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**Architecture as Inauguration of
'Das da Sein'**

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Abstract

This essay explores a form of architecture designed for the human body and simultaneously examines the exact point at which the body becomes human. Architecture is strictly anthropological. It is something that is needed by humans. The ‘human’ is identified as ‘the there’ – in a circulation of the sense – and he unendingly opposes the affirmative interrogation of the artefacts. The primitive artefact is architecture as a material necessity – a metonym for the stance of ‘the there’ i.e. the ‘human’. This contiguity provokes an operation of incorporation: ‘the there’ is the circulation of the sense at the moment at which the human senses make sense. This primarily consists of ‘thing-ness’ or dignity: in other words, the real intention of architecture.

The essential notions deployed in this exercise are: stances, human as distances and the significance of architecture. The text also encompasses the notion that architecture, the human, emptiness and well-being are verbs, and that architecture is a thing for the body, or an ‘infinition’¹ for the body.

Keywords: architecture, stance, distance, body, significance, ‘thing-ness’, dignity, infinition

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¹**infinition** (noun): (definition + infinity; Lat *in*, not + *finire*, to bound) – an infinite process of defining something that cannot be fully or precisely defined; an endless list of possible definitions. *Infine* verb – to define in a negative way something indefinable, to stop or postpone the process of definition (Merriam-Webster, open dictionary: http://nws.merriam-webster.com/opendictionary/newword_display_alpha.php?letter=In&last=50, accessed 29 November 2012).

Introduction

Let's begin by considering the sentence 'architecture designed for the human body'.

It isn't architecture designed 'for the body'. It isn't 'for the body of the human'. It isn't 'for the 'human'. It is for the 'human' body. Nor is it 'architecture designed 'as' the human body'.

These distinctions have different significations.

But even once such distinctions have been made, the intriguing phrase 'architecture designed for the human body' still needs to be interpreted and questioned. Because architecture is usually thought to be – when it is thought of at all – as something 'spiritual' rather than something connected to the body.

This essay proposes that architecture isn't designed for anything else other the human body. Or, to be more precise, architecture for the body of the human at the very moment when it becomes 'human'.

It is strange to think of a body that is, or becomes, 'human'.

In other words, this text doesn't accept a priori that 'human' exists and that architecture is related to 'becoming 'human'...

It is therefore very important to state, at the beginning of this essay, that the reader should try not to think of architecture as a finished product, something that is visible and aesthetically evaluable, but to interrogate it. How is it made? How does it work? What does it do? What is it for? Or, even better, how does it operate? Try not think about how architecture looks (image) but how the careful arrangement of matter might influence human well-being.

Throughout this essay, we will keep one basic question about 'architecture', as the most primitive event, in mind:

How does just a 'dis-position' of matter affect a person's well-being?

It is such an elementary question, yet so difficult ... or is it?

Let us begin with a summary of the different terms used in this essay...

Human

'Human' is both 'real' and 'reality'. In some French fields of thought, there is a very significant difference between 'real' and 'reality'.

There is more than a minor variation between these words. 'The real' or 'the reality' indicates two very different, and even separate, domains.

So, there is 'the real' and there is 'the reality'.

Real

The 'real' is simply what is there, including our body. But we can't 'conquer' it, or define it. Our language – that's to say our ability to invent distinctions – cannot attain it. Our language is 'over' the real, but not on the level of the real. Our language creates a 'world' over the real, and so leaves the real.

So 'real', in English, could be equated to 'What have the human' or to 'What acts the human' It is essentially the body or 'What makes that the 'body' pay some attention for'.

But the human doesn't understand this and can't encompass it – not even by language.

It is the 'Other' that attracts us, or makes the body change orientation. And we don't resist. The 'real' is the resistance to knowing. And there is resistance.

Reality

Reality is what the human creates, or brings into existence, 'on' the real: the action of language and speech, or the effects of language. The word language is used here in the broadest possible sense: The ability to invent distinctions...

It is not certain that reality ever attains the real. And nor can we be sure a priori that there is a reality. Reality is what the human create on the real.

Human

'Human' is the opposite of the 'real'. It is a 'reality'.

If we insist upon this...

That 'human' is the opposite of the 'real' - and that it means to be immersed in a physical body, but yet separate from it by a distance...

...then 'reality' is created by what I call 'affirmative interrogations'.

And so the 'human' is endlessly established at the same logical time, through a reality on the level of the real.

I insist upon the preposition 'on': Reality on the real. And not reality in the real. And definitely not reality 'of' the real.

I use also the word to 'establish' in which we see the word 'table': 'es-table-ish'. The table is something that 'holds' or maintains a gap or a distance, be it big or small, but a gap nevertheless, between the 'ground' and a 'surface of presentation', and in our case, between the real (the 'ground') and the reality (the 'surface of presentation').

Reality is established at a distance from the real. Reality is not in the real. That's to say: the real isn't attained.

