

AND IF THE IMAGINARY...

An investigation of the Imaginary and our relation with our built surroundings.

by

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Diplome Ecole des Beaux-Arts.
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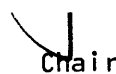
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Louis Perouse

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on Sept. 15, 1981, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Architecture Studies.

-ABSTRACT-

Architecture has progressively become the distinct object of a discourse and a practice.

If not constituting what we might call a scientific body of knowledge, this discourse represents a consensus upon this object and the definition of some values that it has to conform with. This architecture constitutes the "Built-Space" ("Real-Space?").

But an Architectural Discourse (and architecture itself) is finally if not primarily a discourse about man. In other words, it has to be concerned with his totality and motivated by the representation of this totality. It has to be concerned with man in his whole living, with the nature of this living and with the way architecture has a role in this living.

Our hypothesis is that the imaginary has an active presence in the life of the people...if architecture is a part of our lives then it is probably also a part of our imaginary.

Once revisited from the side our imaginary, architecture becomes of a quite different nature than the objectified one from the Architectural Discourse.

This architecture constitutes the "Lived-Space" ("Imaginary-Space?").

This paper is an attempt to investigate some aspects of these two "realities" that constitute however the two sides of the same object. The metaphor that is used to structure this investigation is the theater and its particularities.

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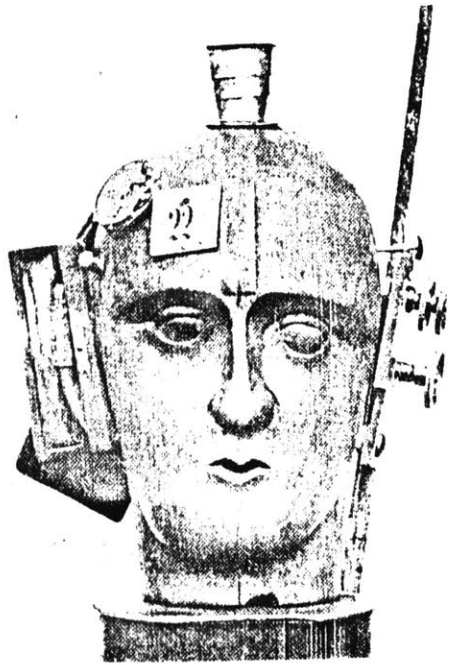
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-I-

-INTRODUCTION-

Where the context, the motivations
and an overview of the different parts
of this paper are presented.



For many years, the discourse about the environment* **5**
has essentially been concerned with it in a rational and
objectifying manner.

It seems that a new solicitude starts to be given to
its human and social dimension. One might say that this
solicitude, among other things, is very concerned with
the people's way of "living" and how they can relate
to what is built around them.

For this new techniques have been developed usually
falling in two categories. The first tends to inter-
vene after the construction trying to find remedies,
(cultural or social equipment). The second tends to
intervene before the construction trying to involve
people on the different levels of "decision-making"
that precede the construction or essentially by trying
to find the hypothetical datas that would allow to pre-
conceptualize the way the space will be used.

One of the reasons that gives the last technique more
weight than the first, is that a systematic attempt
to study the people's way of relating to their physical
environment has already been substantially documented
mainly upon the "Behaviorist Theories", by the social
sciences that have a relatively long and homogeneous

* In this paper, we will use the word "environment" as
the object of the architectural and urban profession.

tradition in this field. It can be made (it is said) **6**
in a more rigorous manner.

However the issue of the "representation" of our living and the nature of the relation that we have with our physical surroundings is still very much a question that is open to further investigations and I would think improvements.

The hypothesis that is proposed for this paper is that "the imaginary" has a presence and an active role in the life of the people... If architecture is also a part of our life then it is probably true that architecture is part of our imaginary.

Does this "imaginary" have something to say about our living; does this "imaginary" have something to say about architecture?.

The imaginary has not had a very important role in our occidental way of thinking.

Most of the time when we think about the imaginary, it is to describe some aesthetic dimension of our life. Otherwise, we currently associate it with all forms of irrationalities that we accept as a negative part of our understanding...

Even if psychology can help clarify this notion, it can do so only after the notion is divided into

different pieces and then we can learn about the mechanisms of our "memory", the definition of our "imagination", or the structures of our "perception". **7**

We do not want to look for an a-priori definition of the imaginary. We are looking for a quotidian imaginary; not something isolated in an area of its own but something that is active in our everyday life.

We thought that the way we relate to a place, to a building, to a city had something to do with this imaginary. We thought that through the imaginary architecture is actually "de-realized"; that every building is everyday redescribed and that all these imaginary impressions in their sedimentation might eventually describe this living relation that we have with our surroundings.

Architecture as a discrete tissue; architecture that determines us even while we determine it; architecture that we choose and architecture that we accept; fulfilling architecture, inexistent architecture, forgotten architecture...

The imaginary is difficult to distinguish; it is always a little before or beyond the "real", always disguising it, spread over its surface, it is hardly discernable.

The imaginary seems essentially to be a notion that convokes the "totality", that requires an effort to

work upon the global, the continuous.

However, and may be consequently, the imaginary cannot be represented in this totality, because then the risk is high to lose its valuable quality and its typical interest.

For this reason this paper is more of an exploration than a demonstration and it might recognize its limitations and sometimes its contradictions.

We will go from the "real" to the "imaginary", from things to ideas actually trying to make the distinction difficult between them.

The theater signifies, among with other things, the loss of the distinction between "real" and imaginary. I therefore think it is appropriate to use it as a metaphor to help structure this investigation.



1. THE SCENE OF THE REAL

In a first essay, we will look at the "scene". The scene is the object. Architecture can also be taken as an object. But an object does not mean anything by itself. We will try to look at the code which makes architecture become what we call "real", a real object. What is the key to this reality.

Identified architecture. Ordered architecture.

Identified places. Geography "1" of the
built-world.



2. THE MASK AND THE ILLUSION

In a second essay, we will look at the mask. Second figure of this paper, the mask is the key to another reality. It is an ambivalent figure. It contains both the real and its "illusion". It allows us to deny the real and imagine another one. The question becomes whether architecture has anything in common with the mask or the nature of the architectural illusion.



3. SOME ASPECTS OF A DIALOGUE

In this third essay, we will attempt to understand on a theoretical level two different aspects of what we have called the dialogue between the imaginary and the real. Referring to some psychoanalytical material, we will investigate what the characteristics of an imaginary space and its difference from the real space are. Then looking at the architectural object, we will see how we can understand the nature of its imaginary representation.



4. THE OTHER SCENE

In the fourth essay, we will look at the environment (anonymous urban environment) as physical "expression" for this imaginary of our living. We will isolate some aspects of this geography of places or signs that can speak about our imaginary

as they speak to our imaginary. They are like the "THEMES" that can testify this secondary and creative part of our living.



5. THE ACT & THE IMAGINARY

In this essay, the imaginary is seen as the descriptive FORCE of the real. It is both the expression and what expresses our quotidian environment through a rhetoric of its own. It is within an "exchange" between our acts (our "ways-of-being") and the environment itself that appears its imaginary configuration. We will attend some instants of the descriptive rhythm of a walk through the city.

-ACTS DE-REALIZED Architecture.

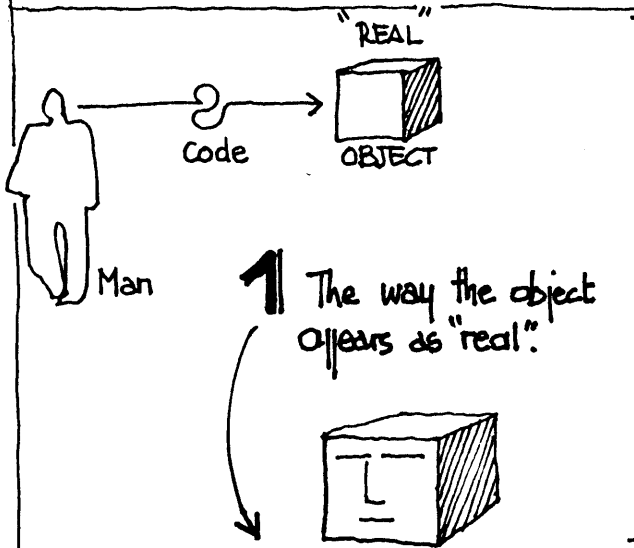
-Imaginary Expressivity.

6. CONCLUSION

Why the imaginary?

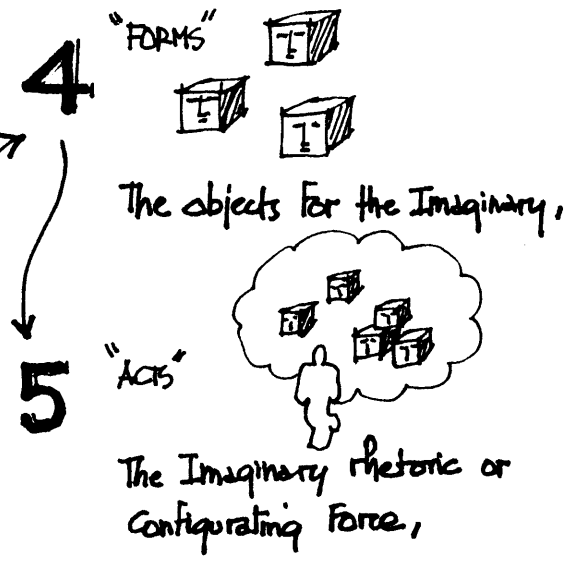
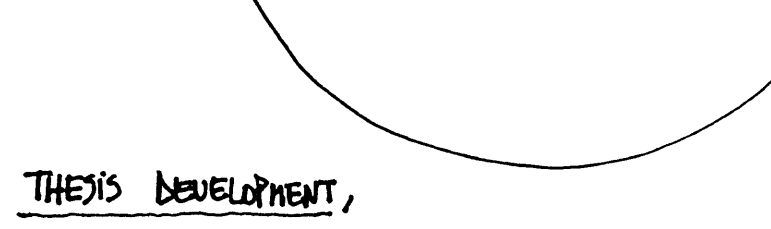
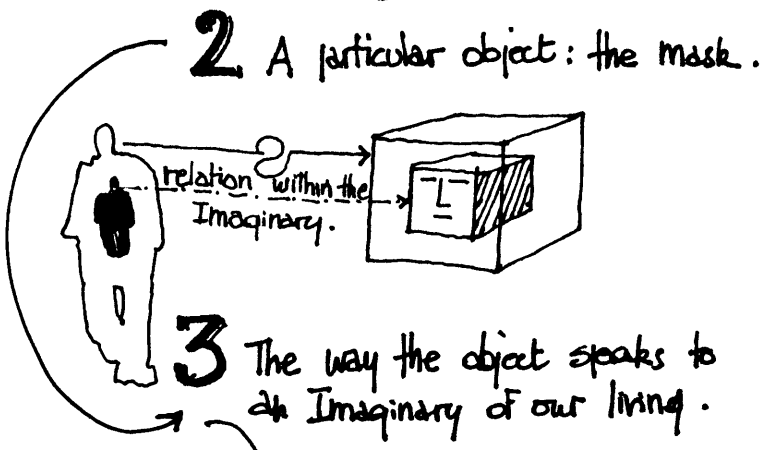
How the imaginary.

Perspective.



To Summarize, these are the main motivations of this paper:

1. The belief in an active presence and role of the "imaginary" within the life of the people and their relation to the environment.
2. The poverty of the models representing our everyday life upon which our society bases the transformation of its physical environment.
3. An attempt to revisit and revitalize some marginal dimensions of our living.



THESES DEVELOPMENT,



-2-

THE
SCENE
of
the
REAL.

-First essay-

"The one who attends a traditional chinese play
without particular preparation will be able to see
the scene as it really is, the actors as they really are."

Cles pour l'Imaginaire.
O. MANNONI.

MAGRITTE. "The Key of the Dreams"



The scene is the object; the object before the dialogue has started. It is our physical environment too; the objects that constitute our cities, our buildings (partially, but essentially).

Maybe an object is not completely innocent, but still it does not mean anything by itself. It is the discourse that we can have about them that makes them appear as they really are.

"Architecture is what it says to be."

Raymond.

With the discourse and the practice that have contributed to build their legitimacy, the architectural objects constitute the scene, what we might call the "real" space.

The intention of this essay is to understand this so-called Architectural Discourse, before to look at the object itself from the same perspective.

In other words, we were looking for the CODE that would give architecture an identity of its own and a validity of its own, or finally a "reality" of its own. We were looking for an "objective" relationship.

The "real" through the discourse.

The society as its context.

The environment as its object.

THE ARCHITECTURAL

1. The style . DISCOURSE,
2. Man :
3. Form : AND THE "REAL" SPACE,
4. Object .

Man is taken as separated
from the Environment.

The Environment as
finality and instrumentality.

The Relation between the
Environment and Man seen
as an abstract problem.

THE DISCOURSE, ITS CODE AND THE "REAL" SPACE.

14.

In the legislative field a discourse is defined as an "an attempt to find regulatory relations between objects, concepts and themes, so that they may emerge and constitute their own verity and their own truth within this field".

1. An approach of a particular style (in five points).

First, and an essential assumption for the Architectural Discourse, man is taken as separated from his environment.

Man as a potential or active participant in the elaboration of his environment, man as a conscious being related to his environment does not have to be present within the "real-space".

Consequently, the environment becomes the exclusive object of the discourse's consciousness. It becomes together its finality and its instrumentality.

At the same time the nature of the relation that man "should" have with his physical surroundings has to be re-invented. And the means and justification that could be used to re-create this relation has to be defined.

The issue becomes an abstract problem and therefore the attitude for solving it should be likewise abstract suggesting an objective knowledge.

Objectivity, Rationality.

The world as a collection
of positivities.

Definition of the Rules.

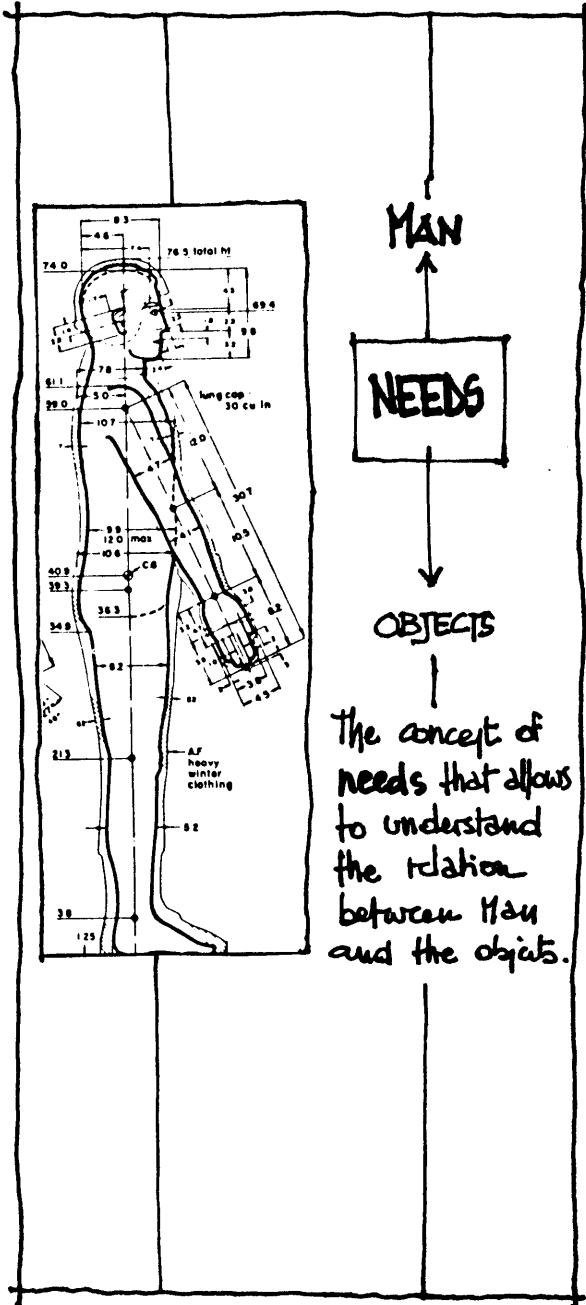
An appropriate use of Language.

