaning).
61. Marshall Sahlins, Stone Age Economics, Chicago, New York: Aldine-Atherton, 1972.

generally vaguely reniniscent of a crescent. It is the fire of the weatherward, of Ares[62] and of Mars.[63]

With that last act of orientation, space has not only a back and a fore, up and down, but right and left. Right and left are fundamentally assymetrical. [64] The right (south) is warded, so your right side is protected. When the third fire was lighted, the Roman said "fas est," it has been pronounced (favorable). By contraction, the expression became fastus, favorable. Is it not logical to think that the right (side),[65] warranted by an oral pronouncement, is the forerunner of the 'right' in the sense of French 'le droit' or Spanish 'el derecho' (but also of the law, lat. lex)? If we take that origin serious, before any written law, there is an oral meaning of the right as 'the settled side of life'. Historically and, as I will argue, philosophically, the 'fas est' is prior to the 'scriptum est' and cannot be reduced to it.

If the main axis were a rope on which the founder progresses like a rope-dancer, the fire of the right would be his pendulum.
The left is left[66] unprotected, it has no ward. From there blows Aquilon, the

62. Pokorny, op. cit., I. p. 337: eres-, 'zürnt, will übel, benimmt sich gewalttätig', 'ist neidisch'. Arès= Gott der Rache. (Pokorny suggests that the name of the Greek war god Arès's could come from the Indoeupean root eres-, meaning to act violently or be envious. Arès is so the god of vengeance. The proximity to arèn, the lamb, of course suggests also an association with the sacrifice).
63. Pokorny, op. cit., I, p. 1175: uet-, 'jährig', in Ableitungen auch für jährige, junge Tiere. Gr, fetos, heuer.
Viteliú, Italia, woraus durch unilat.-gr. Vermittlung lat. Italia, eigentlich 'das Land der Itali (junge Rinder)', nach dem Stiergott Mars. (As to the Italian war god, he is originally the Mediterranean bull god. The "bull" associates to Italy via the Indoeuropean root uet-, which gave Gr. fetos, from this year (viz. the new lambs) and Lat. vitellus, calf. Italy is the land of the vitelli. A sacrificial association is not excluded).
64.Rodney Needham, ed., Right and Left: Essays on Symbolic Classification, Chicago, 1973.
65. Pokorny, op. cit., I, p. 854: reg-, 'gerade, gerade richten, lenken, strecken, aufrichten (auch unterstützend, helfend)'. ('Right' has its origin in the Indoeuropean root reg-, meaning 'straight', to 'stretch', but also to 'support'. Because of a frequent transformation of r into l, it is possible that the Indoeuropean roots reg- and leg- (whence lex, 'law') are originally one).
66. Greek laios, lat, laevus: Pokorny, op. cit. I, p. 652: laiuo-, links; ursprünglich krumm?; vielleicht Sinn von 'verkrümmt', schwach (unbeholfen?, verlassen?); cf angels. lyft, schwach, mndl. 'luft', 'lucht', link, ofries. luf, 'schlaf, müde'. (The word 'left'- Gr. laios, Lat. laevus - could derive from the Indoeuropean root laiuo-, left but perhaps originally 'distorted', 'weak', 'abandonned').

Northwind, winter announces itself,[67] danger looms, perhaps in the form of a storm, of an an ennemy, the impredictable.

So life in a founded place has two sides: the protected right, side of rectitude, order and continuity, of settled things about which one 'came to terms', and the unprotected left, side of danger, bad omens, the threat of rupture and discontinuity. Apart from heraldics, sinister (from one of the Latin words for left, the other being laevus) has lost the denotation and kept the connotation.

But the left is also the side of the heart: the impredictable 'torridity' of passions, weighing the cool reason of the shady right (keep in mind that, in a valley, the north is the coveted sunny side, and think that in Latin, torridus expresses extreme warmth or extreme dry coldness). So, the bilaterality of left and right also reflects the basic tension of time: regularity and rupture, equinamity and tension, German Zeit and English tide (from a root meaning regularity) and time (tension and rupture), follwing the double root of the Indoeuropean words for 'time'. With that, the newly founded place has time, a history begins. Mars, the ward of the right, god of the weather and of war is also, internally, the keeper of social stability. He summarizes the two dimensions of time that account for history: the repetition of the same and the emergence of the unexpected, security and danger. As the personification of bad weather and war (as Mars proper), he has an answer to trouble makers (and he more than often starts stories of his own). As Quirinus (the name comes from quiris, 'common man', member of the *co-viria), he keeps internal peace, eventually sacrifying (like Romulus, who also took the name Quirinus) the brother that breaks the rule.

67. Pokorny, op. cit. I, p. 79: udro-s, 'Wassertier'. Quelle, Brunnen. Slav. voda, Gr. hydor, lat, unda. Got. wato (vgl. mit Lat. unda) wahscheinlich Got. wintrus, aisl vetr, ags. winter, als 'nasse Jahreszeit' (The word 'winter' would come from the Indoeuropean root udro-s, meaning originally an aquatic animal; the name of the 'wet season' would also derive from the same root as 'water'. Why not?).

Quirinus, sometimes called the internal Mars or the peacekeeper is the god of the rules of good habits and cohabitation, the protector of custom, the keeper of customary ways, corresponding, in the Greek and the vedic traditions, to the keeper of the èthos and of the dharma. His designation as 'the common man' (the vedic grhapati), speaks about the oral, prelegal meanings of any 'right' that is settled by the 'coming to terms' of common men.

We now tend to understand rights as faculties warranted by law rather than by custom. This is relatively new. MacIntyre,[68] for instance, shows that this was hardly the case before the 15th century, and that, previous to our century, this 'literate' and legalistic meaning of the word right was restricted to Europe, a judgement confirmed by the OED. The asymmetry of left and right in founding rituals allows us to make the people the subjet of 'rights' and to understand these as the security arising from 'having come to terms'.

In the act of foundation, the union of earth and heaven, which is the essence of orient-ation passes through the body. Ge (orgas in archaic Greek) and ouranos are made one by the soma (body). [69] In Rome, city founders relied on certified technicians, augurs,[70] and haruspices, who generally were Etruscans. The Etruscan haruspex practiced the most extreme form of condensing earth and the sky. He in-corporated them into his flesh by the the con-templation of an ideal templum in the sky and by its projection into the landscape[71] and then,

68. MacIntyre, Alasdair, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dam.
69. Joseph Rykwert, "Uranopolis or Somapolis?," in RES, 17/18, 1989.
70. Iván Illich, H2O and the Waters of Forgetfullness, Dallas: The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1985, p. 13." neither the vocation of a founder nor a mandate from the oracle at Delphi nor even the actual settlement of a site suffices to make a locality into a town. The intervention of a recognized seer is required, an augur who creates space at the site discovered by the founder. The social creation of space is called in-auguration."
71. Bernd Jager, "Horizontality and Verticality. A Phenomenological Exploration into Lived Space," in Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology, Ed. E. Giörgi, 1971, pp. 212 - 235.
Bernd Jager, "Imagination and Inhabitation: From Nietzsche via Heidegger to Freud," in E. Murray, ed., Imagination and Phenomenological Psychology, Duquesne Univ. Press, 1987.

he 'expectorated' both, united into the image of the city to come. Founding was an act of marriage and birth. The organ of that union, gestation and birth was the liver. The harus-picium is a form of divination from the inspection of a liver (the root from which 'harus' comes means inwards, see German Garn). The haruspex expelled his own liver and read, on its rugose surface, the contours of the new landscape resulting from the union of earth and heaven. This - and not just earthly topography - was the landscape in which the city had to be found. Since it resulted from things of several realms (chthonian, epichthonian, that is earthly, and celestial), 'thrown together', [72] this landscape can be 1981.called 'symbolic'. Since it united the topographic features with the cosmos, the landscape in which the founder operated - and that resulted from his operations - can also be called topocosmic, a word coined by Bourdieu.[73] It was not a 'map', a 'plan' or a 'blueprint', but a somatic image of a place in a cosmos and, as we will now see, of a cosmos in a place: it was, we could say, both a topocosm and a cosmotope. The templum (heaven and earth, united) is shorthand for this topocosm- cosmotope. Among other indications, it defines the perpendicular directions (Latin regiones) to be given to the new city's main streets.

One year after Rome's foundation, Romulus offered the gods the first-fruits of

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72. Ivan Illich, Im Weinberg des Textes. Als das Schriftbild der Moderne entstand, Frankfurt a.M.: Luchterhand, 1991, p. 35: "Für unsere Generation, die mit Freud und Jung großgeworden ist, ist es fast unmöglich zu begreifen, was das Symbol bedeutet hat. Das griechische Wort symbal(l)ein bedeutet 'zusammenbringen, -werfen oder -setzen'. Es kann die Nahrung meinen, die die Teilnehmer zum Mahl am festlichen Tisch mitbringen. Es ist etaws Zusammengefaßtes, dinglich Bedeutsames, das erst in der Spätantike zum semeion, Zeichen, wird." (Our generation can hardly understand what the symbol has meant. It comes from a Greek word meaning 'to throw together' and evoked something concrete, resulting of an act of composition - think of a meal. Only in Late Antiquity did the word come to mean semeion, 'sign').
73. Pierre Bourdieu, "La maison ou le monde renversé," in Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, Genève: Droz, 1972. Defines the Berber house of South Marocco as a topocosmos: a place in a cosmos or a placed (oriented) cosmos, or still a "monde renversé."

the city: wheat, fruits, flowers, the newborns of all the herds. He 'threw them together' into a hole in the center of Rome, a natural or an excavated cove. This cove was called the mundus. Mundus, here, does not mean the world. The word comes from the Indoeuropean root meu[74] (or, perhaps from mei-[75]?) and its basic meaning is clean, or orderly. In French, this sense survives in immonde, unclean, not worth of belonging to the mundus, doomed to elimination, to be thrown away beyond the city limit. In Spanish, we have the word inmundicias, things to be swept away. A similar kinship exists in Greek: kosmos; the derived adjective kosmetikos meant clean or orderly long before it became kosmikos.

The mundus was the city'_ secret navel, a notion still alive in classical times in the umbilicus, the point or origin of the decumanus and the kardo, the two perpendicular lines, one broadly west-east, the other north-south with which all land survey started.