So, The 'human' establishes itself, through an interminable process, and in the same logical time, as a reality on the real. Therefore, A 'human' is he who admits that he has been established with this reality. And that this reality, which is not the real, is always an affirmation and an interrogation on the real, and not in the real, and not of the real.

Inhuman Anthropoi

There are inhuman anthropoi: Those who ignore the distinction between the real and reality.

Those who believe in the oxymoron: 'only believe in science'.

Those who don't admit that they are establishing themselves with reality.

Those who believe or postulate that the human, the world and the things in it, are there a priori. Those who exclude the real – they are the humanists. (the

humanists are un-human.) It is they who act as if the signifier was fabricated for the signified. Nor do they believe that the signifier was there before the signified.

Human - Animal

So, in this variation, from reality to the real, A 'human' is One who doesn't believe that the reality which is established, or which is 'put on the table', with him, is a priori 'true'.

This is not the case with animals, which are 'real' in the 'real', and believe the 'real', without even thinking about it.

The great French psychiatrist, Jacques Lacan, discussed a very interesting difference between animals and humans and it is one that helps us to better understand what I have just established:

... My dog, in my sense and without ambiguity, speaks. My dog has without any doubt the gift of speech. This is important, because it does not mean that she possesses language totally...

... She does not speak all the time, she speaks contrary to many humans only at moments when she needs to speak. She has a need to speak at moments of emotional intensity and of relationships to the other, to myself and some other people...

...What is it that distinguishes this usage ... from human speech?

...What distinguishes this speaking animal from what happens because of the fact that man speaks is the following... contrary to what happens in the case of man in so far as he speaks, she never takes me for another...

The fact is that she knows very well that it is I who am there, she never takes me for another, contrary to what in all your experience is there to testify ...

...The purely-speaking subject as such, it is the very birth of our experience, is led, because he remains purely-speaking, to take you always for another... that by taking you for another, the subject puts you at the level of the Other with a big O...

...It is precisely this which is lacking to my dog: for her there is only the small other. As regards the big Other, it does not seem that her relationship to language gives her access to it.

Jacques Lacan (extracts from 'The Seminar of Jacques Lacan', Book IX, Identification, 1961-1962)¹

Almost unbelievably, Lacan immediately goes on to say: Why, since she speaks, does she not manage to constitute at all as we do these articulations in such a fashion that the locus ('le lieu' in French) of this 'Other' where the signifying chain is situated is developed for her as for us?

Humans as 'Speaking Beings' (parle-etre)

¹English translations of Lacan's seminars: http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/?page_id=123, accessed 29 November 2012.

For the animal, therefore, there is no distinction between the ‘real’ and the ‘reality’.

And yet, for the human, there is. And that makes some ‘great Other’. ‘All Other’ which has to be maintained, ceaselessly, and, for this ‘speaking-being’, there is only one means:

by activity with words, or by activity with matter, without which he would perish, rather than ‘ex-perish’.

Notice here that that the form of the word ‘experience’ is ‘ex-perish-ence’. Or, in French, ‘ex-périr-ence’. So, a ‘speaking being’ is ex-perish-mental, or experimental.

A ‘speaking being’ doesn’t describe ‘things of the real’ or bring these internal elocutions into reality. A ‘speaking being’ isn’t the excellent producer of an adequate elocution of the reality. A ‘speaking being’ affirms, or ‘pretends’ an interrogation, in ‘op-position’ to the real.

Human - Animal

In a certain sense, a ‘speaking being’ or ‘human’ is a ‘question’. (But there are inhuman anthropoi...). A ‘human’ is therefore ‘question’. A question to which he interminably opposes affirmations or interrogations, or affirmative interrogations, by disposition of matter (this matter can be words, or something else, even something mute). From these dispositions or ‘op-positions’ the ‘human’ is established. (establish – es-table-ish, é-table-ir in French). Lacan would say: that it is from these dispositions or op-positions that humans fall, or humans rise. But I prefer to say: humans es-table-ish themselves.

Lacan also uses the French word ‘échouer’ to convey this meaning of ‘to establish’, a word that has three meanings in fact: to ground, to strand, and to fail. It is inspiring to mix these three meanings up, or to regard them as a polysemy for the word ‘to establish’

The affirmation and the interrogation by the human

Caution. When it comes to ‘affirmations’ or ‘interrogations’, or ‘dispositions’ or ‘oppositions’, it isn’t necessary to understand the displacements, of ‘words’ or ‘matters’ nor the result of an activity. One can give ‘sense’, without even a signification, to a matter, that is just seen or just noted, or that we perceive as an event, that thus becomes a signifier through the perception, location or y-dentification¹ that precedes this ‘sense’, or which comes with this ‘sense’.