In its attempt to validate its approach upon the scientific model, the discourse uses objectivity, rationality.¹⁵ However it does not constitute what we might call a scientific body of knowledge.

In its confrontation with the world, the Architectural Discourse takes it as a collection of positivities, and its attitude is an attempt to reproduce it as such. However "the Architectural Discourse does not attempt to totalize itself".³ Its role consists more of defining the rules and the language that will allow the transformation of its object, in an on-going and circumstantial attitude.

It has already been said, there is a constant pre-occupation to work toward the "real" and the "truth" and once identified, a phenomenon will be taken as such and assimilated as true: "Things have been reconized in a positivistic manner and expressed as such..."³

But before translating this phenom into space and form, their identity and their relations have to be somehow "frozen". "Once a relation has been established and its presupposed typicality has been reconized, it is associated with a noun, and then the noun is permitted to dominate and determine the meaning of the sentence".³



The architectural language becomes the support and regulator of an order, delimitating and formulating the code, and thinking about architecture becomes limited to the field that it has allowed.

②. The "design" of man, or the "real" man.

Having separated man or more precisely having separated man as a conscious being from the environment, the Architectural Discourse finds itself confronted with an ideological problem.

In order to handle the two terms of the relation man-environment, one has to know what the nature of these two terms taken separately is.

What is man after all?. What is known about his living so that the physical surroundings can be a direct answer to the requirements of this living.

Here again the problem has to be taken as one of "verity" and "objectivity" and once man's subjectivity has been taken away, he is supposed to act, to work... in order to satisfy his needs ²⁹.

"We believe in a real individual motivated by his needs and confronted with real objects, in which he finds his satisfaction".

BAUD

"Architecture and City Planning must give a

The concept of need justifies the behaviour of man under a sort of "has-to-be" form,

Life is represented as the exclusive sum of its activities, and is taken out any social or symbolic context,

global answer to the permanent needs of man".

LE CORBUSIER

17

In Lacan's writings, a need is defined as something essentially physiological; it satisfies itself with an object through which it find it satisfaction (Sugar, rent...). A level of experience, not of analysis.

This concept of "needs" is very helpful in justifying man's behavior; the latter is seen as motivated if not determined by them. Finding their confirmation on an economical level, the "reality" of the needs are like a justification of the behavior of man under a sort of "has-to-be" form.⁶ The behavior of man is something definite and contingent.

Once the needs have been identified, it also becomes possible to classify them. They become the representative schemes of the acts, actions and activities of life.

Life is represented as the exclusive sum of these activities. Life becomes a definite "reality", fragmentable into its different parts. To live becomes being identified with an activity. The practice of an individual can be anticipated through the codified model and it is taken outside any particular social or symbolic context.

The question of the relationship between men is not asked and neither is the question of the "expression" or "meaning" of everyday life.

3. Forms, Formalism and Formalisation.

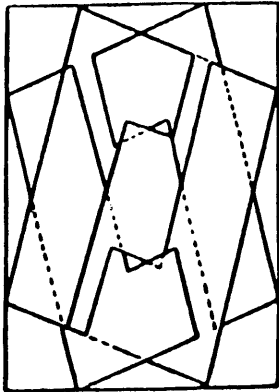
After having represented life as the sum of its activities, these activities are taken as representative of the relation between man and his physical surroundings; and once this relation is objectified, it is possible to think of it in terms of space and form.

Similar to the advertising argument, which claims that "such product can make your life in such a way", the Architectural Discourse takes the object as the necessary and ideal way to implement real life and that object is identified with an "image-model" of life that acts as a referent to the discourse.

"The realisation process of a good fit between the form and the concept, couple in which the variable is the concept".

ALEXANDER

In that process, the form and their geometry are considered to have specific qualities and they become objects of thought, objects of rationalisation, instrumental matter.⁽⁴⁾

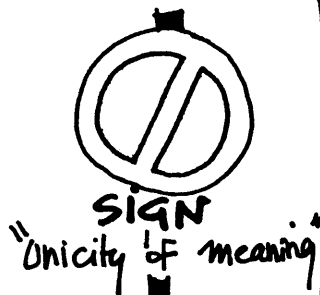


The object identified with an "image model" of life,

Form and geometry with specific qualities.

Thinking about Architecture
becomes thinking about **FORMS**
more than about the practice
that will be related to them.

The product is an Architecture
"to-be-seen" if not a specta-
cular Architecture,



Thinking about architecture becomes then thinking about forms more than about the practice that will be related to them.

"If there is any social meaning to these forms, it is seen as spread over their surface and the form becomes the permanent and statical reference to this meaning"⁽¹⁾

The architectural objects for these reasons present themselves together in what we might call a narcissist and exhibitionist attitude.

Narcissist attitude, because they are thought of as self-sufficient and because they embody the thematics of their origin.

Exhibitionist, because they essentially expect a visual confirmation of what they are made to express.

The product is an architecture "to-be-seen", if not a spectacular architecture. It positions its viewer, whose vision becomes its essential reference, confirming that what was said through the form, can be received without interference. The architect uses the form as a sign to which he designates a specific meaning, assuming that the viewer recognizes this specific meaning. "There is no projective relation that would tend to idealize the object. The sight becomes an act of confirmation for the

object".⁽⁴⁾

4. The build-object

The object presents itself finally as a finished and self-sufficient entity. It has become through the rigor of its definition something similar to an autonomous status. It is like the physical correspondance with the different argument of this definition.

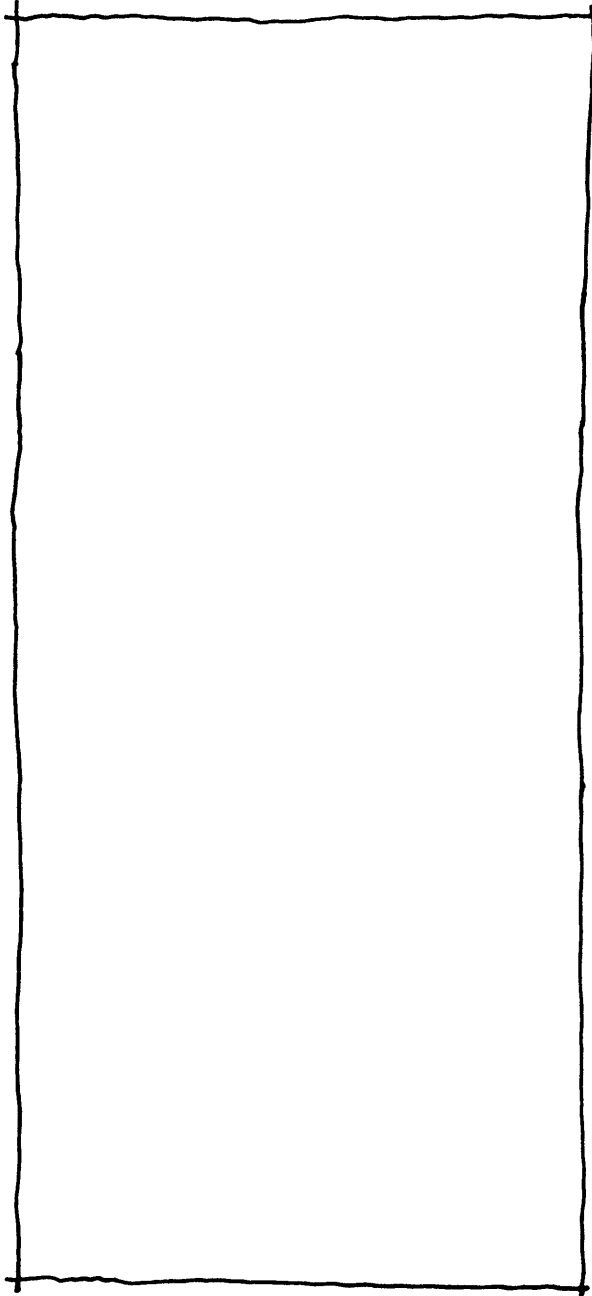
The "real" object, like a confirmation that everything has been said, is built as the representation of ORDER. The surroundings have been assumed disordered and therefore the "real" object tend to annihilate them.

This is the reason why the territory for the "real" object is always seen as a "totality". The architectural intervention seems to need this abstract concept of totality to apprehend it as a finished whole on an intellectual level.

However, this totality is divided into its separate parts, which partitioned within it are like the dependent elements that constitute the finished object in an additive manner. They rely upon the totality and provide as in a mechanical answer, the support to the various activities that will take place within them. Adjacent and continuous,

The "Real" object : Total,
finished, ordered... confir-
mation that everything has
been said,





each of the parts are attached to an activity. The activity becomes the substance and the reason for that part. (It is what is called the function of the part). 21

In this "substantiated" space, time seems to be isochronical with the different fragmented assignments. Time as juxtaposition of equivalences; (or at least assumed to become as such).

Finally, the object presents itself as static and permanent. It is like a definitive posture, for a definitive image of life, which was anticipated by the architect. If the way of life of the user does not conform with this anticipation, it is considered an accident.

To be "man-architecture" within a building or a larger "real" context means to be present homogeneously with it. Adequate behavior, adequate perception, adequate sensation, adequate move and gesture, adequate man for the containing and constraining matter.

The "real" space; its characteristics through its discourse.

22

- ① The project as instancy of "order".
 - The project seen as a "totality".
 - The project seen as the sum of its adjacent and continuous parts.
 - The project seen as determining, permanent, constraining...

- ② Man separated from the environment. (Man as a conscious being).
 - Representation of the problem through its abstraction. (Objectivity).
 - Positivistic attitude towards the phenomena.
 - Definitions of the rules and the appropriate language.

- ③ A "real" individual motivated by his needs.
 - A non-subjective individual. De-totalized man man.
 - Economical confirmation and support.
 - Life built upon man's activities.
 - Non historical or social man.

- ④ Space and forms as instrumental and final.
 - The object taken as an actualization of life.
 - Forms and space with specific qualities. (Space as substance).
 - Social meaning projected upon the forms.
 - Vision as "passive" and confirmatrice reference.

The discourse is the code to the object. It allows us to look at it from the same perspective and find a consensus upon it: What it is? How it is made? for which purpose, for whom? How to transform it?

We might argue that our description of the architectural object through the discourse and the practice that has finally shaped it as it is, might have been a little partial or tendentious. In other words, is it fair to describe it within the limits of the positivist, objectual, attitude?

We did not want to enter a debate upon the context and the reasons for which this attitude, if such, might have existed and be justified. At the same time we did not want to try a historical exercise which would have consisted of locating the validity of this attitude within a particular period. Which would not have been necessary and appropriate for the purpose of this paper.

Is it possible however, to limit oneself here only to a theoretical analysis?

We have seen that in its position toward man the Architectural Discourse has also been ideologically orientated.

Disregarding the existing relationship between man and his environment, the discourse has taken

over attempting by means of its rationality to redefine it. This invites us to question the validity and the appropriateness of this rationality.

Is there a relation between a discourse which speaks implicitly about "happiness" of man and the means taken to impliment this "happiness" through a design essentially based on an economical perspective.

As a matter of fact, Max Weber had shown that the development of Capitalism has been associated with the development of Rationality.⁽⁶⁾ And in the most exemplary manner Foucault has also shown how the beginnings of the technological progress at the early 18th century had been very much accompanied by the normalization and structuration of the social classes and the appearance of this structuration upon the organization of space.⁽²¹⁾ In this economical perspective, the relation between rationality, order and normalization can not be dissociated.

Is what we call the "real" space also the space that is able to be controlled by social power. Space in which the places are assigned a definite function. Space that writes its evidence in regard to the evidence of the society. Space that is

identified for identified individuals...Space that has normalized the relations between the individuals.

But we don't want to go further in the investigation of the "real" space, since its geography is probably by now clear.

We made this analysis for our ultimate purpose was to have a critical attitude and also because we thought its assumption about man and his living relations to architecture had to be revisited which is what we intend to do in the following essays.

In our metaphor of the theater, the intention of this first essay was to consider the "scene".

The scene was the object. The architecture like a scene, or the architecture like a play for nobody, like a play which would make sense for itself. A silent play of its own.

The architect like the director is in the wings and is therefore able to attend the play and see the "real" in it. He has a position which gives him an objective code to the real.

A matter of fact twice "real" for the architect; "Real" for his position beside the scene but "real" also for he has wanted his play to be about the truth, the representation of the "real".

We have shown that in order to do so his play has to have something special put into it.

The architect believes that his mode of expression is ultimately and exclusively based on the expression of his "forms". Form is taken as an accomplishment that is independent of human life which consequently does not have to happen anymore as present by anticipation.

The play has eliminated the necessity for the audience to establish its verity.

The play becomes a performance about itself.

THE "REAL" BECAME THE SCENE ITSELF.



-3-

THE
MASK
AND
THE
ILLUSION

-Second essay-

"If one want to look at Theater from the Imaginary side one has to put forward the notion of illusion;even if it is not an easy thing to define..!"

"Theater has something very special into it:despite the scene is a real place and the actor a real person,the scene tends to appear as another place, the person of the actor as another person."

Cles pour l'Imaginaire.
O.Mannoni.



①. "From the "real" to the "real", the concept of DENIAL.

In order to look at our built-spaces from another angle than the one we have thought could constitute its "real" definition, we might take a look at an object which carries in itself an intriguing ambivalence: the MASK.

All of us have seen masks. We have even probably believed in masks. Maybe it was in the old days, maybe it was when we were children...

What interests us now, is the question of what a mask is? or more exactly what is the significance of believing in masks.

When we say that we believe in what the mask represents, the expression does not make sense if we mean that we believe in it as something that is "real", as something that is true.

As a matter of fact, if we took the mask as a "real" face, the effect of the mask would not exist anymore.

"The mask does not try to appear different from what it is, but it has the power to evoke the fantasies".

The quotes of this essay have
been taken from the book:
Cles pour l'Imaginaire.
D. Mannoni - (5)



The concept of "denial".

Therefore the question of the mask is not a question of belief.

In order to understand the effects of the mask we will have to refer to an explanation that we will borrow in Freud's writings, "Die Verleugnung". From these writings, we will be able to understand the difference between what it is "to believe" and what it is "to know" and now what we believe from what we now know, can be different.