Three times a year, each time during a day, the mundus remained open: mundus patet.[76] When mundus patet, Pandora's box is open. It is prudent to shut oneself up. No contract, no council, no public debates, no war can happen these days. Festus, a writer of the 2d or 3rd century A.D. tells us: Cato,

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74 Pokorny, op. cit., I, p. 741: meu-, mu-, feucht, moderig, unreine Flüssigkeit (auch Harn), beschmutzen, aber auch: waschen, reiningen. Mu-n-dos in der Bedeutung von 'gewaschen', auch lat. mundus, 'schmuck, sauber, rein, nett', Subst. 'Putz der Frauen', Weltordung, Weltall (nach Gr. kosmos). Holl., niederd. mooi, Gr.: kosmos. (Pokorny hypothetizes that the Latin word mundus and the Greek word kosmos both have their origin in the Indoeuropean root meu-, which in turn adquired its meaning of 'clean' through a strange inversion. Pok. thinks that the root meu- meant originally humid, dirty liquid, and even urine and that the inversion ocurred thanks to the notion of 'washing'. Dirty things are in need to be washed and so the root came to stand for 'washed things'. Ingenious, isn't it? Yet look at the following note: it seems to me that an etymology of the kom-moini- type is not to be excluded, think of kosmos).

75. Pokorny, op. cit., I, p. 710: mei-, 'wechseln, tauschen', daraus Tauschgabe, daher gemeinsam; moi-ni-, Leistung, kom-moini-, gemeinsam, osk. múínikad-, umbr. muneklu, 'munus, Sporteln'. (In the hypothetical 'Ursprache' called Indogermanisch by the old German philologists, it is possible that there was a root, mei-, meaning more or less 'to exchange gifts'. Why not think that the word kosmos could derive from the idea of an order resulting from gifts and countergifts and have so the same origin as 'common' (hypothetical Indoeuropean kom-moini-), and 'the commons'? Could it be? Isn´t it a nicer hypothesis than the previous one?).

76. Georges Dumézil, La Religion Romaine Archaïque, op. cit., p. 345.

in his Commentaries on civil law, explains so this name: the mundus derives its name from the mundus (vault of the sky)[77] which is above us; indeed, so I heard from those who went into it, it has a shape similar to that of the other mundus.[78]

For him, the mundus was already a semeion of the world. Things can be classified by dualities: hot and cold things, masculine and feminine, dry and wet, luminous and dark, high and low, right and left, living and dead. These dualities of things 'thrown together' reflect or 'symbolize' the world's fundamental dualities. So, if a place is in the world, the world is contained by every place. Pupils of Louis Dumont would find here matter for a reflection on their master's concept of inversion, which allows the part to contain the whole to which it belongs.[79] The place has now a center and a cosmic order: a hierarchy.

This account speaks of one ideal type of founding ritual, whose characteristics are often common to the Indian and to the Mediterranean world, particularly in the Etruscan-Roman realm.[80] Yet, even within the Mediterranean domain,

77. Actually, etymology suggests the opposite derivation.

78. Georges Dumézil, op. cit., p. 345.

79. Louis Dumont, Homo hierarchicus. Essai sur le système des castes, Paris: Gallimard, 1966.

80. Iván Illich, H2O and the Waters of Forgetfullness, Dallas: The Dallas Institute for Humanities and Culture, 1985, pp. 19, 20 (note 11): "It would be a grave mistake to generalize from Etruscan fondation rituals as though they were the model according to which dwelling space is ritually created by all cultures. The rituals described here should be seen as only one ideal type through which social space can be brought into existence and maintained. In certain African traditions, beautifully described by Zahan, I have the impression that social space is cultivated as the result of the personal experience of initiation. The initiatory way into the sacred woods and the ritual discovery of one's one 'inner experience' are expressed in the communitary building of house and village. This example might be seen as the inverse of the Roman procedure, through which the templum, made visible in the city, comes to be experienced as an inner reality. Lebeuf reports from the Congo a "creation of space" that is the result of heaven and earth growing together, as the right and left part of the house are carefully built so as to rise, inch by inch in harmony with each other. Roumeguere describes the distinct stages of an initiation ritual, in each of which a new revelation of the body's significance associates the young man or woman with a different sphere of outside realities. Niagoran stresses even more than Zahan that some African dwelling-spaces are the result of each generation's initiation and therefore are time-bound. They are constantly in the process of decaying and must be reconstituted. Nicolas reports that the sacificial victim is "split" to "make" new space. The space-creating spirit is ever at work as a zigzag line, representing the motion of water, word, and dance. See Griaule 12, 18 ff. on the "Nummo pairs of twins, who are water." Space seems never to be 'sealed off'." Dominique Zahan, Religion, Spiritualité et Pensée Africaines, Paris: Payot, 1970. J.P. Lebeuf, L´habitation des Fali, Paris: Hachette, 1961. J. Roumeguere-Eberhardt, "La notion de vie: base de la structure sociale Venda," in Journal de la Société des Africanistes 27, fasc. 11, Paris, 1957. G. Bouah Niagoran, "La division du temps et le calendrier ritual des peuples lagunaires de la Côte d'Ivoire," in Travaux et Mémoires de lÍnstitut d'Ethnologie 68, Paris, 1964. G. Nicolas, "Essai sur les structures fondamentales de léspace dans la cosmologie Hausa," in Journal de la Société des Africanistes 36, Paris, 1966. Marcel Griaule, Dieu d'Eau: Entretiens avec Ogotemeli, Paris: Fayard, 1966. Translated into English as Conversations with Ogotemeli: an Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.

the sequences of foundation proper to a particular tradition are not necessarily followed identically by another. It might be that here the mundus is caved or discovered first and the town limit traced then (as in Rome) or the reverse. And the templum, which we already mentionned as 'shorthand' for the union of earth and heaven established by the two first fires is generally traced after the 'expectoration' of the haruspex's liver. At that point, a lamb - whose liver substitutes for the sacrifier's - is slaughtered.[81] In Rome, this sacrifice was preceded by the contemplation and the consideration.[82]

The town still lacks something before it can be declared fully founded: a limit. Ivan Illich recalling Rykwert's commentaries of Titus Livus,[83] describes so the tracing of the furrow that determined Rome's extention and defined its topographic shape: For this ceremony two white oxens are hitched to a bronze plow, the cow on the inside, drawing the plow counterclockwise, thus engraving the templum into the soil. The furrow creates a sacred circle. Like the walls that will rise on it, it is under the protection of the gods. Crossing this furrow is a sacrilege. To keep this circle open, the plowman lifts the plow when he reaches the spots where the city gates will be. He carries (portat) the plow to create a porta, a doorway. Unlike the furrows and walls guarded by the immortals, the threshold and gate will be under civil law. At the porta,

81 Clay models of the liver, with inscriptions in Etruscan letters have been discovered. They were presumably used in lieu of the liver of a sacrified animal. Illustration in Joseph Rykwert, The Idea of a Town, op. cit., p. 56.
82 Ivan Illich, ibid., p. 13: "The augur is specially gifted: he can see heavenly bodies that are invisible to ordinary mortals. He sees the city's templum in the sky. This term is part of the technical vocabulary of his trade. The templum is a polygonal shape that hovers over the site found by the founder and that is visible only to the augur as he celebrates the inauguration. The flight of birds, a trail of clouds, the liver of a sacrificed animal can assist the augur in the contemplatio, the act in which he projects the figure seen in the sky onto the landscape chosen by the god. In this con-templatio the heavenly templum takes its this-worldly outline. But contemplatio is not enough. The outline of the templum cannot settle upon the earth unless it is properly con-sidered, aligned with the stars (sidus). Con-sideratio follows con-templatio. Con-sideratio aligns the cardo (the axes) of the templum with the city's "star." The cardo was originally a "hinge" with an explicit, concrete, masculine-feminine symbolism.
83 Joseph Rykwert, The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World, London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

domi (dwelling space) and foras (whatever lies beyond the threshold) meet; the door can swing open or be closed. Benveniste remarks that there is a profound asymmetry between the two terms in Indoeuropean languages; they belong to unrelated sets of words. They are so distant from one another that they cannot even be called antithetical. Domi refers to in-dwelling, whilke foras refers to whatever else is shut out.

Only when the founder has plowed the sulcus primogenitus (furrow) around the future town perimeter does its interior become space that can be trodden and only then is the arcane celestial templum rooted in the landcape. The drawing of the sulcus is in many ways similar to a wedding. The furrow is symbolic of a hierogamy, of a sacred marriage of heaven and earth. The sulcus primogenitus carries this meaning in a special way. By plowing a furrow around the future town, the founder makes inner space tangible, excludes outer space by setting a limit to it, and weds the two spaces where the walls will rise later[84]. The founding of the greatest of all gentile cities did not go without another fratricide. Yet, contrary to Genesis, the Roman religion culpabilized the murdered brother. Following René Girard, [85] only the biblical tradition takes side with the victim. Rome is on the murderer's side. Romulus's act was seen as a peace-bringing murder performed by the first citizen, Romulus as Quirinus, the common man who was also the 'inner Mars'.

With its limit, the place has now an inside and an outside. The inside is the ager effatus (effatus: same origin as fas). Outside the wall is the pomerium and then

84. Iván Illich, H2O and the Waters of Forgetfulness, op. cit., p. 14, 15. See also, Émile Benveniste, Le Vocabulaire des Institutions Indoeuropéennes, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1969, 2 vol.
85. René Girard, La Violence et le Sacré, Paris: Grasset, 1972.

the open land (rus). The city is now fully founded. Square is the wall, square the houses: they are oriented, founded. On the contrary, a round building is the presence of the unfounded in the founded space: records of the time before the foundation. So the tholos[86] and the several skias[87] in Athens' center, and, in Rome, Vesta's round temple on the forum. [88] A round, not orientable building is a hut (Greek skia), not a house. It has generally no threshhold, no windows but a simple hole and an opening (Greek eschara) in the roof for the climbing smoke culumn and the dead's souls. [89]

But the story still does not end here. The city - the founded place: stead, asty - is the abode of the living. What is the place of the dead? In the neolithic 'cities' of Palestina and Anatolia, seven or eight millennaries before the Christian era, this was in the hut and then the house, under a heavy stone. But already in the settlement of Hacilar, from the sixth millennium, the dead were expelled at the periphery of the livings' domain. Hacilar had the first cemetery ever documented in a sedentary place.