For Freud, even after we have seen and recognized something that is part of the reality (in the Freudian's case the anatomical differences between sexes), we are still able to deny this experience of the "real" and replace it by what we want it to be.

It is the concept of "denial" (that according to Freud's theory is the explanation of fetichism).

In common terms, the appearance of this denial of the real is clear in the expression: "I know..., but it is also true".

On one hand the real, what we know well and the signs that we cannot ignore. On the other hand what belongs to our opinions and to our beliefs...a second area of our understanding of the world... Confused reality which speaks about another reality

that is here, that is as present, as constraining but harder to understand and harder to represent under a definitive image.

I know well...but it is also true".

Starting from the perception of what thing is the real, the denial brings however, the variations that will substitute it.

Not refusing the reality, denial creates another one that accepts it, but also alters it.

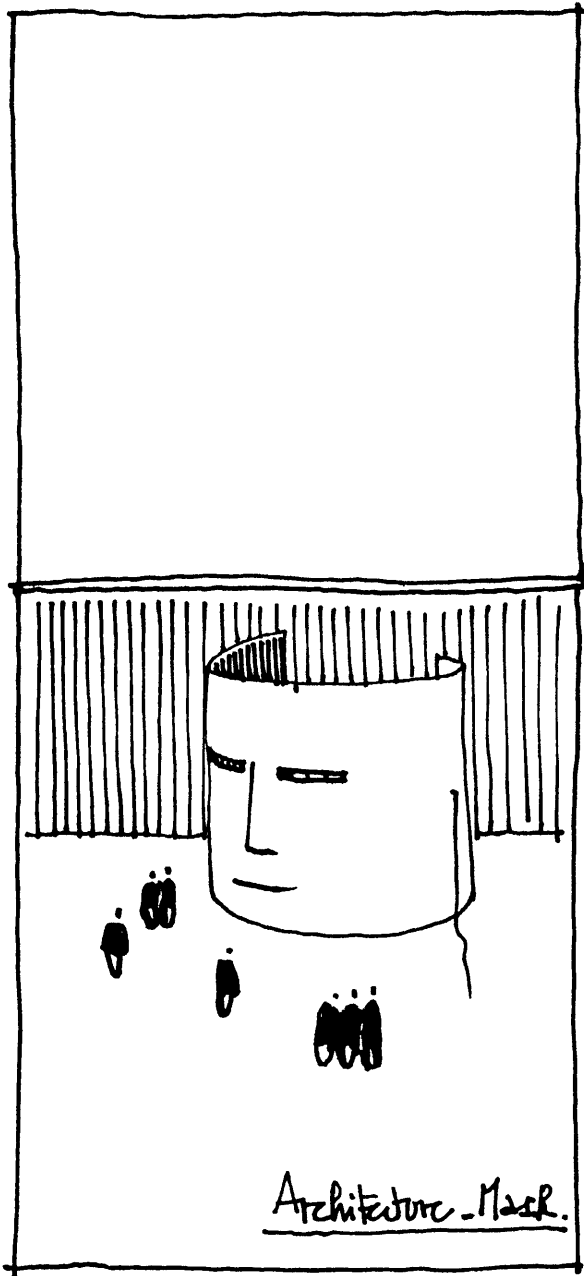
"The denial intervenes as generator of new forms..."

2. Architecture-mask.

Our relation with architecture is similar to our relation to masks.

On one hand architecture is something that is part of a reality, a physical object, a sedimentation of a certain "order". It is something that we have found and that we "know", but on the other hand, what we "make of it", the way we reshape it to make it suit our living.

We cannot deny the first reality completely, because it physically exists, however we don't accept it totally; we take its presence only as a one that is not completely fulfilling. Is there still a gap,



between this reality and ours, a difference that we will overcome by creating a secondary reality, through an infinite number of fantasies and imaginary variations, making finally the reality conform to us, to our "desire". Although this secondary reality "denies" the initial one, it is, in a way nothing but a transformation of it.

With the "denial" we take at the same time we transform the real within an imaginary relation...

The architectural object can neither remain as it is anymore "nor as it claims to be" (discourse).

Consequently architecture cannot remain architecture anymore, it has to be restituted to us through the imaginary.

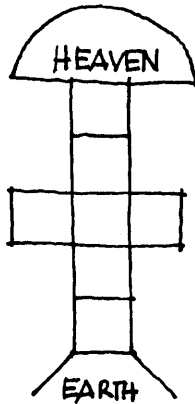
3. The Question of the Architectural Illusion.

Why not come back to our metaphor of the theater which might help us to clarify the nature of this particular relation between us and architecture. Relation that we have started to locate within an imaginary of our living.

A. THE METAPHORICAL ILLUSION

In the theater, if we put forward the notion of imaginary it seems that we also have to put forward

GAMES

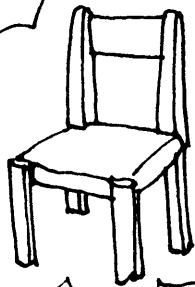


"Marelle" and
Chest game:

The metaphorical
illusion.



"One would
believe that
the chair
is a plane..."



the notion of "illusion" even if it is something that ³² is difficult to define. However can we say that we are illusioned when we attend a theater play? We wouldn't probably say so, just as we would probably not say either that we "believe" what happens on stage. But still we take it for "real" even if we don't believe it.

"This particular relation can occur in the theater, only because there the conditions are somewhat particular. It is in a way a matter of conventions. The conventions do not act within the theater as they do for the chest game or for the "marelle". If the "marelle" finally leads to heaven it is only a metaphor that does not require to be imagined by the children".

IS THE ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSION CONFORM TO THE ARCHITECTURAL OBJECT?

DOES ARCHITECTURE CREATES THE ILLUSION BY ITSELF?

CAN ARCHITECTURE BE WHAT IT SAY TO BE.

B. THE ILLUSION OF A "ONE WOULD BELIEVE IT IS..."

..."In other games, more common and more usual, the conventions are more difficult to distinguish, they are implicitly introduced.

"One would say that the chair is a plane..."

In this case the use of a conditional tense, has

something very special to it and very meaningful because of its variety of meanings. The children in this case can play the game as if what "one would say it is" is equivalent to what "one believes it is..."

● IS THE ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSION CONFORM TO A CONVENTION UPON THE OBJECT?

● IS THE ILLUSION AN HAS-TO-BE ILLUSION?

● WHAT WOULD BE THE ILLUSION WITHOUT THE CONVENTION?

C. THE "ONE" THAT IS ILLUSIONED.

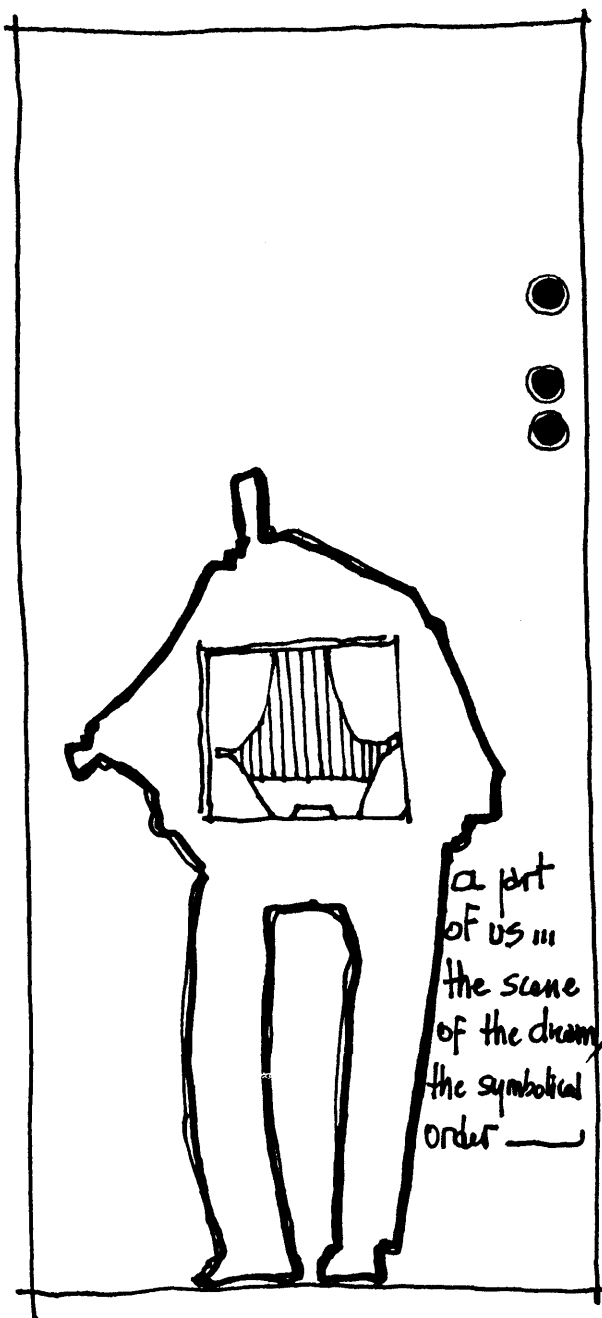
The interesting question is not only trying to know who that "one" is but also if it is the same one in the case of saying and in that of believing.

Although the word "one" in both cases refer to the child. It is on one level that the saying occur and on another level that believing occurs.

"It is exactly as if we had to have somebody else to believe for us somebody that for our satisfaction be illusioned, another spectator..."

"But we might start to guess who might this "ONE" this "other" that wants to accept the illusion be."

"somebody within us, something as the child that we have been and that must be replaced by something within our ego..."



"the scene of the dream..."

"It is a place within ourselves as if we carried with us the person to be mystified by us".

"to look for the imaginary is to look for it in this place..."

"a place where finally the distinction of the true and the false, the real and the unreal has no importance; where the distinction between the real and the imaginary has no jurisdiction. Where the question of the illusion and the real does not make sense anymore."

"the scene of the dream, the symbolic order..."



IS THE ILLUSION THE SAME FOR THE OTHER PERSON?

DO WE NEED ANOTHER PERSON TO BELIEVE?

CAN THIS OTHER PERSON ALSO BE A PART OF OURSELVES...

-TRANSITION-

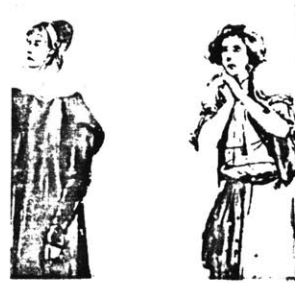
The mask has allowed us to sketch the nature of another relation with the real. The architectural object from silent is starting to appear as different and existing within this relation that denies it. The architectural object looks for its reality within the imaginary. It becomes a different object.

Does this verity for the imaginary depend on the object itself?

Does this verity for the imaginary depend on a convention upon the object?

Does the imaginary depend on a convention upon the real between us?

Does the verity for the imaginary only exist within us. A scene where the legitimacy of the real is not even asked.



-4-

SOME
ASPECTS
OF
A
DIALOGUE

-Third essay-

"In the theater, it is a little as if
we had within us the "other" to mystify.."

"The place for the Imaginary is the "EGO"
the narcissistic EGO, place for the reflections
identifications. It would be the only place
for the theater to happen, "the theater
of our mind" as Mallarme used to describe it".

Cles pour l'Imaginaire.
O. Mannoni.



THE DIALOGUE

While looking at the figure of the mask in the previous essay, we have tried to show the presence of another relation to the architectural object. A relation within our imaginary...which is within our living. We will not change the object, but we will change the relation that we can have with it. We have to leave the object as outside from ourselves. We have to leave the object that is "said", that is "codified", that is defined as such. (Discourse). We have to relocate ourselves to the architecture that surrounds us, that is the place for our lives to occur.

AN IMAGINARY SPACE.

Choice for a theoretical position.

Despite it appearing a little abrupt, I thought I could start this essay by telling how an investigation of some theoretical material had helped me in understanding what could be the characteristics of an imaginary space, our imaginary space be.

Theories about the definition of space, as well as the definition of time are numerous. They all depend on the image of the world that we have and the values that we give to them. As for space, to clarify the question, we might say that these theories are basically divided into two different systems. The first one is attached to the tradition of the Cartesian Philosophy . It represents space as an unlimited extent that can be measured through a system of coordinates. Its essential characteristic is that the "observer" is outside, or does not belong to it.

The architectural concept of space that we have presented in the first part of this paper is attached to this theory. Space is associated with intelligence and matter. It is in this case taken as a "substance". It can be divided, compartmented, for an "observer" seen as having a rational and measurable relation with it.

For the other system of thought, what is put forward is the sensitive experience, the perceptive world. Man is at the center of this world and does not conceive what lies out of this perspective. In this case a phenomenology of time as well as one of space starts from the body, from the self. The world appears through one's own subjectivity through one's own opinion. The only relativisation to this personal world comes from the "other". The discovery that another individual also belongs to this world, to one's environment. It is to one the essential point of contradiction. This system comes in opposition with the first one. However they are both necessary to the understanding of our different acts and attitudes about and toward the environment. The Phenomenologist Method and theory that have been originally developed by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of this century might have provided the framework for the theoretical representation of the imaginary space that we were looking for in the end system. The Phenomenologist Principle is basically that we can translate from the sensitive perception through different languages the information that will allow us to build a system of concepts through progressive abstraction.

"One of the criticism that is made to this method is that it might reflect more of the schemes of comprehension and consequently, what might be abstracted and classified might already be structured by this comprehension."⁽²⁹⁾

In other words with this method, a sort of a-priori form would be given to this imaginary space.

But we also are interested in its genesis , its structure, its articulation upon the real-space , the physical reality...we had to refer to a theoretical conceptualization that would serve this curiosity, being more generic in its approach.

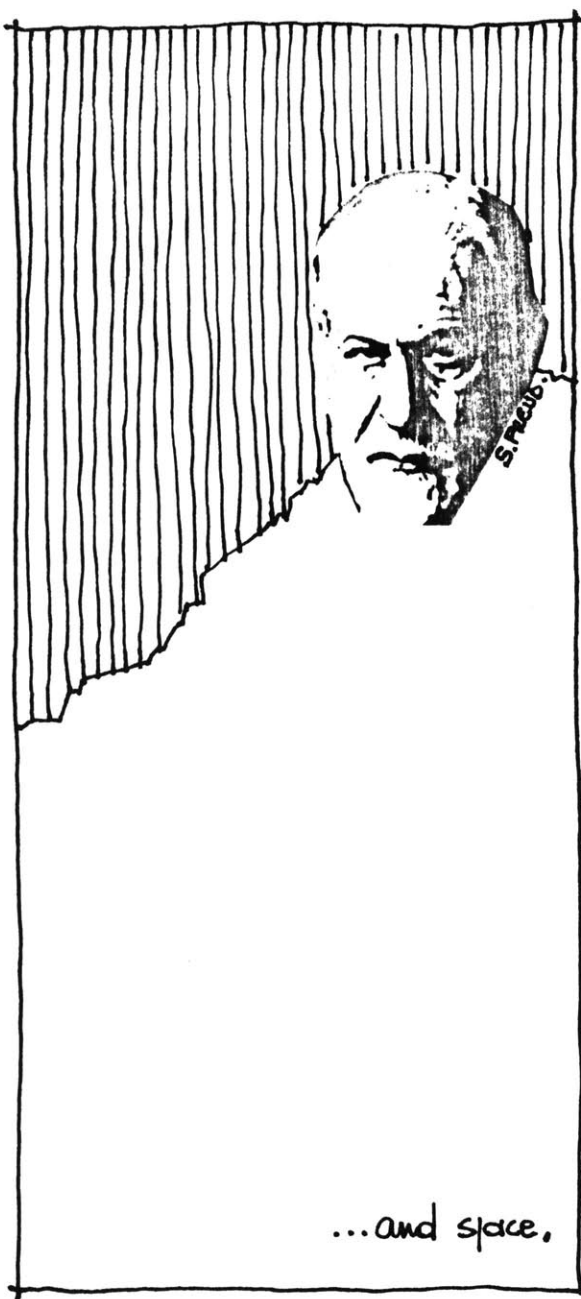
Not being very familiar with the material that is used for this essay, mainly taken from the psycho-analytical theories, I will present it in a rather schematic manner, using quotes from studies that have already been done upon the same issues. I will try however to use them critically and fit them in the perspective of this paper.

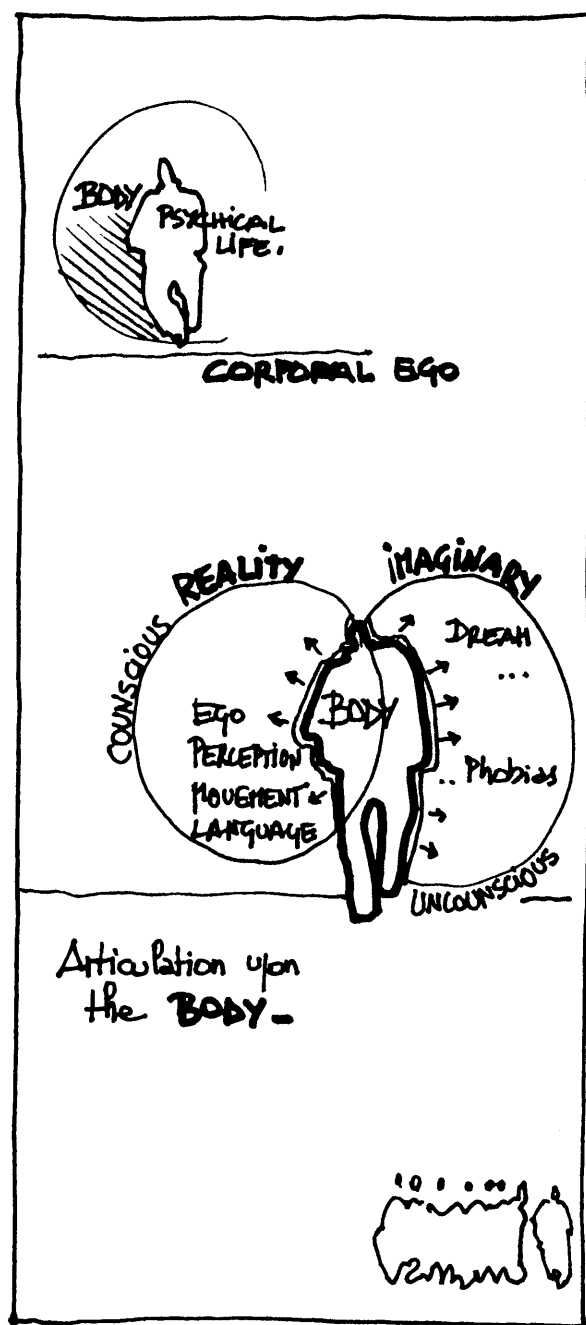
As a matter of fact, it seems that one cannot find anything explicitly related to the imaginary space if one looks for it in psychoanalytic material. Interestingly enough, the structure that is given to the different elements of our psychic life in this theory is seen as spacially distributed; but the theory has been more interested in working upon a definition of the genesis of time than upon the notion of space.

However this theory can be tangentially related to the imaginary space when dealing with dreams and a form of hysteria, Phobia...(considering the laws of the of the unconscious).

One of the main characteristic of this theory is that the physical life, the unclear region where the exchanges between man and the world happen, is never seen independently from the BODY. The physical life and the BODY constitute a

...and space,





dependant structure.

Freud in his formulation of the psychical apparatus with the instances: ID, EGO and SUPER-EGO defines the EGO as essentially corporal.

It is through the BODY that the consciousness and the interaction with reality occurs. It is the corporal EGO that allows the perception, the movement, the language in the "outside" world.

But the delimitation between the role of the BODY on perceived level and its role on the unconscious level seem to have some transparency and correspondance.

It seems that the BODY also participates in the elaboration of the unconscious reality. It appears to be the mediator between the "external" reality (the real space) and this other "internal" reality (the imaginary space).

Different examples can be given to illustrate this mediation and this mysterious metamorphosis of space. One of the most expressive is probably to be found in the hysteria of distress:

"The body in this case seems to assimilate with the dimensions of the surrounding space. It is like an expansion that would almost coincide with the whole surrounding space and where the imaginary



correspondances start to appear. The high, the low, the inside, the outside, the front, the back are not anymore related to movements in the outside world, but they are associated with different parts of the body".⁽⁸⁾

However one dimension which seems to dominate is the internal-external relation...

"This is why the distress can be located in either one of these two poles. As for the Agoraphobia, it is the outside that is aggressively invested and unconsciously associated to an attractive emptiness...the inside on the contrary is seen as purified and securising. The claustrophobia is lived as the opposite impression and associated with elements of the outside world such as staircases, ceilings, labyrinthes."⁽⁹⁾

But there is another example which leads to the same idea, it is to be found in the onirical activity.

The best illustration of what happens in the dream is probably to be found in the Alices' adventures of Lewis Carrolls that are in a very imaginative manner essentially concerned with space.

In the story of Alice it is shown how Alice, falling into her dreams, is able to apprehend the

world in a very distinct manner. Once ruled by her unconscious laws, she can see the world according to the particular characteristics on these law: "Non-contradiction, a-temporality, a-spatiality". It is also through her body and its successive metamorphosis that Alice is able to experience the particularities of the world and once free from the order of the "real", she lives the particularities and differences of an imaginary space

(See: Lewis Carroll; Alice's adventures in wonderland.)

If the body rarely appears in the dream, its role however according to these different examples is primordial. The body will constitute the "matter" of this world. As the background of the different events of the dream it will also bring to it what one calls the "recent impressions"⁽⁸⁾. Recorded in a way through the mediation of the body (perception) these impressions will provide apart from childish material; elements for the onirical activity.

"But can we speak about space for a dream"?

As we have already suggested, although a dream has a structure of its own it is without either temporality or spatial organization.

Freud writes that it is through the telling of the dream that the conscious will re-arrange the

different events and re-organize them to make them conform to the logic of the consciousness, the logic of the reality. As a matter of fact the universe of the dream is a universe which accepts the contradictions, that allow equivalence between the most diverse beings...

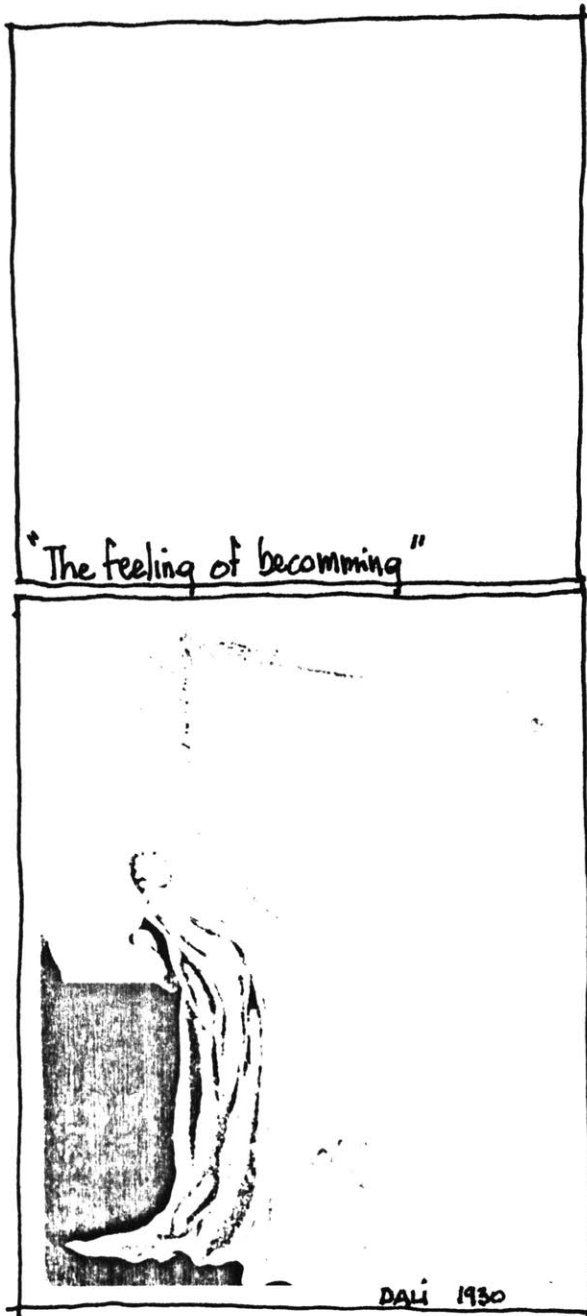
"Things having lost their interiority, their thickness, their shades they become interchangeable on a plan of reciprocal inclusions...the far, the close, the inside, the outside, everything will be gathered on this unique plan..."

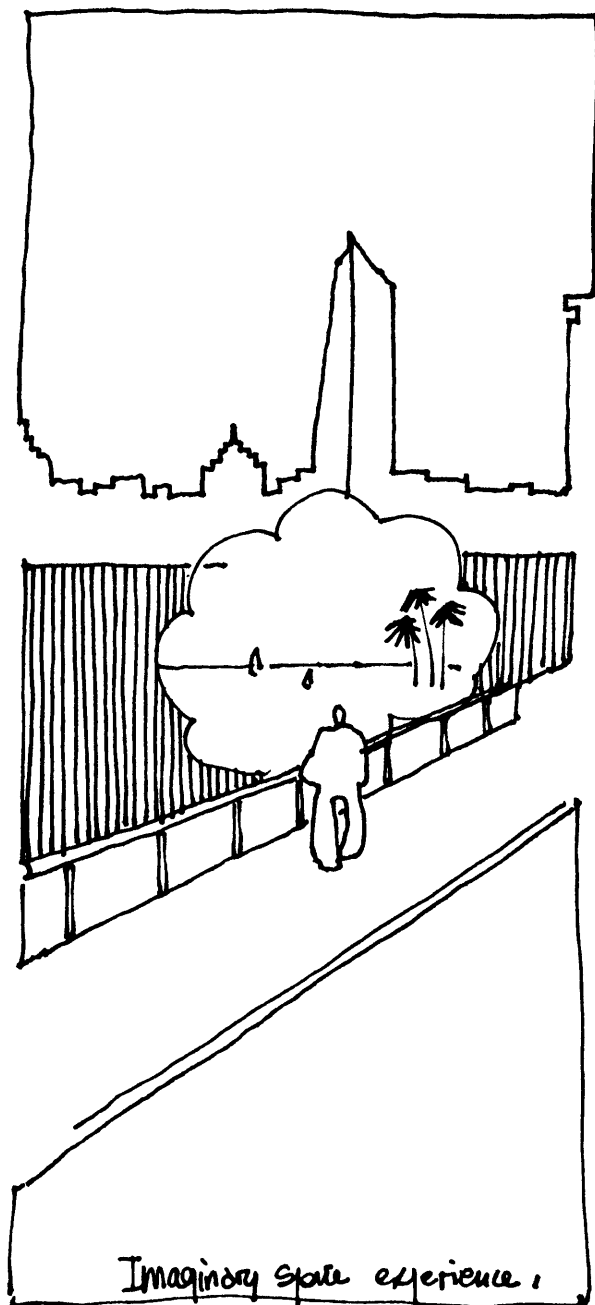
Articulation imaginary-reality.

What is essential to be noticed here, is this interaction between two levels of reality, that correspond to two different levels of perception and that find their articulation in the body.

These two levels of perception as we have tried to show when we were using our metaphor of the mask are sometimes very hardly discernable.

If we consider that the conscious perception is the only actual fragment of reality that is "present" to our instantaneous sensibility then we can say that everything else is "imaginary" and subject to the "deformations" of the imaginary...(Laws of the unconscious).





The imaginary space that we are trying to describe is different from that of the conscious perception.

It is more likely built through this gathering of "impressions" (images) that are stored in our memory and shall we say accessible to our consciousness or to use Freud's own words: "Dynamically unconscious": ID, EGO & SUPER-EGO.

For this memorization and accessibility we can consider the imaginary space as an independent entity with the characteristics that we have already seen and that we will recall later.

But we can also consider it in its possible superimposition with the real of the instantaneous perception. The imaginary space can also be a particular case of the real space. (See quote: the dialectical relation imaginary/real at the early period of formation of space, at the end of this essay). In this case, the intra-psychical activity is stronger than the actual perception of the reality and the space perceived by our consciousness can be "denied" and substituted by the imaginary space and its characteristics.

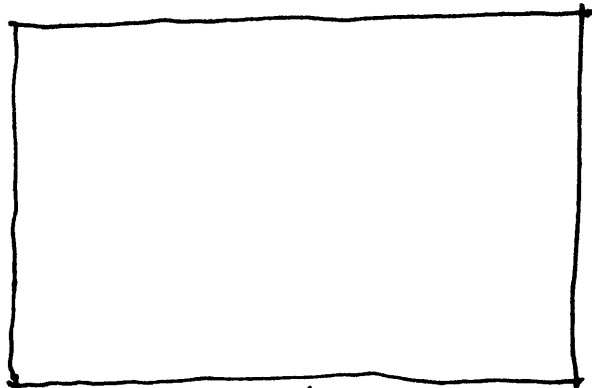
Many examples can be given of this situation where the actual instantaneous space seems to appear on a secondary plan and our feeling is displaced or

impregnated by the presence of another space that comes back to our consciousness. Ephemeres or more durable impressions where in this case it seems that the imaginary space substitutes almost totally the real space (see: Prisonners of space. Hawlhes)²⁶

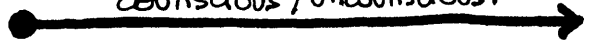
IMAGINARY SPACE

A. Abstract of some characteristics.

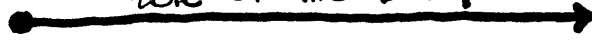
- ①. The imaginary space is to our unconscious what the real space is to our conscious. (Two different levels of perception).
- ②. It is related to the real space through the mediating and projecting power of the body. In this case the bridge between the conscious and unconscious life. (The body constitutes the symbolic part of the imaginary space).
- ③. It is subject to the particular "laws of the unconscious" that are the ones that structure the events of the dream. (Non-contradiction, a-spatiality, a-temporality).
- ④. It builds itself (and is constituted) with images and impressions.
- ⑤. It is more likely to be a two-dimensional plan where relations are of reciprocal inclusions.
- ⑥. It is a place of internalized actions.



conscious / unconscious.