In Rome, the law of the twelve tables stipulated that no dead must be burried within the city's limits, and similar dispositions existed in the Greek poleis. With the exception, sometimes of the founding hero, the dead must be burried outside. The tomb marks both the end of human life and the ultimate limit of the city's domain (of the fields, outside the wall). In the stone(s) or the

86.Pokorny, op. cit., I., p. 265: dhuek-, dhuk-, dheuk-, dunkelfarbig, verborgn, geheimnisvoll, trüb, geistig schwach. Gr. tholos, Schlamm, Schmutz, bes. von trüben Wasser, der dunkle Saft des Tintefisches' (got. dwals). Bailly, op. cit., p. 940: tholos, édifice en voûte; coupole, bâtie dans la cour, où l'on conservait les provisions. A Athènes, la Rotonde, édifice à voûte où mangeaient les prytanes. (The tholos was a round building recalling "the time before the foundation." It had some of the "natural" characteristics of a cave (wetness, darkness).
87. Bailly, op. cit., p. 1760: Ombre (shadow). Also hut, round building.
88. Illustration in Joseph Rykwert, The idea of a town, op. cit., p. 109.
89. Mircea Eliade, "Architecture sacrée et symbolisme," in Damian/Raynaud, ed., Les Symboles du Lieu, L´habitation de L´homme, 1983.

wooden pole recording a dead's abode, the temporal and the spatial limit of earthly existence coincide.

Above Ithaca, the Odissea tells us, there was a hermaios lophos, a heap of stones. The Greek god Hermes has been defined as an iconic represention of the hermaios lophos. It is also the personification of one of the most primitive ritual gestures of the Mediterranean world: the act of throwing stones on a grave, or simply on the spot where blood had been shed. Jean Servier[90] reports that Algeria's Berbers, the Kabyles, still do it, shouting "la," "well done!" while throwing their stones. Historians call this gesture lithoboly.

Sometimes, etymology illuminates deep phemomenological contexts. So is it with the Indoeuropean root from which Hermes comes. Following Pokorny, this root is uer,[91] It has given most Indoeuropean languages terms meaning 'mount', 'eminence', 'protuberance' or 'turgidity', as for instance the not very palatable 'wart'. The Greek words herma and hermaios, meaning heap, mound are 'uer' words. Many linguists have hypothetized that from the same root comes also Greek horizeo, I divide, for the crest of a mountain divides the landscape in two parts. From that comes 'horizon', the line dividing the visible and the (still) invisible part of the landscape.

90. Jean Servier, "Hermès Africain: les origines communes, les limites du visible et de l'invisible," in Eranos Jahrbuch 49 (1980), pp. 199-257. Servier reports that in all North Africa, the mound resulting from the lithobolic gesture (the "African Hermes" on local tombs) is called horm. Though I am not at all competent for research on semitic languages, I checked in a Hebrew dictionary and found that, be it by coincidence or by borrowing, the Indeuropean and the Semitic root that originally refers to the heap of stones on a tomb strangely seem to coincide phonetically. In the Bible, we find it several times under the forms hor, horeb, hora, meaning each time a mound. The most striking example is from Deuteronomy (5, 1-5), the passage where Moses received the tables of the law on mount Horeb.

91. Pokorny, op. cit. II, Gr herma: 1150, 1151, 1152. Pok. I, p. 1151: uer-, erweitert uer-d-, uer-s-, 'erhöhte Stelle (im Gelände oder in der Haut), ursu-, 'hoch'. uer-s, Lat. verruca, Warze (bei Cato auch locus editus et asper). Gr. herma, 'Stütze, Riff. Hügel'.Unsicher: Greek rhion, 'Berghöhe, Vorgebirge (*urison?) und aisl. risi, Riese. (Pok. sees the origin both of the name Hermes and the word horizon in the Indoeuropean root uer-, suggesting a mound, a top, a protuberance or even a wart. From that root derive also, apparently, the English verbs to "raise" and to "rise." What Pokorny cannot treat is the strange homophony of the Indoeuropean root uer- and the Semitic root hor, hor-, (for instance, in North Africa, "horm" means as much as "hermaios lophos," a heap of stone), which I am not able to explain).

The horizon was the limit of 'our world', including the city and the countryside (polis and agros). As far as local people's perception is concerned, it was the world's limit[92] and every trespassing was the motive of rites of passage. [93] Tombs were on that line. Temporal and spatial expression of liminality, they were also on a topographic limit, close to, or on the horizon: the most conspicuous mark of the temporal limitation of life was also the origin of spatial boundaries. All practical delimitation were derived from tombs through a kind of primitive trigonometry[94]: landmarks and milestones were defined by their distance to three tombs. In an age still deprived of formal census practices, lithoboly, which defined the first fix points of a country, was the originary limit tracing gesture. So, a town had a center, an enclosure and a broad periphery. The passage from the outside to the inside and vice-versa occured through four doors. Thresholds, like walls were sacred, the nature of sacredness being the passage between two radically heterogenous kinds of space: the inside and the outside. Yet remember: if the latter was protected by the gods, the first was under the protection of civil law.[95] Beyond the horizon begun the others' world, which was not 'sacred' proper, but taboo. The word 'taboo' refers to the opposition of a 'we' and 'the others'.[96]

Oscar Koschorke differentiates between four broad moments of the history of the horizon:

1. Horizon and world limit coincide in the dwellers' perception. To trespass the horizon is equivalent with leaving 'our' world and penetrating into the others' world.

92. Albrecht Koschorke, Die Geschichte des Horizonts. Grenze und Grenzüberschreitung in literarischen Landschaftsbildern, Munich: Suhrkamp, 1990.
93. Arnold van Gennep, Les Rites de Passage: Etude Systématique des Rites, Paris, 1909.
94. A. Seidenberg, "The Ritual Origin of Geometry," in Arch. Hist. Exact Sciences I (1962), pp. 488 - 527.
95. Ivan Illich, H2O and the Waters of Forgetfulness, op. cit.
96. Jean Robert, Raum und Geschichte, Kurseinheit 2, Hagen: FernUniversität, 1998.

2. Horizon and world limit cease to coincide. The Odissea speaks of the beginning of this moment in archaic Greece.

3. Any horizon is a challenge to trespass, a syndrom characteristic of the times of 'great discoveries'.

4. The aporia of the horizon: every limit having been transgressed, the perception of the horizon wanes. No wonder if the dead, whose tombs belonged to the horizon have no longer a place: no more mysterious presences among the living, they are radically negated.[97] Following Koschorke, the succession of these four moments summarizes the peculiar dynamism of the West and shapes its history. [98]

What meaning can still have the word 'place' - as opposed to abstract, 'cartesian' space - in late Western culture, that is in modernity? Has our time become placeless, as it is limitless, centerless, horizonless and deprived of the presence of the dead? And what kind of earth, of body, of heaven are we left with, when the very elements making of a place a topocosm and of the body a soma in a topocosm have abandoned us? How can we recover some sense of placeness beyond the demise of all that, which made a place? We are here to explore Jerry Brown's idea that friendship can make us recover a sense of placeness.

97. Borst, Arno, Mönche am Bodensee 610-1525, Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1978. "Among all the groups that suffer from discrimination, the dead are the worst off, since their very existence is negated."
98. Albrecht Koschorke, Die Geschichte des Horizonts, op. cit.

## History of Place: Odysseus's house, 8th Century B.C.

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

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In Homer's time, in the 9th century before Christ, a polis was not a city but the household of a noble man. The word stems from the Indoeuropean root pûr and means originally a mound or a hill. The German word Burg derives from the same root. To designate the city, there was another word, asty, which did not mean the physical city within its limit, but a broad domain of civility, of people who could be called asteoi, urban in the sense of civilized, polite, handy. Odysseus was the prototype of such a man. Instead of speaking of politics, for those times, it would be better to speak of "asteism." The word could stand for the maintenance of relations of civility between houses, equal if they were in the same town or not. The Odyssea is thus a first "geography of asteism" that should inspire the Greeks to expand their sphere, particularly in the still half unknown Western part of the Mediterranean.

One good half of Odysseus's house was dedicated to the inter-domestic

relations of "asteic" hospitality. It consisted mainly in a huge room, with a hearth and small tables for festive meals. It was Hermes's domain, and the type of hospitality that was practiced there was no longer the "hestian" hospitality, in which the guest was integrated into the domestic hierarchy, but the "equalitarian," "hermetic" hospitality characterized by the xenos relationship. In later time, this place, much reduced in size, was called andronitis, and opposed to the gynaikonitis, the space of women.

In Homer's time, the part of the house dedicated to inter-domestic "politics" or better "asteism" was still called the megaron. The asteoi gathered in the megaron, ate and drank, listened to the rhapsod or aiodos, and weaved intrigues. Homer was such an aiodos. In absence of any supra-domestic institution, of well-maintained roads and hotels, hospitality in the web of "asteism" was the only possible means of traveling and the only way to know about the world.

The megaron opened the house to the world. Though it was men's domain, the Odyssea reports over regions where women had entrance into the megaron. In the 8th song for instance, Odysseus, whose ship had wrecked on the shore of Phaiakia, is told by Athena to ask the queen, and not the king for hospitality. The other part of the house was dedicated to household activities. It is the domain of Hestia, to which men are not allowed.

## Euphiletos' House, 5th Century B.C.

Euphiletos lived in Athens at the end of the 5th century before Christ. One day, while he was in the fields, his wife let her lover into the house. When her husband came back earlier than usual, she convinced him that he should

take a nap. She enclosed him in his room and went back to her lover to help him escape. In order to cover the noise, she ordered the servant to pinch the child, so he would cry. Nonetheless, Euphiletos heard the noise of the door and discovered the plot. He murdered his wife's lover and had to stand for the judge for that reason. Since he was a poor speaker, he asked a logographos and rhetor to take care of his defense. This logographos was Lysias. Here is how Lysias let Euphiletos describe his house to the judge:

I have a small, two story house, whose second floor is installed like the first. It is so divided into a gynaikonitis on the upper floor and an andronitis downstairs. (...) When my wife got the child, we interchanged rooms, so that she would not be exposed to dangers when she goes to the bath. So it became a habit, that my wife went away from me and slept downstairs near the child (...) so that he would not cry.[99]

Lysias's text shows us at least two things about a small house in Athens in the 5th century. 1.Since the house has two stories, there is no hearth in the middle of the men's quarter: It is no longer a *megaron.*

Men's and women's quarters have become interchangeable: they are alike.

Louis Gernet, the founder of the "French School" of Hellenism, related the disappearance— or at least the reduction—of the hearth with the rise of democracy in Clysthenes's time:
When the position of the hearth becomes arbitrary, the territory can be ordered

99. Lysias, edited and translated by W.R.M. Lamb, Cambridge, Mass., London, 1976, I 6:14.

mathematically, that is, reorganized around an arbitrary and theoretical center: every hearth can be displaced at will.[100] He so associates the rise of the classical polis, be it democratic, oligarchic or ploutocratic, with changes in the relations between gendered spaces, and this is a powerful insight.