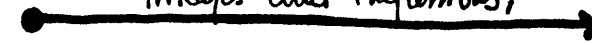
role of the Body.



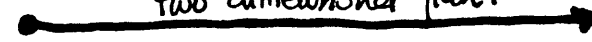
Laws of the unconscious.



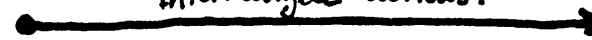
images and impressions,



two dimensional plan.



internalized actions.

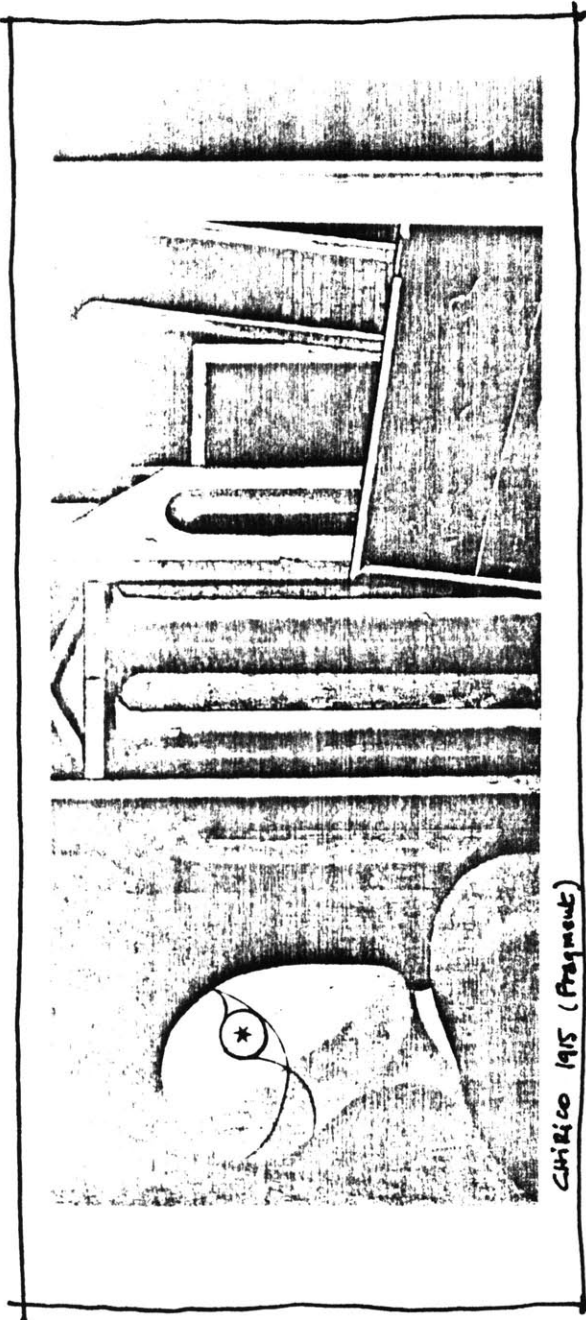


- ⑦. It is subject to the variations of the "intra-psychical life", that can allow its substitution of the real space.

B. Differences from the real space.

Finally the imaginary space can be seen as different from the real space (perception) in essential characteristics that we defined through the discourse. If the real space is said to be "measurable" (distances, dimensions) then "far" is also seen as "distant". (The distant perception has less importance than the close).

On the other hand, the imaginary space does not follow the logic of the real and the horizon can be as near as the local. The concept of distance is abolished. It is what we might call the "POWER OF IMMEDIACY". If the real space is seen as a: "Partitionnable" substance (limits, enclosures). Then what exists to the perception is what is instantaneously present. For the imaginary, this not necessarily the case. It is the POWER OF SUBSTITUTING. The real space is seen as: contiguous and continuous (adjacent) and the perception has to be synchronical with these continuities. For the imaginary space, this order is not necessarily contingent. It is the power of REVERSIBILITY.



C. Conclusion

What is interesting to notice here is this de-realizing power that the imaginary seems to have in relation to the "real space" or the different characteristics that show how the real space is diffracted by the imaginary. Equally interesting is to see how imaginary space can be a particular case of the real as well as a part of it and how it can substitute itself to our conscious perception and force upon it, its particularities.

The dialectical relation imaginary/real at the early period of the formation of space.*

1. Phase.

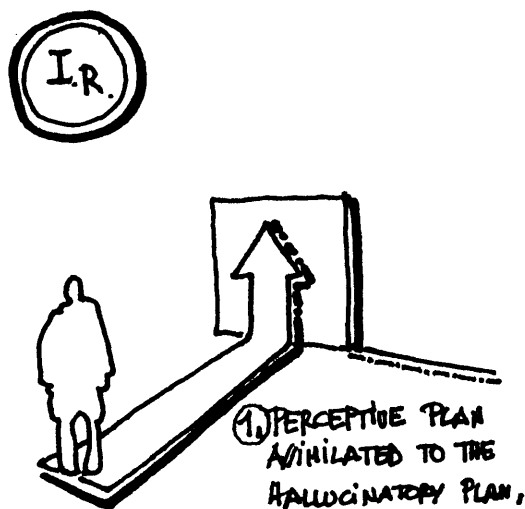
If we postulate that originally the pulsional satisfaction is mediated by an hallucinatory activity we can put the perception in the same equation with the desire.

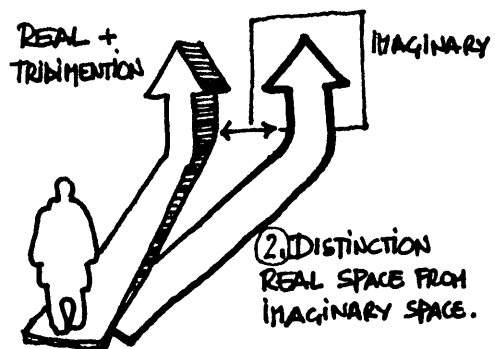
At this stage where the real does not exist yet, the imaginary space is like a plane surface of reciprocal inclusions that are coincident with the perceived space.

It is as a matter of fact the only spatial structure to which the child has access at this period.

* Quotes from the book: L'Espace Imaginaire. S. Ali (8)

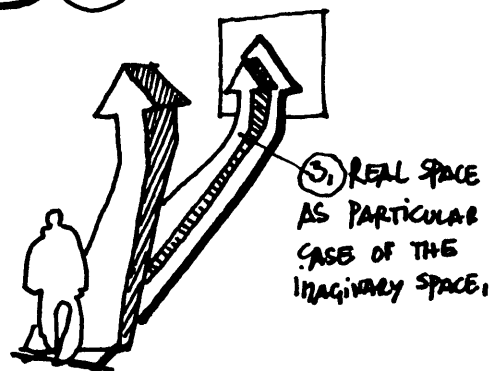
(...)





2. Phase.

The introduction of the "Principle of Reality" by making the perception and the desire incompatible, will create the distinction between the real and the imaginary space. The latter starts to have an autonomy of its own. In opposition to the real it becomes the only place for the desire to be satisfied. Besides the introduction of the Reality Principle, and as tridimensionality progressively appears on the level of the perceptive experience, the "deepness" of the real space is constituted.



3. Phase.

The progression will go further because the real for the unconscious has become now an "exception" of the imaginary...

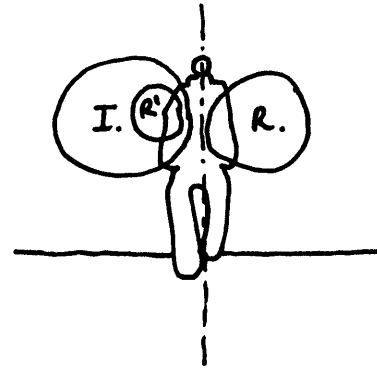
Although, the distinction between the two spatial forms is maintained in regard to the fantasmatical activity of the child, the real space is included within the imaginary space.

We then have three similar and distinct spatial structures: the two dimensional perceptive space, the tridimensional space as the place for the desire and the perceptive space within the imaginary space.

These three plans where the experience of space

happens do not exist separately. They are organized around an axis that is provided by the body which participates on every level.

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The characteristics of the imaginary space that we have analyzed in the first part of this essay were developed upon the different levels of man's consciousness.

Built upon the real through the perception of the corporal EGO this imaginary space then submits to the particular laws of the unconscious and in a way becomes an interpretation of the real. Doing so, we are able to isolate some of the main characteristics of the imaginary space and to evoke its articulation upon the reality.

We have also put forward a relation between man and the outside world that might appear indirectly related to the environment and its different physical components. Although the definition of the imaginary space is useful in helping us to see that the nature of our "present" relation with our surroundings can be related to this particular "order" of the imaginary (imaginary space as a particular case of the real space) it does not however tell us the imaginary significance of the architectural object, the "idea" that we can have of a building or a place and the values or meanings that these things have in regard to ourselves.

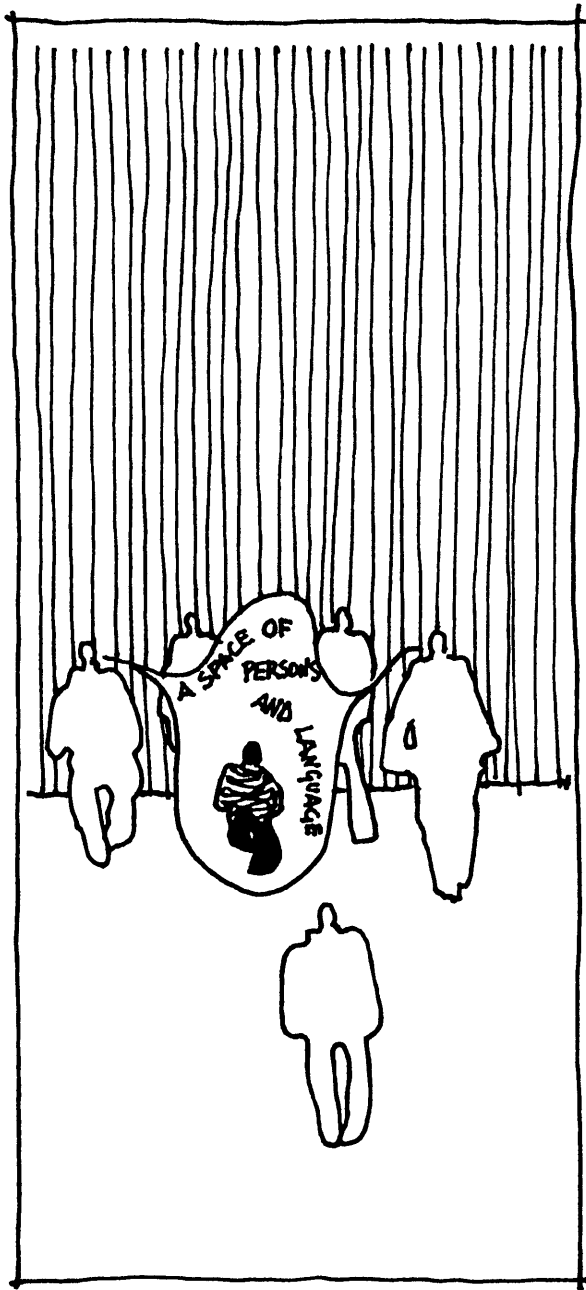
The position that is taken in the second part of

this essay, is in opposition with what was assumed in the Architectural Discourse of our first essay. The object is not determined, but its significance depends on a particular viewer, in a particular context. It is in the nature of the viewer's relation with the architectural object that its imaginary significance can appear. This is why to understand this relation one has to have some keys of our social and psychological life.

It is from LACAN, as a critic and continuator of FREUD that we will borrow the concepts that can help to have this understanding. Without going into what LACAN has brought to the psychoanalysis, we can use however some of the explanations that he gave about the language and the human practices. Explanations that have been seen as giving: "a new union between the matter and the mind, a new status to the fabulation, the dream, the desire..."⁴

-
- ① From the desired space to the real space.
Elaboration of the context of significance.
-

We have seen that if the space of a child is initially the space of his desire, an imaginary space, it will have to conform very soon through progressive adaptation to the real space.



In a first stage with the evolution of his abilities to interact with his surroundings (mobility), the child will start to structurate both his own personality (identity) and the knowledge of the physical parts of his surroundings. It is only through the child's actions that he will be able. It is by doing and experiencing that this identification is made possible. At this period, the space is only the physical MEDIUM with which the child experiments, discovering both it and its physical abilities.

In addition to this physical experimentation of the real space, the child learns to associate a moral "value" with the different elements or parts of the space that he is experiencing. The real space becomes the different cases where it is "allowed to do such thing or where it is forbidden..." By itself the real space is not determining as the Architectural Discourse claims, but it is a spatial context for the social practices that take place in it. In other words, it is not a "model of space that is going to be built (living room...) but a space for interactions between persons, a space that is talked about and that talks to the child".²⁹

②. Language, practices and the significance of space.

Therefore to summarize: through the evolution of the

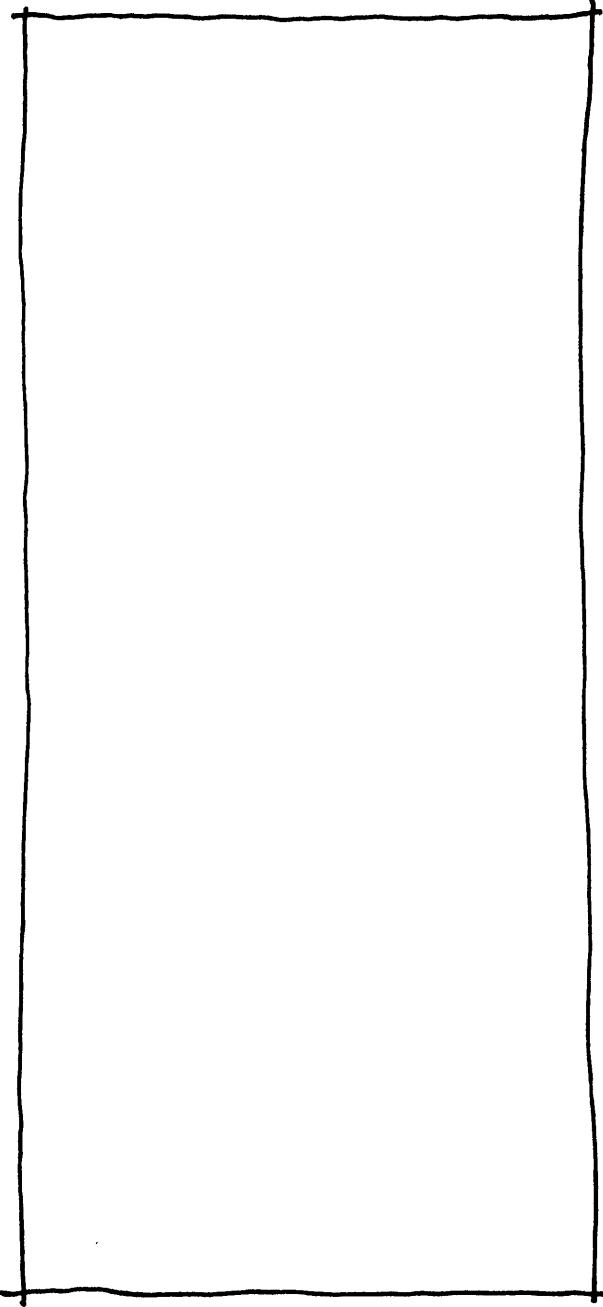
child's interactions with his surroundings, from one with physical parts to one with persons, the space that the child discovers changes from the desired (imaginary) space to a space of social practices and gestures.

For this interaction to occur, the child has to be able to identify himself with the "others" through the language. Language becomes the medium of social exchange as well as the support of significance (representations).

It is here that we have to refer to what LACAN says about language and to understand its particular role that will bring us back to the imaginary significance of the architectural object.

In his definition of the desire, LACAN says that the desire cannot be satisfied with an object (disappearance of the desired space). The desire cannot be satisfied at all: "it becomes the desire of another desire, the desire to become the desire of the other..."⁶ (Ecrits, Lacan, 1966).

Instead the desire will manifest itself through dreams, languages and practices...and these manifestations of the desire are going to be lived as "the different expressions of the desire" (BURLIN)⁶.



If language is lived as "expression" of the desire, it is not however THE expression of the desire. What LACAN tells us is in fact that language is built of "SIGNIFICANTS" which means that it is built with the "ultimate" expression of the desire; but the "SIGNIFIED", original or initial expression of the desire can never be expressed as such and never exists. It would lead to an abstract language, the language of the unconscious, a language of confusing symbolism.

Instead the man of desire (the EGO) holds the language of "significants", the language of the literal meaning, the language that can have a value for his imaginary and becomes the support of imaginary representations.

Example: Speaking about one's car is neither necessarily speaking about the physical object with a motor and four wheels, nor is it saying what the meaning of the car on the unconscious level is ("signified") but it is saying what is the imaginary representation that we have of the car. If the three significations exist: the "objective", the unconscious and the imaginary it is this last one that is expressed and to which we believe (See: Masks).

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NI DE MITI ACCI E SENAN

- Objective,
 - Unconscious
 - and Imaginary
- Significance of
the car —

However if language is support of representations, each object can have different representations. A car does not necessarily mean the same thing for everybody. The "significant" does not mean anything isolated. This is why LACAN speaks about a "chain of significant". The "significant" has to be related to this chain in order to be meaningful and to be understood. In practical terms this means that the significance of an object cannot be found independent of a particular context and that the study of that significance cannot be made independent of the globality of this context. The same car bought by two persons from two different social classes in a society for instance does not have the same significance for these two persons. The imaginary according to LACAN has to conform to a chain of significations and does not mean anything by itself.

③. The significance of the architectural object.

If we refer to what we have learned from LACAN, we can say that the psychical life has to conform to the social life.

It is the relations between individuals that structure the society into its different classes with their "differences", their particular language (way to use the language), their particular



Walls and "ways of life"

practices (way of life).

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In order to become symbolic, that is to say supportive of imaginary representations, the real space has to be brought back to the perspective of these different groups that share the same system of values. At the same time it has to conform to the ways of life, gestures and fashions of these groups. These two conditions become the context in which the ultimate significance of the architectural object can appear; (they are also the necessary conditions if one wants to appropriate the significance of this object).

This is why to study the effects of an architectural intervention (new form of housing...) is possible only once it is related to this global context, if one wants to avoid a too personal interpretation, which is very difficult to do.

The real space that we have described before in its effective functionality and its presupposed significance (sign), actually does not mean anything by itself as long as it has not been experienced within a particular context. In order for architectural form to become meaningful, it is necessary that "a homology happens between this form and the way it is lived". The assumption of the Architectural

Discourse that the form is a sign whose significance is already defined a-priori, is not true but the form becomes the support of imaginary representations elaborated upon the complexity and the dynamism of each lived situations. It is within the context of these situations that the "reality" of the architectural object can exist.

The imaginary is not developed by the place; or more precisely, even if the place has a role in its development, it is not only this that is the reason for the imaginary significance. In order to understand this significance, one has to have a "CODE". This code cannot be found in some particularities of the imaginary itself. It is within man that the code is elaborated between his psychical and social life. Once man is inhabited by the order of the code, the architectural object can become the support of imaginary significances that are taken as true and into which man believes.

-TRANSITION-

This theoretical essay about the imaginary seen from the perspective of the psychoanalytic tradition, has allowed us to explore some aspects of our relation with space and the architectural objects that constitute the environment.

Despite the fact that the two parts of the essay were concerned with different objects, their theoretical structure comes from the same tradition of thoughts and I actually believe that together they can contribute toward a better understanding of the relation that we have with our "lived-space".

It has appeared first that through his psychical activity, man can bring different forms of "de-realizations" (denial) to the real space (architectural space). The unconscious life of man acts here as a power of transformation of the established "order" that is represented by the physical reality of architecture. It actually subjects this reality to these different imaginary variations that become a particular case of the real. Consequently it can be seen as another architecture, another construction, "conditional construction" to coin a phrase from our introduction.

The imaginary of the architectural object according to Lacan, can only be understood if it submits to a particular code. The role of the psychical life is as important as the role of the social life. The imaginary object however, as we have seen it, is also differentiated from the real object. (Its functionality and its presupposed effective determination have also be denied and submitted to the particular order of the imaginary.)

These two forms of de-realization point out a particular strength of the imaginary in our lives in relation to the physical reality.



-5-

THE
OTHER
SCENE

-Fifth essay-

"Theater largely uses space too.
...it has to designate a place
carefully, different places to go
across the world.

L'espace et son double.
P.Sansot.

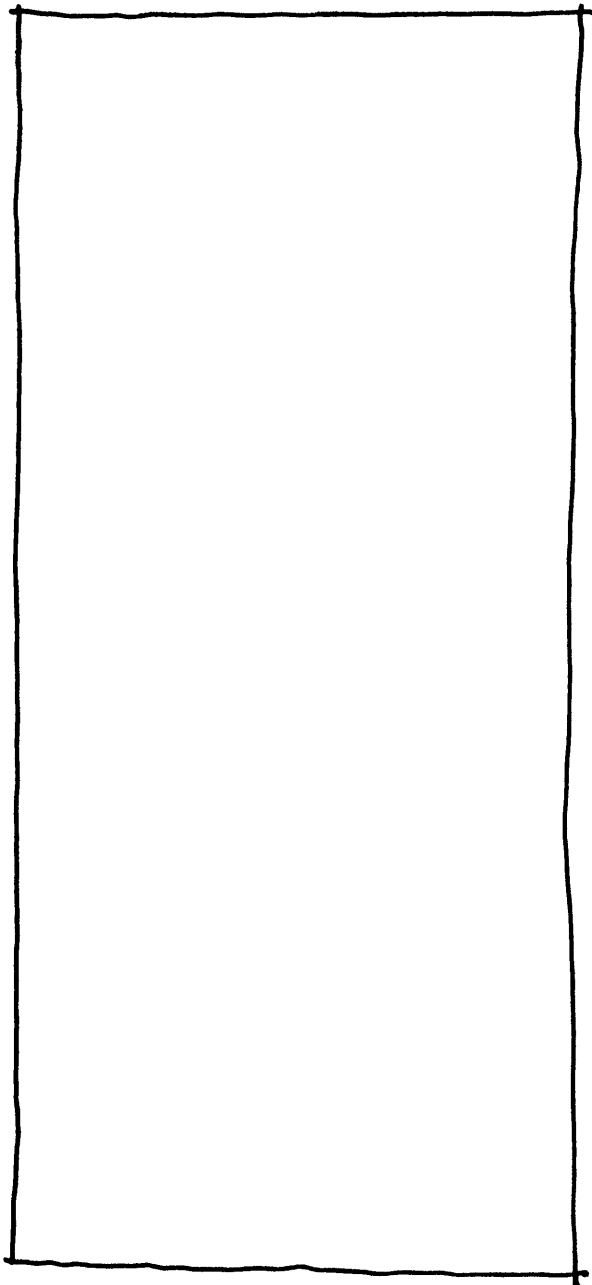
The two following essays can be seen as a second part ⁶¹ for this paper.

It is not a second part in the sense that we would have already identified the sufficient questions that can help us to understand this imaginary of our living related to architecture: these questions are still very much our concern in the following essays.

However, if up to now, our approach has essentially been theoretical and abstract in this second part we want to get closer to the expressions or the "manifestations" that can testify a presence and an active role of the imaginary within our everyday life.

In the fourth essay, we will look at the environment (anonymous urban environment) as physical "expression" for this imaginary of our living. We will isolate some aspects of this geography of places or signs that can speak about our imaginary as they speak to our imaginary. They are like the "THEMES" that can testify this secondary and creative part of our living.

(...)



In this essay, the imaginary is seen as the descriptive FORCE of the real. It is both the expression and what expresses our quotidian environment through a rhetoric of its own. It is within an "exchange" between our acts (our "ways-of-being") and the environment itself that appears its imaginary configuration. We will attend some instants of the descriptive rhythm of a walk through the city.

THE IMAGINARY AND THE PLACE.
FORMS.

Does it make sense to ask the question of the imaginary and the place? and how can it be asked?

Does it make sense to turn back to the object and pretend that it is in itself part of the questions about the imaginary.

We have seen that, if the imaginary develops itself upon the physical conditions of the environment, it is within that we can find the "reality" of this environment in regard to ourselves.

How To avoid contradicting this attitude that we developed in the first part of this paper and still look at our quotidian surroundings as "objects" that can have something to say about our imaginary.

Our conventional attitude when we look at the environment is to look at it as a sum of well defined objects. We tend to look at the environment as built of identified places and functional parts (See: Real Space).

As we orient ourselves toward what is representable, what can become explicit, we are unable to deal with what seems to be transparent, fluid, boundless.

What does the environment mean when we have taken away its functionality?

The problem becomes even more complicated when we are interested in the quotidian environment; the one that is not necessarily sensational, the one that is often discrete and anonymous. However, it is the one of our concern here because it is the one that concern most of our life.

Should we select a particular place or a number of places? A selected topography out of what we have called, in a generical manner, the physical environment. Would not that be already too constrained by a logic that we want to avoid. Do these delimitations and these definitions, still make sense for the space that is "lived"? The configuration of the imaginary.

If it does not make sense to look at an object persay, then it does to look at a more continuous entity. Therefore the "real space", only this time seems as a virtual continuity, may be more appropriate as ground for the imaginary, the ground of our sensitivity.

● WHICH GEOGRAPHY OF THE REAL IS BORROWED BY OUR IMAGINARY TO BUILD ITS SECONDARY REALITY?

● HOW IS THE IMAGINARY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS GEOGRAPHY?

● HOW DOES THE REAL TAKE ITS APPEARANCE FROM THE IMAGINARY?

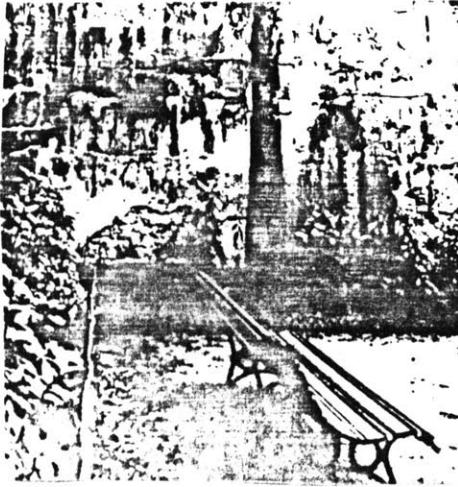
Various aspects of an answer.

A first attitude that might help to evoke this environment that would become the support as well as the expression of the imaginary, would be to put oneself at a distance from the "real space" as identified places that represent some sort of conventions, that are known recognized and accepted; and then try to look for the non-places, the floating place or the transitory areas...

That is let oneself be attracted by the marginal that is still open to the "possible", what can be "re-invented" and "re-invested" and that seems to be offered to the "difference".

The places that allow the observer to be himself with himself. Mirror places in someway, neutral contexts where any little event, any discrete sign, unexpectedly taken, can invest the place totally and convoke the imaginary.

May be this place in the city is the vacant lot, the partially destroyed, hidden part, empty corner or passage. In other words all what the 19th Century european city has tried to amputate from its body, seeing it as confusing, ambiguous and non-hygienic... (See: Foucault, Histoire de la folie). It constitutes this second area within the city and within the society, the second network where social control



cannot be applied and cannot be efficient and again which one has to struggle.

Is there an imaginary in the vernacular and the spontaneous? Should we here distinguish a theme for the imaginary, a geography that would be easily invested. Something that is both part of the "real" and beyond the "real". A secondary part of the "real" that says that everything is not determined; and something that would look like a secondary part of our being, a place where the possible is still possible, a place that looks like the imaginary.

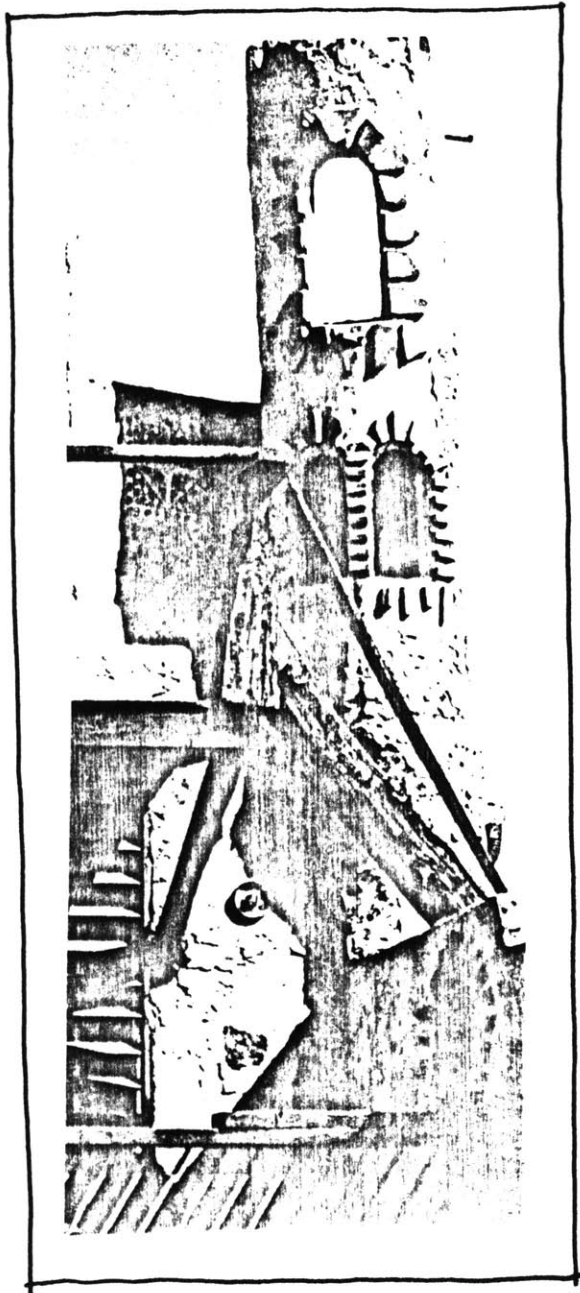


Another way the environment can be seen as the support and the expression for the imaginary is in the signs of it "appropriation".