Not only the hearth, but the parts of the house, and the house itself had become mobile, as if Hestia had been uprooted. This can be compared with Xenophnon's admiration for a "mobile house" which is a ship. In Oikonomikos, he lets the perfect householder Ischomachos tell Socrates:
But the most beautiful and best calculated order of furniture, o Socrates, I have observed during a visit of the great Phoenician ship. [101]

And Ischomachos goes on to explain how the organization of this ship should be the model of all well-ordered houses.
Xenophon is the author of one of the first known "doctrines about the house." Such doctrines do not speak of the vernacular tracing of limits between gendered domains, but of the domination of the house father over wife, children, slaves and dependants. I have, I believe, identified a moment in which domination is instituted over the asymmetrical complementarities of gendered spaces. This moment implies the alphabet.

100. Louis Gernet, "Sur le symbolisme olitique en Grèce ancienne: le Foyer Commun," in Cahier Internationaux de Sociologie, 1951, pp. 21 - 43.
101. Xenophon, Ökonomische Schriften, edited by Gert Audring, Berlin, 1992.

# Space

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

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To the question "where are you in this moment?" a pilot would answer "at longitude x, latitude y, altitude z." But if I ask you "where do you live?" your answer may instead evoke neighborly relations weaved through the years—a climate, old stones, the freshness of water. Depending on who is asked about what, the "where?" question can be answered by space determinations or by the memories of a concrete place. Space and place are two different ways of conceiving the "where" or, using the Latin word for "where" as a terminus technicus, two answers to the ubi question.

Place is an order of being vis–à-vis my body. This order (Gr: kosmos) always mirrors the great cosmos. This vis-à-vis or mirroring is the essence of what Ivan Illich called proportionality (Illich and Rieger, 1991.) According to Einstein, the concept of space disembedded itself from the "simpler concept of place" and

"achieve[d] a meaning which is freed from any connection with a particular material object" ([1954], p. xv.) Yet, Einstein insisted that space is a free creation of imagination, a "means devised for easier comprehension of our sense experience." In pure space however, my body would be out of place and in a state of perceptual deprivation.

This article concentrates on the radical monopoly that space determinations exert today on the ubi question. Wheels and motors seem to belong to space, as feet do to places. And just as the radical monopoly of motorized transportation on human mobility leaves some freedom to walk, space determinations leave remnants of placeness to linger in perception and memory. It will be contended that ethics can only be rebuilt by a recovery of placeness.

A general conception of space is conspicuously absent from ancient mathematics, physics and astronomy. The Greek language, so rich in locational terms, had no word for "space." (Bochner, 1973) Topos meant place, and when Plato in Timaeus located the demiurge in an uncreated ubi of which we can have no perception because it does not "exist," he called it chôra, fallow land, the temporary void between the fullness of the wild and cultivation. According to Plato, the demiurge's chôra could only be conceived "by a kind of spurious reason," "as in a dream," in a state in which "we are unable to cast off sleep and determine the truth about it" (Plato, Timaeus 52). In hindsight, it can be conceded that this was a first intuition of the antinomy between place and what is today called "space." In the XIVth century, Nicolas d'Oresme imagined an incorporeal void beyond the last heavenly sphere, but still insisted that, in contrast, all real places are full and material. Space, still only a pure logical possibility, became a possibile realis between d'Oresme and Galileo (Funkenstein, 1986, p. 62).

Following the canons of Antique and medieval cartography, a chart had to summarize bodily scouting and measuring gestures. Pilgrims followed itineraria; sailors, charts of ports; and surveyors consigned ritually performed acts of mensuration on marmor or brass plates. These were no maps in the modern sense, because they did not postulate a disembodied eye contemplating a land or a sea from above. The first maps in the modern sense were contemporary of the early experimentations of central perspective and, like these, construed an abstract "eye" contemplating a distant grid in which particulars could be relatively situated. In 1574, Peter Ramus wrote a "lytle booke" in which he exposed a "calculus of reality" in which all topics were divided in mental spaces that immobilized objects in their definitions precluding the understanding of knowledge as an act (Pickstock, 1998). Cartesian coordinates and projective geometry gave the first mathematical justification to the idea of an immaterial vessel, unlimited in extent, in which all material objects are contained.

Had "space" been invented, as Einstein contended, or discovered? In the XVIIIth century, Kant announced that space was an a priori of perception. For him, Euclidean geometry and its axioms were the mathematical expression of an entity—space that cannot be perceived, but, like time, underlies all perceptions. The first attempts to contradict Euclidean geometry were published in Russian in 1829 by Lobachevsky[102] , whose ideas were rooted in his opposition to Kant. For him, space was an a posteriori concept. He thought that he could prove this by demonstrating that axioms different from Euclid's can generate different spaces. In the light of Lobachevsky's—and then Riemann's—non-Euclidean geometry, Euclidean geometry appears ex post as

102. Lobachevsky, Nikolay Ivanovich. The date of the first publication on non-Euclidean geometry is 1829. It was a work in Russian by Nikolay Ivanovich Lobachevsky (1792-1856), followed in 1837 by an essay in French ("Géométrie imaginaire") and, in 1840, by a book in German (Geometrische Untersuchungen zur Theorie der Parallellinien).

just another axiomatic construct. There is no a-priori space experience, no "natural," "universal" space. Space is not an empirical fact but a construct, an arbitrary frame that "carpenters" the modern imagination (Heelan, 1983).
Einstein occupies an axial and simultaneously ambiguous position in the history of this understanding. In order to express alterations of classical physics that seemed offensive to common sense, he adopted a mathematically constructed manifold (coordinate "space") in which the space coordinates of one coordinate system depend on both the time and space coordinates of another relatively moving system. On the one hand, like Lobachevsy and Riemann2 ([1854]), Einstein insisted on the constructed character of space: different axioms generate different spaces. On the other hand, he not only came to consider his construct as ruling the unreachable realms of the universe, but that which also reduced earthly human experience to a particular case of it.
In Einstein's space, time can become extension; mass, energy; gravity, a geometric curvature; and reality a distant shore, indifferent to ethics. This space has reigned over the modern imagination since about a century. Yet, the idea that the realm of everyday experience is a particular case of this construct has not raised fundamental ethical questions.

The subsumption of the neighborhood where I live into the same category as distant galaxies transforms my neighbors into disembodied particularities. This loss of the sense of immediate reality invites a moral suicide. Hence, ethics requires today an epistemological distinction that evokes d'Oresme's: contrary to outer space, the perceptual milieu is a place of fullness. According to its oldest etymology, ethos means a place's gait. Space recognizes no gait, no body, no concreteness and, accordingly, no ethics. The ubi question must, therefore, be ethically restated.

Body historians and phenomenologists provide tracks towards an ethical recovery of placeness in the space age. Barbara Duden has shown that fundamental ethical questions related to pregnancy can only be raised by relocating the body in its historical places (1991). For their part, phenomenologists, these philosophers who cling to the "primacy of perception" in spite of tantalizing science-borne and technogenic "certainties," restore some proportionality between body and place. For Bachelard, for instance, there is not the individual body immersed in the apathetic void of space, but an experience of "mutual seizure" of the body and its natural ubi. Merleau-Ponty (1964) further articulates the complementarity of these two sides of reality. These can be steps toward a recovery of the sense of the vis-à-vis without which there is no immediate reality, and hence no ethic.

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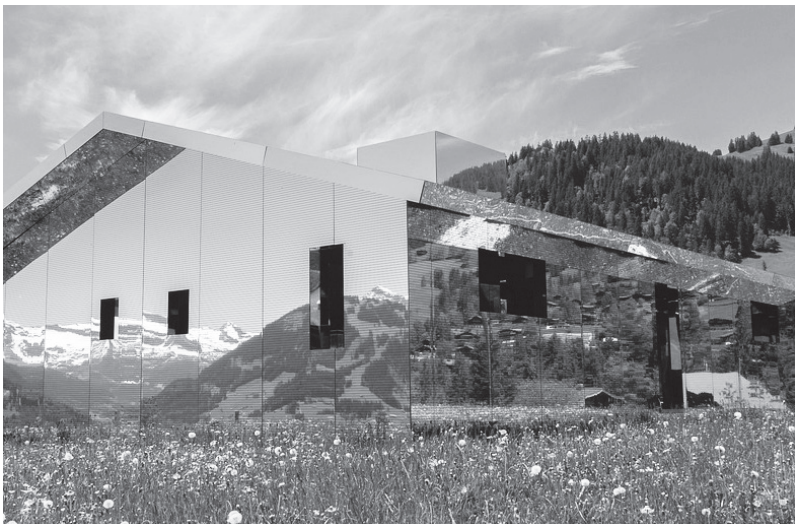

## Modernity's Spatial Imperative (2000)

The International Journal of Illich Studies ISSN 1948-4666

*Jean Robert*

Modernity could be appropriately defined by its urge to master space and to expose all reality to a shadowless light in a controlled space. Long before Armstrong treaded the moon and even before Sputnik's bip was broadcasted all over the world, modernity was the "space age."

Unlike other epochs, this age does not care to define its concept of the summum bonum as a graspable frame of orientation for action. It does not offer clues for decisions about ends, but for choices about means, and these means always imply free motion and shadowless vision in mastered spaces. All what our epoch considers worthwhile can always be reduced to a mastery over spaces, to vision and to motion in a manageable space.

Bridge builders do no longer say that, by uniting the edges of a cleft, they

found a human site in the wilderness. They say that they remove an obstacle to a virtual flow of circulation. Traffic planners have adopted their language: in all that which opposes free motion in controlled space, they see a "factor of friction" to be removed.

"Circulation" and "speed"—the measure of its intensity—have become the axiomatic certainties underpinning a vision of the world as a collection of accessible objects and locations in space. Starting in the mid 19th century with the rapid propagation of the railroads, "space" has emerged into public consciousness as the ultimate substratum of reality. In the experience of speed, the landscape is experienced as an immutable space which frames ever changing images. This fixed receptacle of fleeting images makes the abstract coordinate-space of mathematics and physics seem more real than the realities that "it contains." This void, and yet more than real universal container has become "the real space of modern experience." It is what commuters perceive as the "environment" in which they haste by selecting the appropriate signs along the highway, successively discarding sight after sight what E.V. Walter calls "the rubbish of perception." Traffic landscapes are not landscapes in which one dwells but landscapes through which one runs by abolishing their sight. Symbolically, speed is the arrow that pierces all circles and removes boundaries as disposable obstacles.