A typical characteristic of the human way to live with one's surroundings, is that whatever place, from the most momentarily used to the most sedentary, has to be "appropriate" through the appearance of some distinct signs.

It is as if the reality, too regular and too coherent, had to be re-organized to be re-established as belonging to oneself and to be re-adjusted against the "homogeneity" of the time and objects.

A single sign (even visually identified) is enough for the place to be invested and to belong to the



imaginary.

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Infinitely different, these signs also create a grid upon the real and testify that the place is accompanied by a life with its dreams and its ideologies...it shows a level of adhesion to a place, an authenticity and a demarcation from the other places.

Various examples can be given to show this "appropriation" of the reality with its correspondance on the imaginary level.

Probably the best example would be the "realized utopias".

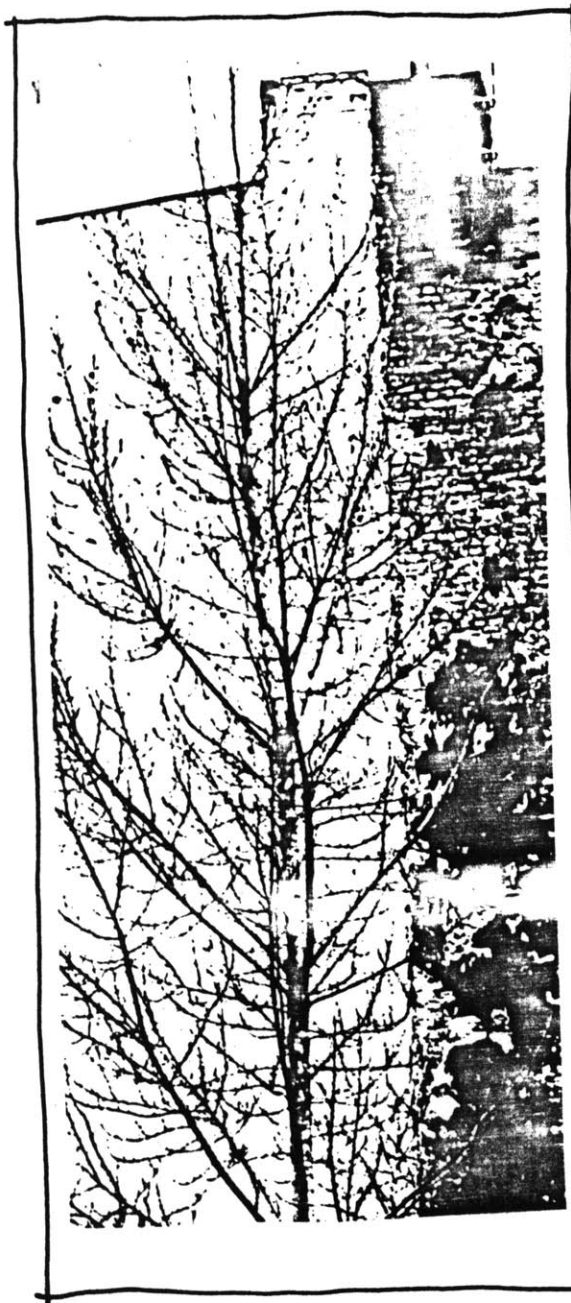
In this case where the appropriation of the real reaches a very sophisticated point it seems that the reality almost fits with the dream.

However, at another level we can say that the "secondary residence" as a spatial and social phenomenon, is a similar example where the form that is given to the real tends to fit the imaginary. Architecture without architect as a materilalization of the denial of the "real space".

-Hidden, non-geometrical, absent, non-defined places that offer themselves as mirrors of our present sensitivity.

-Secondary areas of the city...

-Signs of our appropriation...



However it might be possible that within the range from the most private to the most public, some places exist that despite their assignment, reveal their ambivalence. Urban places that despite their identity "reverse" themselves and are taken according to different combinations of imaginary figures between the individuals and the others.

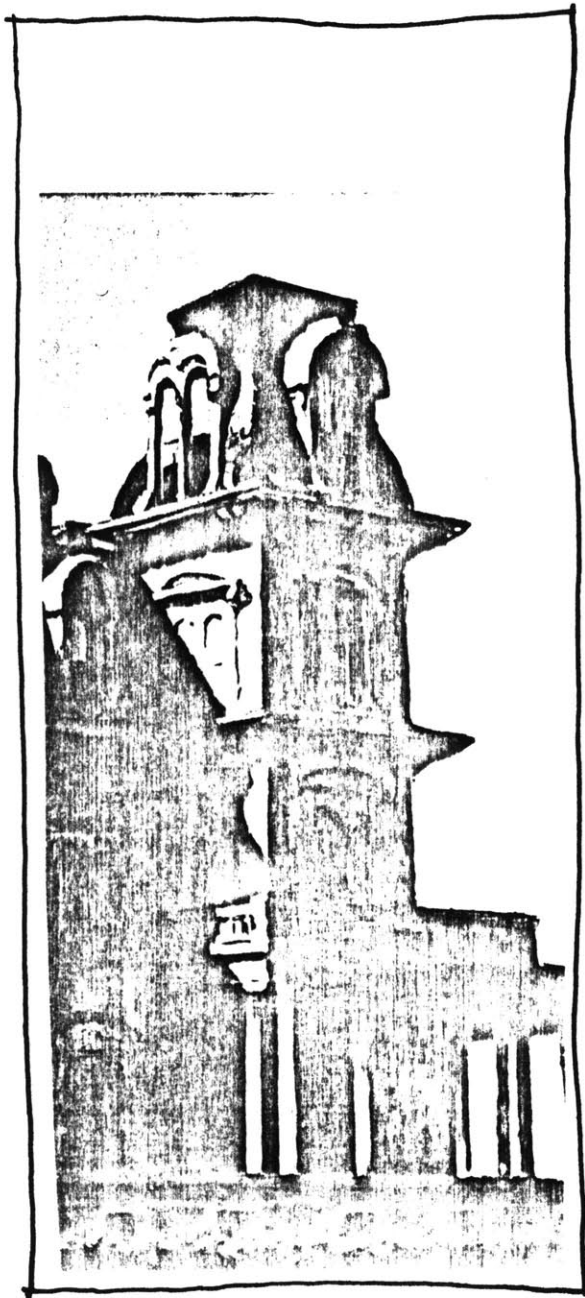
Contrary to the modern city, where the uniformity of the ways of life has also uniform the segmentation of space, the city of the Middle-Age could probably have provided the example to illustrate these ambivalent places.

Can we think about some of our urban quotidian places in the same way?

It is also possible to pursue this investigation further looking for different structures to our environment. Trying to find another code to the real.

The presence of the nature within the city for instance. The gardens, the parks, ambiguity between the city and the countryside that always tend to re-appear, mutual and reciprocal convocation, mutual and reciprocal reflection.

As if the imaginary was always concerned with an elsewhere of the places and that this bi-polarity city countryside allowed the alternance for this



elsewhere. An imaginary that would be in-between the places and that would need this geography of "oppositions" to build itself.

63

Finally this exploration can also be done while looking at literature, for this last has often considered the discrete and sometimes powerful relation that can exist between life and places. Or sometimes place itself, carefully considered for the qualities of its own.

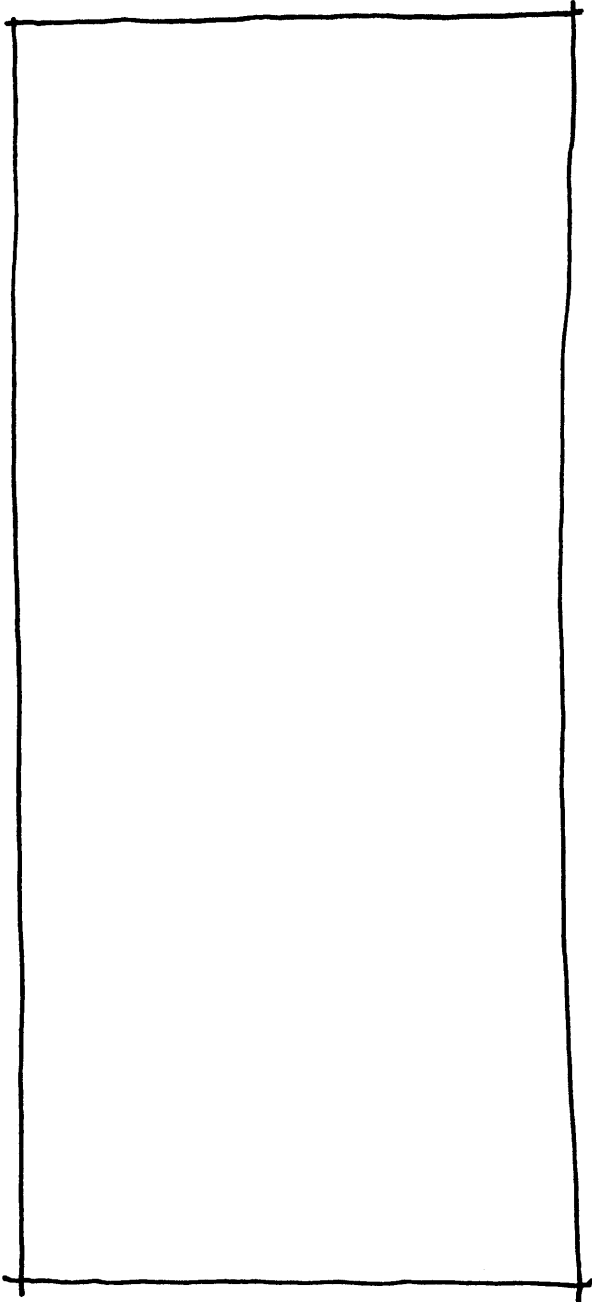
This has been the case in many aspects for the Surrealist Movement. Despite the fact that the latter is usually known for its late period where it has been attracted by the sensational and the exhibitionist, the Surrealist Movement was originally mostly concerned and fascinated by the "appearances" of our very quotidian environment. Its ultimate search was to get closer to this "appearance" of the things because it was said that the real essence of life was there. To make the things appear from their opaqueness, to bring them toward their expected transparency, to narrow the distance between the real and the imaginary and to build this other latent reality that exist within the things themselves. For this the Surrealist want to bring the realism to its highest point, they try to go as deep as possible into the real of the human inven-

tions and among them they are fascinated by the city. The city is taken and visited in every of its attributes: the places, the streets...which are also the places for the "science-fiction" of the everyday life to happen.

To achieve this other dimension that they were looking for, they try to transform their "look", going beyond the superficial perception and finding an authentic freshness of the look, the instantaneous feeling that has no past, that negates the time and that is able to create the "difference" within the instant and within the things.

The idea of the Surrealist Movement of this period has something to do with our actual interrogation about imaginary and sensitivity for the discrete and anonymous object. Something that we can hardly distinguish for it is beyond the established identity of the things. As if the quotidian imaginary had nothing to do with the assumptions that are made upon the "real" and the values that are attributed to the things.

The Surrealist also think that "creativity" has to be removed from its established delimitation. Creativity can also be located in the way we experience the objects of our everyday life: the particular shine that we give to them.



Is there a particular strength in our quotidian imaginary, something that would not be recognized by the conventional representation of our living attitude, a particular power which interacts with the physical objects around us. Quotidian and original creativity within the imaginary that would give the images that we have of the objects around us, the discrete places and the familiar architecture.

-TRANSITION-

In the previous essay, we were looking for the FORMS that can testify as a sedimentation that there is a part of our living that does not necessarily refer to the identified environment as we described it in the "real space" and that builds a reality, conforming to the imaginary part of this living: what we can call the formalizations of the "denial".

Despite it being difficult to try to look at the environment as a sort of continuous entity, I believe that for our purpose we had to do so instead of looking at it as an a-priori sum of already defined and delimited entities.

Therefore from this virtual continuity, we have been able to show different "themes" that can be seen in a way as constraining or complementing the so-called "real space". They are not all "formalizations" but sometimes we notice them telling us something about the nature of the imaginary of our living.

We might recall here what they are:

- The "vernacular" and an imaginary that reacts against what is pre-determined.
(reaction)
- The signs of our "appropriation" and an imaginary of our "belonging" to a place.
(identity)
- The "ambivalent" and an imaginary of a "beyond" of the place. (difference)
- The "fluctuant" and an imaginary of the metamorphosis. (transformation)
- And finally an "appearance" of the most quotidian places or a creative imaginary.
(creativity)

Should we recognize all these different "themes" of reality? Should we also take **73** them as reflections that are characteristics of the imaginary of our living: reaction upon the real, identification of a particular real and creation of the real.

Does the imaginary of our living have these different powers of transformation that are, however, not recognized by the conventional representation of this living, often seen as submitting to the determinism of the reality?

Do these expressions of our ways of beings only have confusing significance or do they constitute a meaningful way for us to conform to reality?

Is there in these expressions of our living an overall coherence that contradicts and goes beyond what the assumptions of the Architectural Discourse are?



-6-

THE
ACT
AND
THE
IMAGINARY

-Fourth essay-

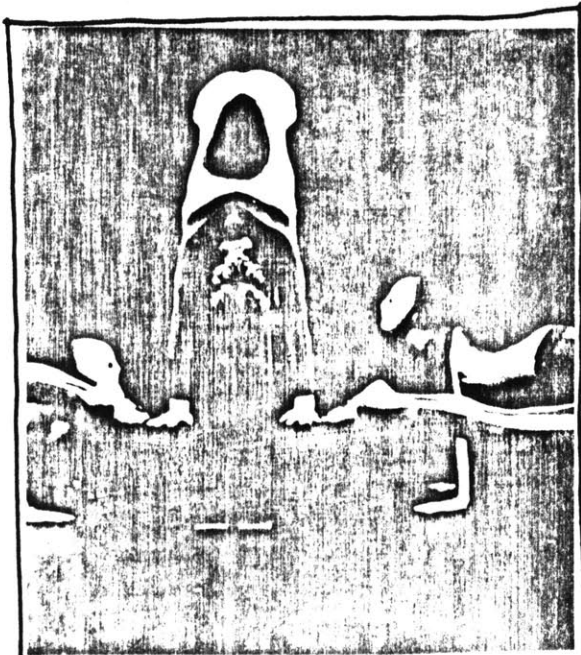
"The theatral act can be understood
as the caricature and the scenography
of the Imaginary..."

L'Espace et son double.
P.Sansot.

We have seen in the first part of this paper; that the imaginary which concerns us is an elaboration upon the real, (in our case the physical reality of the environment), that probably comes from the dialogue of our "desire", our "corporeity" and the nature of our relationship with "others". Active elaboration with a power of recreation and of "denial", the imaginary, in its particular manner, creates the reality of architecture as it appears to us; and at the same time it negates its objectual reality. It creates architecture as the context of our life to occur. In a sense the imaginary is a force of "expression" of the reality as well as an expression by itself: it is through the imaginary and within the imaginary that the reality in which we "believe" appears.

In the last essay, while looking at the forms of the environment we have shown some that can constitute a geography to which we relate through the imaginary and that speaks about this imaginary.