Yet, circulation is not the only manifestation of our time's spatial imperative. It is only one of several symptoms. From astrophysics to topology, from cinematography to poetry, there is hardly a modern discipline or an art which does not start as an initiation to rules of composition in real or imaginary spaces. Since centuries in the West, space is the medium of all visual representations.

Yet, in the "real space" of modernity, representation becomes a simulation: an engineered deceit of the senses which abolishes the distinction between the image and its model.

The adoption of the heliocentric worldview led to a "spatialization" of the Earth. The container of all places was transformed into a rock or, as Romanyshyn says, "a corpse." Barbara Duden sees the image of the fetus which—since a famous photograph in Life Magazine—haunts the modern imagination as the outcome of the ultimate spatialization of the body. Building on Panofski, Duden shows that it started with Leonardo's pictures of the dissected corpses of pregnant women. From Leonardo to Hunter and to the sonogram, Duden documents the constitution of what she calls "the public fetus" as the result of a progressive "peeling away" of the maternal, caring body. In her book Geschichte unter der Haut, Duden contrasts modern anatomy—the art of piercing the skin and exploring the "obscurity beneath" to a reckless light—with the complaints of early 18th century patients to their physician, Dr Storch.

*Speed* similarly transpierces all limiting horizon and makes "the beyond" part of daily experience. In No *Sense of Place,* Meyrowitz has shown that the electronic media breaks down any possible distinction between familiar objects and remote, ungraspable realities. In the words of Michael Mooney, a participant of the "Commonplace Conference" in State College, we live in a world "in which the common is becoming uncommon and the uncommon common."

An age which disposes of the tangible "flesh" of all things—of all that offers resistance to the hand and is therefore "haptic"—first makes the unexpected seem obvious and then, as Ivan Illich says, redefines it as "that which is

demonstrable but remains unimaginable." Modern man lives in a world of unimaginable *demonstrabilia* that techniques of spatial simulation have transformed into *visibilia.*

# Autonomy and Heteronomy in Architecture Theory: Part I The Potential Conflict Between the Art of Building and the Act of Dwelling (2000)

***Jean Robert***

Again and again, architecture theorists like to quote Adolf Loos's parable about "the poor rich man." But, do they really understand the lesson?

As the story goes, a newly enriched man wanted to celebrate his change of status by asking the best architect in town to build him a new house. Everybody worked hard, and after a couple of months, the rich man could move in into his

new residence. The architect had thought of everything, for instance, the color of the bedroom's wallpaper was harmonized with that of the man's and his wife's nightgowns, and even with the special slippers that they were supposed to wear in that part of the house.

The rich man was really happy, and, like Emperor Nero in his Golden House, he could have exclaimed: "At last, I feel fully human." Architectural journals widely publicized the mansion and described its owner as a man who had made a work of art out of his life. In fact, there was not a single act of his daily existence that was not art.

This euphoria lasted until the man's birthday. At this occasion, his house was invaded by his new adulators who filled the living room with their gifts, all meant to be contributions to the man's art of living. After they had left, passed midnight, the rich man inspected the gifts and tried to figure out where each of them would fit in his artwork.

Suddenly, the architect emerged from behind a curtain and ordered: "Remove immediately all that trash. You hired me is my major work and I will not let you defile it. Besides, look at your feet: those pink slippers belong to the bedroom, not here in the living room." The rich man realized at once that what his architect called a perfect life was a life to which he had nothing to add. "I am perfect: I am a finished man," the poor rich man moaned. [103]

When he wrote that joke in 1908, Loos wanted to deride the pretentions of the

103. Alice T. Friedman, "Domestic Differences: Edith Farnsworth, Mies van der Rohe, and the Gendered Body," in Christopher Reed, Not at Home. The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, pp. 179-192.

architects who thought of themselves as “general artists of life” (“because I am a renowned artist and you wanted me to provide you with a perfect life. Your house with you inside Gesamtkünstler”) while allowing their clients almost no vital decisions over their own vital space.

Yet, in spite of that early warning, more than one modern architect played god with their clients. See for instance what happened to poor Mrs Edith Farnsworth, one of Mies van der Rohe’s first American clients. Middle-aged, single and professionally successful (she was a nephrologist at a Chicago hospital), Dr Farnsworth met her future architect at a party in 1945. When she ushered her desire to create a retreat in which to escape the loneliness of weekends in the city, Mies immediately offered her to design it. He would not charge any architect’s fees. Mrs Farnsworth had already bought a piece of land in a place called Plano, 60 miles west of Chicago, near the Fox River. A visit to the site with her architect elated both.

> She (in her Memoirs)…the effect was tremendous, like a storm, a flood or other act of God.”
> He: “I would think that here where everything is so beautiful, and privacy is no issue, it would be a pity to erect an opaque wall between the outside and the inside. So I think we should build the house of steel and glass; in that way, we’ll let the outside in.”

A project was soon done. It was displayed at the exhibition of Mies’s work at the Museum of Modern Art organized by Philip Johnson in 1947. Edith Farnsworth felt proud of the project and of her role in it. From that point on and for all the three subsequent years, she felt more a patron than a client.

Construction was started in the summer of 1949 and lasted about one year and a half. When Farnsworth finally moved in, in December 1950, nothing really worked: the roof leaked, the heating reeked, and building costs amounted to twice the original estimates. The patron became an ordinary client again, and she complained. The architect answered by claiming owed fees for architect's and supervisory services, amounting to 20% + 15% of actual building costs. Counterclaims followed claims until the matter was finally settled in 1956. Meanwhile, Farnsworth tried to make a home out of the glass house that one of the world's leading modern architects had built for her. She confessed to a journalist:

> The truth is that in this house with its four walls of glass I feel like a prowling animal, always on the alert. I am always restless. Even in the evening. I feel like a sentinel on guard day and night. I can rarely stretch out and relax
> What else? I don't keep a garbage can under my sink. Do you know why? Because you can see the whole "kitchen" from the road on the way in here and the can would spoil the appearance of the whole house. So I hide it in the closet farther down from the sink. Mies talks about "free space": but his space is very fixed. I can't put on a cloth hanger in my house without considering how it affects everything from the outside. Any arrangement of furniture becomes a major problem, because the house is transparent, like an X-ray.[104]

The Farnsworth House was to become an emotional cause célèbre invested with meanings that went far beyond matters of architectural design[105].

104. Quoted in Alice T. Friedman, "Domestic Differences...," op. cit., p. 188.
105. Op. cit., p. 181.

Architectural journals, like House Beautiful, Architectural Forum, House and Garden, successively publicized the case until it became the object of a national debate on "Good and Bad Modern Houses." While this publicity eventually contributed to the architect's fame (he could discuss his ideas with famous architectural critics) it was no benefit to his client. Once the case was brought to the attention of the public, crowds of people came on weekends to look at the house "reputed to be the only one of its kind," but in reality "a one-room, one story structure with flat roof and glass and steel outer walls." [106] In her memoirs, Farnsworth wrote that she found it, hard to bear the insolence and boorishness of those who invaded the solitude of my shore and my home... flowers brought in to heal the scars of the building were crushed by those booths beneath the noses pressed against the glass.[107]

In spite of all, Edith Farnsworth managed to stay nearly twenty years in the glass house, working to make it a home. But she finally gave up: in the early 1970s, she sold the house and moved to Italy. She had been for too long the object of other people's curiosity, too long a non- conformist. Now, she wanted nothing more than to become invisible: "Now I would prefer to move as the women do in the Old Quarter of Tripoli, muffled in unbleached homespun so that only a hole is left for them to look out of." Best of all, she said, the world outside would not even know where the hole was.[108]

Last spring, I visited Mies van der Rohe's Museum of Modern Art at Berlin's Kulturzentrum. Few works of architecture affect me so powerfully. The architectural promenade through the museum lets you with the sensation

106. Op. cit. p. 187.
107. Quoted in op. cit., p. 187.
108. Op. cit. p. 192.

that every particular space opens to a half mysterious beyond, that you are on transit to the place where the gods play with numbers and proportions (and, as Mies said, reside in the beautifully crafted details). The Cistercian simplicity of the forms, the clever clarity of the composition, the naturalness of the light, the presence of the garden "in the inside" before it becomes physically accessible, all contributes to a feeling of great complexity, a word that here almost means the contrary of complication. A splendid "leçon d'architecture." True, the architecture is so interesting that you almost forget to see the paintings on the walls. As to the sculptures, they seem to engender their own "Eigenspace" and to modify the "metrics" of space perception. Every time I visit a work by Mies van der Rohe, I discover new aspects of it, am elated by the manifestation of always new intentions. His spaces are literally extra-ordinary. They are for very special moments. They put you out of yourself.
Would I like to spend my ordinary life (with its apparent disorder, its need for changing arrangements) in them? No. Yet Mies found patron-clients who have been said to appreciate just that: being put out of themselves, estranged from ordinary circumstances, "defamiliarized." So confirmed Grete Tugenhat, one of Mies first European clients, over the effect her house had on its inhabitants: "A person appears, both to himself and to others, to be more clearly set off from his surrounding." As to Mrs Farnsworth (obviously not a he-person), she experienced this being set off as a repression of her being a woman.[109] Her house was no real home to her.

What are the lessons of Mies van der Rohe's "leçons d'architecture"? Let me try suggest these: A home is what you make of the house that has been made for

109. Op. cit. p. 190.

you. A house is “homeable” when it lets you touch it. A house of untouchable perfection is hardly homeable.

How do contemporary architecture theorists understand this lesson of a lesson?


# Autonomy and Heteronomy in Architecture Theory: Part II Home and House (2000)

***Jean Robert***

I found a striking formulation of the synergy of autonomy and heteronomy in architecture in a paper by Prof. Joseph Rykwert: "House and Home" which I will comment on shortly. In this paper, Rykwert writes:

> Home is where one starts from. That much is obvious. A home is not the same as a house, which is why we need two different terms. Does a home need to be anything built at all, any fabric? I think not. Home could just be

> a hearth, a fire or the bare ground by any human lair. That may well be the one thing that nobody can quite do without: a fireplace, some focus. After all, if a home had no focus, you could not start from it.[110]

House refers to an inert object. On the contrary, home refers to a situation, an activity: it is always in the process of making.

Home does not require any building, even if a house always does. You can make a home anywhere: a little tinder, even some waste paper, a few matches, or a cigarette lighter is all you need.[...].... But a house must be brick and timber, mortar and trowels, carpentry and masonry, foundation and topping off: and it requires taking thought. [111]
But in Mexico, a home can consist of four poles, some beams and a roof of palm leaves or of tar paper. Or is a shack not a home? House is something that is done for you, home is what you do, by yourself and for yourself, sometimes thanks to, sometimes in spite of the architect.