In this essay, we describe the way we relate to the environment, creating its imaginary significance and configuration. The hypothesis is that it is through our gestures and our ways-of-being that we configurate the imaginary space around us and at



"The imagination of a move is
 imagination of a matter. To the
 cinematically consideration of a
 move one always has to add
 the consideration of the matter
 transformed by the move,"

G. BACHELARD.

the same time, these expressions and gestures, are "expression" of the way we relate to these imaginary spatial configurations.

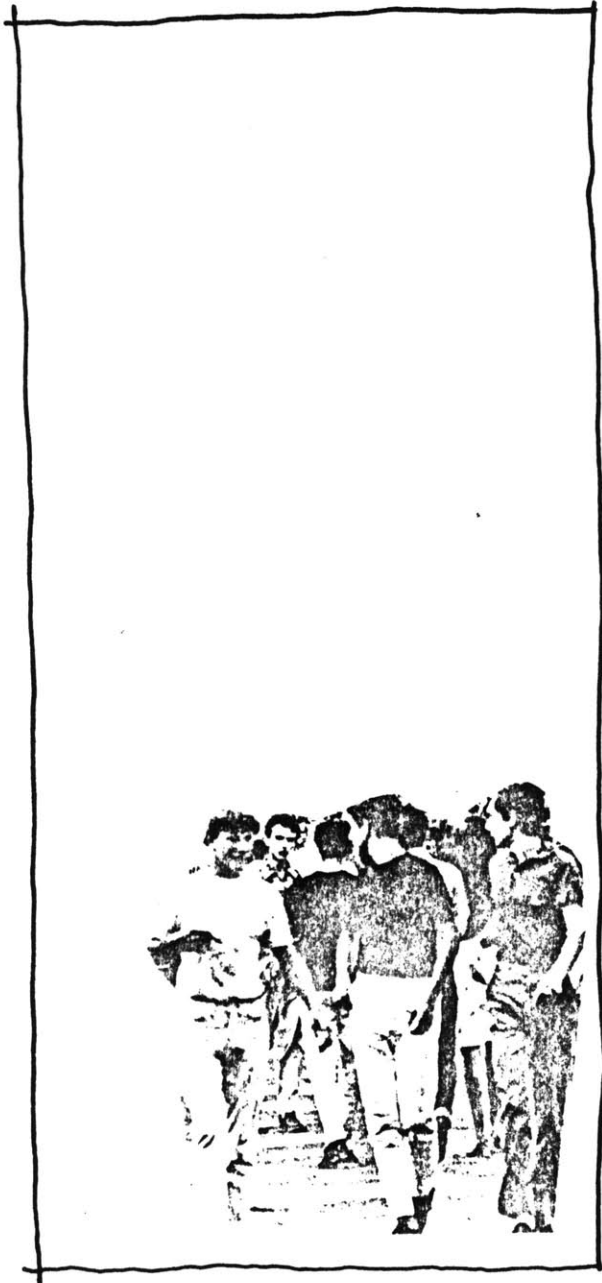
In order to illustrate this hypothesis and to be in conformity with our intention to stay in an everyday context, we have to find a situation that is in some way typical of the quotidianity and that involves our corporeity, some aspects of our individuality and our sociability.

Often forgotten, or secondary among the description of our different activities (probably because it does not participate to our productive life) it seems that WALKING is one of these everyday acts that allows us to relate and to "live" our architecture.

The following pages are some personal notes guides by two different researches" one by J.F. Augoyard, PAS-A-PAS⁽¹⁾, the other by P. Sansot, L'Espace et son double.⁽²⁾ I have used some photographes to illustrate the following notes since photographes can

represent, without words, these instants that are lived through our whole individual sensitivity.

Our purpose is to become attentive to this living and creative attitude that an "active" perceiver has in relation to a "reactive" city. A city that would still have to be built. A city that would progressively be transformed and described by the



strength of this living action and enveloped by its **77**
imaginary modalities.

The nomad builds his city in two different ways. The "real", when he stops roaming and the physical city appears. The imaginary, when the nomad's roam (his walk) takes him into a city and through his exploration he builds its reality to him (an imaginary reality). Ruskin in a book about the city of Venice, leads the traveler along a walk and allows him to discover the reality of the historic city.¹⁶

It is not certain that there is an urban nomadism today and we do not travel all the time, however, it is the scenography of all our walks in the city that represents an "expression" of the relation that we have with the city and the essential way we use to build its imaginary configuration.

Walking is more than a move that allows to connect one point to another.

We might remember that it is through his first words and his first steps that a child distantiates himself from his mother and starts discovering both his autonomy and the reality of the things around him.



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Walking is more than a move, it is a discovery and a creative act with which we configurate space. While walking, we lead ourselves towards the unknown. What already exists but that we cannot see yet. There is always in a walk a part that is not previsual, a margin of choice. Such as the possibility of another itinerary, that the walk itself contradicts along its progression making it disappear. Walking reveals the space in front of us and beyond what is present and simultaneous to this walk is the whole city in its imaginary configuration. The image of walking in the dark with the help of a lamp is probably evocative of what we mean here. Beyond the narrow angle of light in which we can see our senses are able to re-build in its globality the presence of what we cannot see but is powerfully present according to what we already know.

We don't walk in the same manner in a city that we know and in one that we are discovering. As we have already walked in the city that we know, we possess in ourselves its imaginary configuration: neighborhood, group of buildings, houses... The act of walking is that of interacting and revealing space through the accumulation of images and sensations that become an imaginary territory.



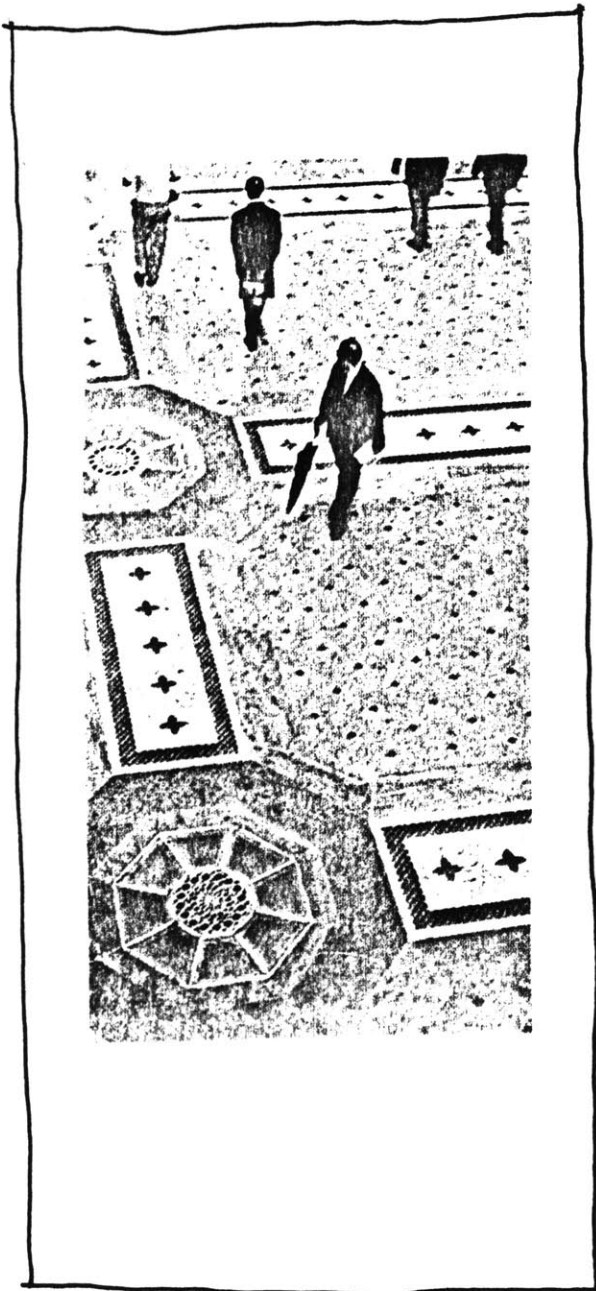
The order of the images builds itself slowly.

79

"The imaginary through the movement requires the shortest time to come to existence but needs the repetitive time to build itself" (Sansot). While taking the walk in different manners some dominants start to appear created by an event or by some particular conditions of the context and such place will be attached to some situation.

It is an exchange of images. As the space transposes its images to me, I transpose my feelings to them and they become permanent. The imaginry space through the temporal and spatial development of the walk builds itself upon memory, sedimented repetitions and discovery.

The places, the streets and the districts, articulate themselves through my sensoriality and my mobility that dismantle the rigorous, ordered geometry of the real to substitute it by the signs of my appropriation. Through walking I destroy the real to rebuild what becomes the "lived" space, the "habitable" areas, the parts of the city that have an existence for me as they are attached to the particularities of the instant when I discovered them; or again it is the absent places of the city, the non-existing place, the place in which I haven't been or that I haven't met the adequate circumstances which would bring them alive to me.



Through walking I build the geography of the forms of my living. 80

Walking is building both the city through movement and my belonging to it. Walking rarely occurs in a particular place but it is by being "in-between" the places that I can constitute the connective tissue between all the place (infraconnexion to every places). It is by appropriating this connective tissue that I can appropriate and belong to a city as a global entity.

However walking is not only a spatial act, it is also a social act. The path that I take has already been taken by others belonging to the same city. I share the same path and the way I share the path becomes an opportunity of sharing the same imaginary configuration of the city. The nature of the relation that I have with others becomes a part of the "ingredients" that structure the imaginary configuration that I give to the city.

My corporeity, my sensorality, my sociability the dynamism of the walk become the "system" that operates as the medium and the projective power. They create according to the succession and the qualities of the instants of the walk, the configuration of the imaginary city. It is a constitutive movement



that rebuilds the real space into a heterogeneous and appropriate configuration. 81

However the walk is not only projective and configurative it becomes itself an expression of the nature of the relation between us and this imaginary configuration of the city. We never walk in the same manner and the places that we come across are never synonymous. The walk is simultaneous with a context, its atmospherical conditions, the tonalities of a situation, the presence of others, the instancies of everyday life and the place when we have to go or the place from which we come.

The walk embodies these different elements that constitute a part of the global context of the surrounding city and it creates the appropriate figures or expressions that in a way signify this surrounding context and in their turn re-create its configuration.

These expressions of the walk can be seen as a style. The choice of a particular figure is always referring to a particular context. In that sense similar to the style of a language where the meaning of the word refers to the context of the sentences. Walking as a "doing" testifies of a way of "being". It contains the instancies of our everyday life that is embodied and it becomes the expression of this



everyday life.

82

From an expressive and configurative movement, the walk becomes expression and configuration itself. It is within this exchange between the physical reality and the movement in its particular style that the expression of the imaginary reality of the surroundings is contained.

The city and its parts belong to us through walking. Its imaginary reality is like the "resonance" of the places that have been associated to the sensitive experience of the walk. Both the city and the walk become "expression" of the imaginary reality.

-TRANSITION-

Apart from the reasons that we give in our introduction, we have also chosen walking because it is this particular moment when the relation between architecture and ourselves is not too dependent on a particular spatial context, but is a relation between the present instant, its tonalities and the overall imaginary reality that we embody. It has evoked in their dynamicism the theoretical elements of our precedent essays. The body its motricity as well as the significance of the surroundings that come from our ways of being and the nature of the relation that we have with others. Walking as a typical example, becomes the dynamic expression of these instances and the imaginary perception of the city, configured as a rhetoric of images and impressions.

Different from the Behaviorist theory, that has as a true assumption given to the environment an effect upon man's behavior, it is here an exchange of effects and significances that is built. The environment as well as man's behavior cannot be seen as determined, but both of them are constantly re-built upon this exchange that refers to the overall imaginary context.

It might be a theory of expression that we are missing in order to understand the nature of this exchange.

-7-

-CONCLUSION-

"The desire of another life, essential
desire without which the theater would
not exist. This other life is something
else than a life. May be it is this
"novelty" that Baudelaire wanted to find
beyond this actual world"

Cles pour l'Imaginaire.
O. Mannoni.

CONCLUSION

And if the imaginary...

The intention of this paper was to get closer to the nature of the relation through the forms of our imaginary, between us and our physical surroundings. It is difficult to build a precise idea about the imaginary of a quotidian living.

It seems, despite the fact that we imagine things all the time, we are not able to easily answer the question of the way we imagine them.

It also seems that if there is a particular strength or creativity within the forms of our imaginary, we tend not to recognize and we finally learn only some repertoried parts of our life to our imaginary (Art Leisure...)

In our society, the way we live with architecture, has been removed from what could have been its original form of expression and it now belongs to the social and economical exigencies of this society. This is probably why we have finally forgotten that this expression of our living can exist, and that we know so little about it.

This is also the reason why as we have seen through the Architectural Discourse when we have to represent this living for the sake of Architectural production, we reduce it to its most superficial

aspects.

Consequently the architecture that we build with a grammar that does not include enough of the richness of our quotidian living can only be an architecture that contains this living within its self-sufficient geometry, without sufficient correspondances.

However, as we have seen while comparing this architecture to a mask in our second essay, we can reconsider this abstract architecture once it becomes the pretext for the modalities of a quotidian imaginary life.

The strength of an imaginary allows us to start our living upon a rupture from the determined physical reality and this submits to the continuous rhetoric of the imaginary.

If there is an imaginary of our living it is the place of the "denial" and the substitution of the determined reality by the "expression" of the reality; the one in which we believe, the one around which we build our life and the one which belongs to us.

These modifications that we bring to the reality can be read on two different levels.

We can look at the environment itself and see how some of its parts, even if they don't belong to the

conventional representation that we have of our environment, constitute a geography that tells us something about the imaginary of our living. These signs or these "themes" as we called them in our essay about forms are the "expression" FOR the imaginary; the things to which this particular imaginary relates (vernacular, signs of appropriation, metamorphosis...)

Besides that, as we have seen in our last essay, it is our living itself and our "ways of being" that becomes the way we express our spatial surroundings according to ourselves; these "ways-of-being" become in turn "expression" of these imaginary spatial configurations. It is both of them that creates the rhetoric of our imaginary architecture.

There is an imaginary related to our living that takes different forms and that we have to rediscover because it seems to contain a particular power and a particular creativity of its own. It probably requires that we do not rerepresent what has to be represented of man, for the sake of economical repetitivity or a too comfortable intellectual attitude. It also requires that we set aside, at least for a while, our conventional methodologies that are more interested in the "WHAT" of the things than in

their "HOW" and that we have the courage to look at man again in the totality of his being.

The imaginary is not to be found in things themselves, but more in the way they build their appearance, the way they relate to each other and the way we relate to them through our whole being.

For the imaginary, the world and the behavior of man are not determined anymore, but they appear as expression dynamicism and strength.

To look for the imaginary is to look toward what can be "possible". A latent existence of our way to react against what is determined. If we wish for the realization of the "possible", what Lefebvre calls the "experimental utopia", it is because we have to worry about the renewing of our too empirical attitude toward life.

If a dependance on a more and more effective and rational planning of our surroundings has to be pursued, then we have to be sure that we also involve what is beyond the rational, for the forms of our internal life also have to participate in the elaboration of the already present world in which we will have to live tomorrow.

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