The Latin word whose meaning is closest to home is domus, from which domestic and domesticity stem. Domus never means the physical structure, though it is often translated as house. Domus is a notion related to the family, and connotes homeliness, and even "peace": its meaning is social and moral, never material. Home requires stability, spatial and social "recognizableness," that is orientation, and possession, which demands a relation to the soil (to a piece of land, but "land" is an imperial concept) and so a protection against extradition.

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110. Joseph Rykwert, "House and Home," in Ludolf Kuchenbuch and Uta Kleine, eds., Anthology for Jean Robert, Raum und Geschichte, Kurseinheit 4, Hagen: Fernuniversität, 1998, pp. 1-11.
111. Rykwert, op. cit. pp. 3, 4.

For the Romans, a man's threshold was so sacred that even the emperor could not trespass it. Another Latin word is mansio, from maneo, I remain or abide, from which the early Middle Ages derived the word mansus (OG huoba, modern German Hufe, words akin to Greek kepos, a garden), which connotes a dwelling place by the soil needed to establish it. In the IXth century, the mansus's material complement was called casa, a "hut" and was often precarious, dispersed and mobile. The Greek even has a verb for the establishment of such a two-faced dwelling place: oikodomeo, I break a piece of land open, for cultivation or building, I found, I edify. That verb combines the root *dom, meaning to build (or perhaps, only perhaps, to tame?)[112] and oikos, the Greek word more akin to home. When the Roman wanted to specify that he meant the physical house, he would say aedes, a thing built (hence: aedifico, a verb built by learned Romans to translate oikodomeo).
The architects' business is to build houses, not to establish homes. It is "with structure, with physical fabric, with limit, with context." [113] Perhaps one of the most doubtful effects of the modern movement is the demise of the distinction between house and home. But, as we shall see later, the "postmodern" reaction is as questionable.

> Obsessed with the detailed working of the home where every movement was planned, where a bed would never stand under a window and baby-

112. Émile Benveniste, Le Vocabulaire des Institutions Indo-Européennes, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969, vol. I, p. 307 (cf. also vol. II, p.90 on demos) insists that Lat. domus, Gr. domos (the physical house as opposed to oikos), and Lat. domare as well as Gr. damao (Engl. tame) derive from three distinct and irreductible, though homophonic roots: 1. *doma, to exert a "domesticating" violence, to "tame", to establish a chora" or cleaned field (hence Gr. chorites, country-man); 2. *dem, to build (hence English timber, Greek domos); 3. *dem-, house, family, group sharing a territory (hence Greek demos). In spite of their striking homophony, Lat. domus (from *dem- ) and Gr. domos (from *dem) do not have at all the same origin nor do they have the same meaning, since domus is the home and domos the house. As to oikodomeo, though it meant to build in classical times, its original meaning can hardly have been the equivalent of aedifico, for such meaning would have been rendered by a (non-attested) "domodomeo." In spite of all, *doma and *dem might have a common origin. In this context, remember that in German, bauen means both to build and to cultivate, two activities that required a founding act.
113. Joseph Rykwert, "House and Home", op. cit. p. 9.

> carriages could be stored under the stairs, they forgot that their business was with house and not with home.[114]

This can be seen as a consequence of the reduction of the complexities of the web of personal interactions called home to catalogues of "functions" meeting standard "needs." In this respect, Rykwert recalls the lesson that the Austrian writer Karl Kraus tried to instill in architects and planners:

> … he said that he expected the city to provide him with water, gas, electricity and working roads: *die Gemütlichkeit besorge ich* - I will supply the homeliness, he said. [115]

In his article, Rykwert also clarifies an issue blurred by a fashionable interpretation of vernacular building as "architecture without architects" (he is an adversary of the (ab)use of the expression "vernacular architecture"):

> Without wishing to digress, I would like to remind you of a very popular slim book, full of beautiful images, published some years ago, which was called Architecture Without Architects, as if such a thing were not a contradiction in terms. It suggested that the shelters of monkeys and the dams of beavers were analogous to those of "untutored builders in space and time," [116] nomads, peasants and suchlike, whose houses had evolved from those of the animals without any need for deliberation - like the animals, they worked by instinct.[…]

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114. Op. cit., p. 8.
115. Op. cit. p. 8.
116. Bernard Rudofsky, Architecture Without Architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964, p. 16.

> Yet, I suspect that if one were to investigate any of the human dwellings illustrated in Rudofsky's book, however "instinctual" they may appear, one would soon find that many were produced by specialist craftsmen who could be very articulate indeed about what they were doing. Their notions may have been framed in terms of legends - yet their accounts of them would often contain the word "because." [117]

Rykwert further stresses that there is no building that does not involve decision and choice, concertation, in short a project, even if it is justified and glossed "in mythical terms, and given some specific legendary weight." [118] Deliberating, making decisions and choices, and glossing, in short, "taking thought about building" is one of the several useful definitions of architecture—which is where I come in." [119] In that peculiar respect, there is no specificity of "vernacular architecture" that would oppose it definitionally to "pedigreed architecture."

Rykwert's essay ends with an indictment of an architecture that "packages a life-style" without thinking of the context because it has lost the sense of its own limits:

Look at the real-estate advertising in New York papers with this in mind. If a home is offered you on the sixty-ninth floor of a pencil-sharp skyscraper, know for sure that the sidewalks and indeed the surroundings of the building will be the purlieus (if not the homes) of the dispossessed, however many the varieties of the marbles which line its walls, or photo-eyes blink from its cornices. [120]

117. Rykwert, op. cit., pp. 4, 5.
118. Op. cit., p. 5.
119. Op. cit., p. 4.
120. Op. cit., p. 9.

He concludes:

> I must therefore plead with my contemporaries to reassess the conjunction between house and home. [121]

How do other architecture theorists celebrate the conjunction of home and house or ratify their modern and postmodern disjunction?

121. Op. cit., pp. 8, 9.

# Autonomy and Heteronomy in Architecture Theory: Part III: The Disjunction of House and Home in Contemporary Architectural Theories (2001)

***Jean Robert***

Instead of an assessment of the conjunction of house and home, contemporary architecture theorists have raised what they call *the question of domesticity.* As will become obvious in the following pages, this questions in tangential to that which interests us: it cannot be said that it does not touch it, but it does not settle on it. It rather uses it as an entry to some virtual spaces.

Let's thus examine how contemporary architecture theories touch the question of the conjunction between house and home. Rather than conjunction, they predicate disjunction, rather than reassessment, dismissal. For example, Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham write:

> The insatiable and complex demand for physical comfort—for the "axis," which is one of the paths "home"—in all architectural buildings (even the most austere) stands directly against experiments in building, or even thinking, the grotesque, the pluri-dimensional, the ideological, the sublime.[122]

It is true that architecture is taking thought about the building of houses, not about homes. But should not a house be the shell of a possible home? Many architecture theorists write as if they were thinking that it shouldn't. But how do they, personally, live that disjunction?

Besides, I don't think that the words physical comfort here mean exclusively a state of satisfaction or homeostasis with the surrounding world. It should rather be understood in the verbal sense of comforting. I understand the search for comfort as a longing for an "axis," for what Rykwert calls "focus": the axis that, through the hearth, relates the underworld to the upperworld, and that many cultures symbolize by the tree or the column of smoke that brings the flavor of human libations—fruits of the soil and the underworld—to the gods. Yet, we hear that this longing stands against experimenting and even thinking in architecture. Is a house the abode of autonomous dwelling acts by the dwellers themselves (in which case it becomes a home), or is it the laboratory for the architect's experiments with "the grotesque, the multidimensional, the

122. … as Mrs Farnsworth could indeed testify, see Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, "Introduction," in Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, Restructuring Architecture Theory, Evanston, ILL: Northwestern University Press, p. 1.

ideological, the sublime," and hence a space whose inhabitants are submitted to the other's law (heteronomy)? Most of the architectural theorists reviewed here favor the latter.

In other words, house and home are disjoined and, as I will try to show, each leads a separate existence: the building, or for this effect, the house as an object of experimentation, and the home as the repressed that inevitably resurfaces, as for instance in the search for communitary security and orientation of the Latin American squatters, [123] or, quite differently, in the staging of a dismantled "domesticity" by some artists and architects. [124]

Yet, if architecture theory refuses to settle on the conjunction of house and home, where does it want to head? The answer might be: to some virtual space, beyond all past literary imagination. But again: is such space *inhabitable?*

### *The Influence of Literary Theories on Architectural Theories*

One of the striking things about architecture theory today is how badly it is influenced by literary theories and philosophy. These influences cannot be explained away as mere consequences of the disenchantment—starting in the sixties—with classical modernism. They are new imports, from domains other

123. See for instance: Lisa R. Peattie, View from the Barrio, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1968; John Turner, "Housing priorities, settlements patterns, and urban settlements in urbanizing countries" in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners, November 1968; William Mangin, Peasants in Cities. Readings in the Anthropology of Urbanization, Boston, Houghton Miffin Company, 1970. More examples in Jean Robert, (En)trust People, Mexico: Housing International Coalition, 1996, the bibliography, pp. 127-136.

124. For a statement of "postmodern," dismanteled and disembodied domesticity, see Christine Poggi, "Victor Acconci's Bad Dreams of Domesticity," in Christopher Reed, ed., Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Literature, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996, op. cit., pp. 237-252. For documentation about the return of domesticity in some contemporary architecture (often by female or feminist architects, see the end of the article), Sharon Haar and Christopher Reed, "Coming Home, A Postscript on Postmodernism," in Christopher Reed, Not at Home, op. cit., pp. 253-273.

than the ones in which modern architecture had taken roots. In the heroic period of modernism, in the time of Bauhaus and de Stijl, architecture would import a formal language from the visual arts, mainly painting and sculpture, as well as forge some legitimizing slogans out of scientific metaphors (think of the theories of urbanism since Ildefonso Cerdà,[125] with their tissues, their arteries, nodes and nervous centers), but it had little use for literature or philosophy. Architects then had their own literary and philosophical stamina, think of Le Corbusier.

Or perhaps would it be more appropriate to say that both contemporary literature and contemporary architecture share an interest in semiology? The following quote from Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham seems to confirm it:

The implication of the refiguration of representation, which prepares the way for the presence of the past in postmodern architecture, can be seen by noting central insights that emerge in contemporary semiology. Signs, we have learned, do not represent objects or events that once were present. To the contrary, the sign is always the sign of a sign. Forever entangled in the play of signification, we never have access to things themselves and thus can never penetrate naked reality. What we often naively take to be objectivity is actually nothing other than a sign or set of signs whose signature has been forgotten. Inasmuch as we deal only with signs and never with "reality" as such, our knowledge is inescapably fictive. Unlike (almost all) his predecessors,

125. Ildefonso Cerdà, Teoría de La Urbanización, Madrid 1867. Facsimile: Barcelona 1967. Abr. Fr. edition: La Théorie Générale de L'urbanisation, presented and adapted by A. Lopez de Abersaturi, Paris, 1979.
Comments on Cerdà's work: Françoise Choay, La Règle et Le Modèle : Sur La Théorie de L'architecture et de L'urbanisme, Paris, 1980; Joseph Rykwert, "House und Home," in Ludolf Kuchenbuch and Uta Kleine, Anthology for Jean Robert, Raum und Geschichte, Hagen: FernUniversität, 1998, Kurseinheit IV, pp. 1 - 11; Jean Robert, Raum und Geschichte, Kurseinheit 1, Hagen: FernUniversität, 1998, pp. 31-34.

the postmodernist not only recognizes but gaily embraces the fictions among which he is destined to err.[126]

But architecture theory no longer expects from linguistics or semiology the "explanation" of architectural forms.
[The Opposition years have] given way with a noticeable loss of faith in the capacity of the linguistic and philosophical model to explain architecture, and thus a loss of faith in the transparency promised by the "age of textuality." Perhaps this is because architecture cannot even be thought apart from "form" and formalisms.[127]

The architectural movement which calls itself "postmodern" vindicates the power to add signs to a world of signs, in absence of a beyond called reality.
Perhaps the literary concept that became most popular among avant-gardist architects is defamiliarization. Here is how Bernard Tschumi, a "deconstructivist architect," justifies the cooption of that literary idea by architectural theory:

In recent years, small pockets of resistance began to form as architects in various parts of the world - England, Austria, the United states, Japan (for the most part, in advanced postindustrial countries) - started to take advantage of [the current] situation of fragmentation and superficiality and to turn it against itself. If the prevalent ideology was one of familiarity - familiarity with known images, derived from 1920s modernism or eighteenth-century classicism - maybe one's role was to defamiliarize. If the new, mediated world

126. Mark C. Taylor, "Deadlines Approaching Anarchitecture," in Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, Restructuring Architectural Theory, op. cit. p. 20.
127. Marco Diani and Catherine Ingraham, "Introduction," in Restructuring Architectural Theory, op. cit., p.1.

echoed and reinforced our dismantled reality, maybe, just maybe, one should take advantage of such dismantling, celebrate fragmentation by celebrating the culture of difference, by accelerating and intensifying the loss of certainty, of center, of history. [...]
In architecture in particular, the notion of defamiliarization was a clear tool. If the design of windows only reflects the superficiality of the skin's decoration, we might very well start to look for a way to do without windows. If the design of pillars reflects the conventionality of supporting frames, maybe we might get rid of pillars altogether. [128]

The term defamiliarization is a translation of ostran(n)enie, a Russian word meaning "making strange," "unfamiliar" popularized by the Russian Formalists, a school of literary criticism that began in two groups, Opoyaz (an acronym) founded in 1916 at St. Petersburg and led by Victor Shklovsky and the Moscow Linguistic Circle founded in 1915. Both groups were influenced by the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure. They stressed the autonomy of the text and, more important for our purpose, the discontinuity between literary and other uses of language. They placed an "emphasis on the medium" and analyzed the way in which literature is able to alter or "make strange" common language. They insisted on the predominance of form and technique over content. Proscribed in 1929 in the USSR, the Formalists had nonetheless a great influence in the West, notably through the work of linguist Roman Jakobson. The following example of the use of defamiliarization by an American writer will suffice to illustrate the point:

The mirror reflected what seemed at first a priest. A white robe, which fell from

128. Bernard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997, pp. 237, 238.

his thick shoulders in crescent folds, circumscribed with diminishing accuracy the ponderous art of his great head, and gave to his obesity the suggestion of vulnerability rather than strength as he sat face to face with the fact of himself. This effect was intensified by the resignation with which he suffered what might have been his acolyte, also dressed in white, either to anoint his flourishing, grey-brown hair as if in preparation for some imminent solemnity or to give it a tonsure.[129]

What you finally get, is the familiar scene of a man in a hairdresser's chair. Similarly, what you get at the end in "defamiliarizing architecture," is some public building... or a house. Yet, can I transpose the brief definition of literary Formalism quoted above to architecture and speak of "architectural formalism"? This formalism would, I paraphrase, stress the autonomy of architectural space and, more important, the discontinuity between architecture and common uses of space. It would place an 'emphasis on the medium' and analyze the way in which architecture is able to alter or 'make strange' common spatial experience and insist on the predominance of form and technique over content." Is this perhaps the architectural theory of the age of show[130]?

Literature presupposes literacy, that is the fact that a great number of society's members are fluent in the art of reading.[131] Literacy, and I will say later why the term should be understood as alphabetic literacy, has given us what

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129. Frederick Buechner, A Long Day's Dying, 1949, quoted in R.H. Stacy, Defamiliarization in Language and Literature, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1977, p. 4.
130. Ivan Illich, "Guarding the eye in the age of show" (work in progress), in Barbara Duden, Lee Hoinacki, Ivan Illich and SebastianTrapp, Zur Geschichte des Blickens, pp. 97 - 115, available at Kreftingstrasse 16, 28203, Bremen or at www.pudel.uni-bremen.de
131. Eric Havelock, The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975.

George Steiner called "the bookish mentality" which in turn gave literature the importance it has in our society. [132]

It is often when an epoch comes to an end that it most obsessively displays the technical prowesses that made it possible, as in a sort of recapitulation. Think of the last generations of gothic builders, of their filigreed towers, their quasi flat vaults and their inversed arches. Or think of the clippers, the fastest commercial sailing ships ever designed, that for some decades could compete with the new steamers.

Do we not assist, in literature, to a recapitulatory display of the technical elements of the trade, the letters themselves and their permutative and manipulative possibilities? Raymond Queneau, for instance, published ten sonnets under the title Cent mille milliards de poèmes (1961) and invited the reader to rearrange them in the hundred-thousand-billion ways indicated by the title.

With La Disparition (1969), Georges Perec was able to write a whole novel without using the lettere. Of what cultural changes these games[133] are the symptom is not quite clear. The omnipresence of screens, as the new, now immaterial, support of the text, the "hypertext," but on the other hand, the resiliency of the book have still to be interpreted in a broad historic and

132. George Steiner, After Babel. Aspects of Language and of Translation. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
133. The possibility of such games exists since the dawn of the alphabet, and paleography attests that, since the beginning, such games have been marginally played. Erick Havelock, The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences, op. cit. p. 191, comments on "the habit of manipulating the arrangement of letters". However, such manipulations had decorative rather than "semiotic" purposes. They were limited by the predominance of speech over writs in the pre-classical epoch: Havelock also remarks that in Frogs Aristophanes's Euripides represents himself as a poet whose "fluency of diction" is "an infusion stained out of papyri" which may mean that his poetry draws upon expressions favored by the idioms of documental speech, contrary to Aeschylus, whose spoken verse can outweigh not only the corporeal presence of Euripides but also his "papyri." Aristophanes juxtaposes oral and literate styles to the advantage of the former (p. 286, 7).

cultural perspective. I share with Ivan Illich the hope that, if the ethology of reading is changing, this change will induce some to cultivate new forms of communitary reading, around old and new "houses of the book" similarly, I grope for a rebirth of communitary home- and place-making).

Do we not assist to a comparable "recapitulation" in architecture? I am not only alluding to the "ironic" conjuring up of the past, which is overtly the construction of a fictitious "pastness," but also to the dismembering of the narrative sequences of the promenade architecturale, to the influence of cinematographic and choreographic techniques. Meaning in architecture, as in choreography, happens through the body, through what bodily motions conceal and reveal, through the "narratives" that the sequences of these motions construct and deconstruct. In Summerspace (1958), choreographer Merce Cunningham ordered such sequences by chance procedures. In Biped, presented in New York in the spring of 1999, the sequences and the phrases were arranged at random by a computer. [134] "Our knowledge that the scene is not going to develop forces us to view it more sharply. Because A is not flowing into B, we actually see A."[135] A becomes a unique "event."

Architects who use comparable serial manipulations acknowledge the influence of choreography and cinematography, as well as of writers who, like Queneau and Perec, expected singularity from permutations and rearrangements of the elements of (written) language.
What we have to ask however is, how far we can draw the analogies between architecture and literature. Again, you could object that one dwells in buildings

134. David Vaughan, Merce Cunningham: Fifty Years, quoted in Joan Acocella, "The Gambler. Merce Cunningham, at eighty, continues to roll the dice," in The New Yorker, New York, August 9, 1999, p. 84-87.
135. Joan Acocella, op. cit., p. 86.

but not in the printed pages, but this is questionable: the bookish man literally carves a home in books—though he does not quite inhabit them bodily. The difference is more subtle and profound. It has to do, more than with writing (and more than with building), with reading (and with making a "home," with and without quotes). Modern reading—silent reading [136] --is generally a solitary pleasure. Establishing a home is not.

[H]uman dwellings are always more or less communal. However shabby and casual it may look, a rustic dwelling depends on being part of an articulated (I am even tempted to say an organic) layout; often a layout which was understood as a body with head and members into which the homesteads were "integrated." I would argue further - that a house, whether it is rural or urban, can only be a true home in such neighborly circumstances. While the lonely hearth will not quite make a home therefore, yet the erection of the home-house into a castle which defies its neighbors, and may be seen as quite separate from the public realm, makes it much less of a home. Or, in other words - an individual can have many houses, but only a person can make a home. [137]

Perhaps, the primordial reality is relational (the "thou," the "community") and if so, the alleged demise of "reality" is but the shadow of a neglect for "relationality"? If it is so, to make a home is a neighborly activity that engenders a reality.

Illich tells us that reading has passed from being a communitary, to being a

136. Ivan Illich, In the Vineyard of the Text. A Commentary to Hugh's Didascalicon, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993 explores the changes in the technology of writing and the ethology of reading during Hugh of St Victor's life time, in the XIIth century. As a consequence of these changes, silent, solitary reading superseded loud, public reading. For a funny account of this change and its consequences, enjoy Jorge Luis Borges, "Del culto de los libros," in Prosa completa, Barcelona: Bruguera, 1985, vol.3., pp.119-123. Yale University Press, 1973.

137. Joseph Rykwert, "House and home," op. cit. p. 5, 6.

solitary activity. This is the true crux of the comparison between literature and architecture, between modern, silent reading and home-negating housing. The reader whom Queneau or Perec invites to manipulate letters and words, multiply interpretations and face polysemies is the solitary, silent reader. Similarly, the "architecture of disjunction" appears to me as a choreography for the "lonely crowd." [138]

The question that concludes this essay is of course: can we historcize the "question of domesticity" and its negation? In other words: what remains of the "disjunction of home and house," if we consider it in the mirror of the past?

138. David Riesman and Nathan Glazer, eds, The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character, New Haven, Conn.

# Autonomy and Heteronomy in Architecture Theory: Part IV: Architecture Between Orality and Literacy? (2001)

***Jean Robert***

Finally, I will drive you home to the hypothesis around which I have been circling. The influence of literary concepts and of philosophy on contemporary architectural theory is not casual. The same kind of recapitulation is at work in literature, philosophy and architecture. The silent and solitary reader of texts and hypertexts on screens is echoed by the traceless solitary resident of the modern apartment.

I suggest that the ongoing historic debate on the conflicting relationships between orality and literacy is not only relevant for literary theory. Home stands maybe to house—or what I call historic domesticity to contemporary anti-domestic architecture—as orality to computer-literacy. And this has been so far overseen by architects and architecture theorists alike. Let's look over the fence behind which linguists, historians and sociologists discuss a fascinating thesis.

This thesis states that true literacy does not begin historically with Egyptian or Chinese ideograms, Mayan pictograms, Mesopotanian cuneiforms or Mediterranean syllabaries and not even with the Northwestern Semitic consonantic "alphabets" from which the Phoenician, the Hebrew and the Arabic scripts evolved. It starts with the alphabet, invented by the Greeks between 720 and 700 B.C.

True, the inventors of the alphabet built on the experimentations of the Northwestern Semitic scripts, that the Greeks received from the Phoenicians, probably in bilingual Cyprus, where it was first used to engrave prayers in stone.[139] True also that two forms of writing had been known to the Greek previously: the Cretan linear A and the Mycenian linear B, of which only the latter has been approximately deciphered by British architect Ventris. There are no traces of the use of any of them after the XIIth century B.C., which was followed by the so-called "dark age," in fact a period of flourishing oral culture in which the grounds for the classical Greek civilization were laid.

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139. Eric Havelock, The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975.

The conservation of memories in an oral culture happens through mnemotechnic formulae rich in assonances, "rhymes," voluntary redundancies: pre-alphabetic speech is "formulaic." Reading Mediterranean pre-alphabetic writs is like searching the garden's grass for eggs on Easter morning: the reader's eye wanders through the lines, looking for common expressions of speech: formulae. This cannot be otherwise, because pre-alphabetic scripts were trapped between two contradictory requirements: simplicity, that is the reduction of the signs to a small number which can easily be memorized, and consistency, that is the possibility to relate every sign with a sound with a minimum of ambiguity. Among the old Mediterranean scripts, the Mycenian syllabary called linear B achieved a remarkable simplicity (about 90 signs) at the cost of consistency: it could only represent open syllables (syllables ending with a vowel), so that a lot of guesswork was left to the reader.[140] Consequently, a "text" could only be a record of what had once been said, and consisted of formulae well known to the reader and to his hearers. Since reading required this "recognizableness," the written documents of the pre-alphabetic period are impoverished memories of oral utterances. They were descriptive (of practical transactions or of heroic feats) and imitative of the oral way to bespeak them.

The interesting question is here whether something of this thesis does not apply to architecture, that is, if there is not an epical, "oral" lore of architectural formulae or archetypes whose memory would run through the whole history of architecture. Does perhaps the contemporary practice of "defamiliarization" frustrate a deeply ingrained, atavic ("epic," "pre- literate," "oral") desire for architectural recognizableness?

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140. In Mycenian syllabic script, this text's next sentence would approximately read:co-se-que-ly a te cou o-ly be a re-co of wha ha o bee sai. Find the Eastern eggs in this pasture.

This is the question that a recent book by Anthony Antoniades endeavors to raise and in part to answer.[141] He recalls that...Rykwert made the deepest dissection to date into the origins and creation of the hut, one of the earliest archetypes. In the process, and furthering his own belief that '... if architecture was to be renewed, if its true function was again to be understood after years of neglect, a return to the 'preconscious'[142] state of building, or alternatively to the dawn of consciousness,[143] would reveal those primary ideas from which a true understanding of architectural forms would spring..." he created his book *On Adam's House in Paradise,*[144] one of the most revealing "pirouettes" between the days of our mythic origins and the applications of today [...]. Rykwert's contribution was an interpretive construct based on one of the architectural archetypes of mankind. [145]

Antoniades discovers other primordial architectural archetypes in the legend of Gilgamesh, in the Ramayana, the Odyssey, Beowulf, the Niebelungenlied and the Kalevala, among other testimonies of oral, pre-alphabetic or early alphabetic lores, and gives, for each of them, illustrated examples of their survival in architectural forms. This confirms, if it were necessary, that architecture is a more primal experience than literacy and literature and invalidates Bernard Tschumi's aphorism that "there is no architecture without texts." [146]

141. Anthony C. Antoniades, Epic Space: Towards the Roots of Western Architecture, New York: van Nostrand and Reinhold, 1992.
142. Following Jack Goody, Literacy in Traditional Societies, Ann Arbor MI: Bks Demand Umi, the transition from "prelogical" to "logical," or "preconscious" to "conscious" states of minds, from magic to science, from Levi-Strauss's "savage mind" to domesticated thinking can be explained more elegantly as changes from orality to diverse stages of alphabetization. Following Goody's intuition, I suggest to read "pre-alphabetic" where Rykwert writes "preconscious."
143. Ibid.: "to the dawn of alphabetization."
144. On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1981.
145. Anthony C. Antoniades, Epic Spaces, op. cit. p.xii.
146. Bernard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1997. I confess that I have been tempted for a while to adopt his restriction as an equivalent of the distinction between epic (oral) narrative and literature, that is between orality and literacy. Tschumi's suggestion would open to a distinction between preliterate, "epic" built forms and architecture as a literate, read alphabetic activity. However, I finally rejected the suggestion because, like Humpty-Dumpty, for whom words meant what he intended them to mean, it does to much violence to linguistic usage: the word architecture recalls the arche-techton, the "head- carpenter," by no means a figure limited to the literate realm. Primitive domestic, and epic architectures could be terms that stand vis- à-vis historic architectural forms as orality stands to literacy.

This is because architecture is a gesticulatory art: it involves the whole body and is perceived in its movements, while reading immobilizes the body to the benefit of the eye: our bodily "memories" are of a more primitive, "oral," or, to retake Antoniades's word, "epic" character than our visual memories. Good architecture could relate modern man to his oral origins, which does not mean that architects should literally "sketch and do 'huts'," as some members of the "Postmodern, Historicist" group have understood Rykwert to enjoin them doing. [147]

The alphabet opened to radically new possibilities. Because of the correspondence of graphic signs and pronounced sounds, it made writing independent from the recognition of spoken formulae. For the first time, things that had never been said could be written. Similarly, forms that had never been built could be thought of, though I surmise that this generally happened much later, perhaps as late as the breach of the great tradition at the end of the 17th century, in the time of "the first moderns."[148] Being a bodily and gestual activity, architecture offered resistance to its utter alphabetization and the oral transmission of architectural knowledge survived far into the alphabetic age. [149]

Writing slowly became less descriptive and more conceptual. It started to look for the ground of things, behind appearances. For Walter Ong, the fact that the Greeks invented philosophy is less due to their specific genius than to the

148. Joseph Rykwert, The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1980.
149. Joseph Rykwert, "The Oral Transmission of Architectural Knowledge," source lost. "[before the XVth century] there is virtually no record about the transmission of ideas and skills. A great deal must have passed through evanescent gesture; perhaps as much as through graphic records and through words." (p.1)
147. Anthony C. Antoniades, Epic Space, op. cit., p. xii.

fact that they invented a unique new way of writing, the alphabet. *In Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,* [150] Ong insists that philosophy and all the sciences depend on alphabetic writing. They are not the products of the unaided human mind, but of the use of a technology that has been so deeply interiorized that it became part of the mental processes themselves. And he concludes: philosophy must become philosophically conscious of itself as a technological product. I plead with architects for a similar recognition concerning architectural theory.

The invention that made this "technology" and its interiorization possible is based on an analysis of the speech organ's working: the vowels represent the vibration of a column of air in the larynx, while the consonants (which only "sound-with," which are no sounds in themselves) represent the way the tongue and the lips initiate or stop the emission of sounds. Following Havelock, the alphabet is a "table of elements" of speech, a feat that required a high degree of abstraction. All ulterior atomistic ideas, like Democritus's atoms and Plato's elementary forms (Timaeus) seem to be metaphors of the letters. [151] But is the functionalist reduction of the home to a place for satisfying basic needs supposedly universal and codified in standards not another effect of the alphabetic reduction of human speech and of the letters' metaphorical power? And what are the "postmodern" hesitations about functionalism, if not the expression of doubts about the literate nature of architecture, even if they seek answers in a cooption of extremely literate experiments, or further, in the "simulations" of the system world?

Can architecture really settle in a world of pure signs without a real beyond?

150. New York: Methuen, 1982.
151. Jack Goody, Literacy in Traditional Society, op. cit.

I think not. I hope that this reminder of the origin of the alphabetic mindset in a "technology" that was interiorized in modern man's mental processes will contribute to clarify the debate on the nature of architecture. After all, philosophizing architecture theory should also become philosophically aware of being a technological product.

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7. Contenido de la propuesta (argumentación y discusión).

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1. Un máximo de 12 cuartillas, a letra 12 tipo Times New Roman, 1.5 espacio, incluyendo resumen, bibliografía, anexos y agradecimientos.
2. La citación y bibliografía deben apegarse a los criterios de la APA (6ª edición)
3. Se recomienda no incluir bibliografía sin referencia directa con el texto del trabajo.
4. Por cuestiones de estilo, preferentemente no se admiten notas de pie de página. Estas deberán quedar incluidas en el texto.
5. Los cuadros, gráficas y figuras deberán presentarse en blanco y negro e ir numerados dentro del texto, con cifras arábigas, en formato PDF o JPG.

# Directorio



Área de
**Investigación**

*Departamento de Imagen Institucional y Publicaciones*

L.D.G. Lorena Solorio Ochoa
**Diseño**