By ‘affirmations’ or ‘interrogations’, by ‘dispositions’ or ‘oppositions’, we have to understand that if many different types of displacements, or dispositions, of ‘verbal’ or ‘material’ matters are possible (all the artefacts), then it is natural to believe that simple ‘emergence’, or accidental attentions, are just as possible. Or that e-motions are directed by some signifier that came

¹I use the word y-dentification because the etymology of the French word ‘*identité*’ is located in the ‘y’ of the expression ‘*il y a*’, which means ‘there is’ i.e. a situation rather than a substantive.

into view, without knowing the values of the language, and was stranded at a certain moment towards a 'direction' indicated by a sense.¹ (for example, landscapes or elements of landscapes). All of this is contained within an act of perception, on one hand, and, on the other, by stranding and grounding. (To ground also means 'to touch the ground', like writing on a table, for example, or es-table-shing)

The Human 'Sense'

And it is also a question of sense.

Finally ... we have 'senses'. Or – even better! – the body has 'senses'.

'Sense': the word is equivocal.

I repeat: ... signifiers can be stranded for a moment without knowing, without signification, and caught towards a direction indicated by the senses... One must find, in this sentence, the absence of signification and the two meanings of the word 'sense'.

To feel matter with your 'senses' is nothing other than to feel yourself touching and sensing the matter.

'To sense' a matter...

Feeling the Other, is to feel oneself, or locate oneself, in terms of a sense or a direction. The direction of the Other. The senses always indicates a direction. Or rather: a circulation of the senses, which is far more than the substance, or the essence, of the senses.

Propositions

Proposition of the dis-stance

I have a word for this particular meaning of 'sense' - without signification and without substance - one which is intriguing. Senses in motion, between matters that are mute, and between matters and the human - human, as in all sense and no signification - I also have a word for that:

'distance'

Sometime I write it 'dis-stances', (it is reminiscent of 'dis-positions') or I even sometimes say 'stances at dis-stances'.

Proposition of the stance

One feels, with these 'stances at distances', the complete questioning affirmation of poetry, or the inaugural events.

Here, we note, that in French, the word 'stance' means the same as the English word 'stanza', which describes the basic recurring metrical unit of a poem, in other words, that which is poetic before it is signified. For the

¹Lacan's Seminar XX, 'Encore': '*Le sens indique la direction vers laquelle il échoue*'; Jacques Lacan, *La logique du fantasme* (1966-67), leçon du 18 janvier 1967, p. 74.

purposes of this essay, I would therefore like to add the meaning of ‘stanza’ to the meaning of ‘stance’. The stances or stanzas certainly indicate that they shape a place (‘lieu’ in French). Not even a physical place, just a place. (In Italian, ‘stanza’ is a place, a room, in its stance; in French ‘tenue’). ‘Stance’ contains also ‘stare’ which means ‘to look fixedly’. ‘To hold oneself’ uses the word to hold coming from the words ‘tenue’, ‘tenir’ in French....Difficult!) No stances or stanzas no-where...! Stances or stanzas are places. The stances or stanzas, whether we think of poetry or not, clearly indicate that they precede signification. But without stances or stanzas there is no poetry. They are the inaugural ground that operates as an event. The stances or stanzas also indicate that there is a connection between them. There is no solitary stanza! Finally, the stances or stanzas clearly reveal that they inaugurate that which they are locate: what has to be seen there and the one who is seeing there in his stance. In any case, it is all a question of ‘there’. That’s to say, a question of place. But remember that Lacan didn’t see any gap between the identification of human and the shaping of the place. (Another reason to write it ‘y-identification’) (Full explanation in a longer paper)

Proposition of the human as dis-stances

But let’s retrace our thoughts.

What we have constructed so far, by this word ‘distance’, can be summed up as follows:

‘Human’ is in the disposition or in the distance. Or even: ‘human’ is dis-stances.

‘Human is dis-stances: first to the real but also to a part of the real: his body.

The human is not his body. And there is also distance between himself and his body.

Proposition of ‘dis’-stance

Here we have to note, very clearly, that ‘human’ is not at a distance to his body, but in the distance to his body and in the distance to the stances noted on the real. If I were to show here the stance as a stanza, I would be indicating that it is a Signifier – in the obvious absence of signification, or minus a name.

The ‘human’ - I absolutely insist - is in the dis-stances and not at distance because if we think like that, if the human is at a distance to his own body, then he is somewhere else, or he is concentrated somewhere else, for example in a ‘spirit’. But it cannot be so. There is no ‘somewhere else’ a priori and there is no ‘human’ a priori. All we can say is: the human is to be found ‘there’, in that ‘dis’ of the dis-stance, in that ‘dis’ of the dis-position. He is to be found ‘there’ in a permanent present time as a ‘speaking being’. A ‘there’ which is not in a specific part of the reality; but a ‘there’ which is in the dis-stances and so not at a distance.

Proposition: The ‘Human’ is the ‘there’

‘He’, the human, is ‘there’, in the sense that the human is in the ‘there’. In other words, there’s no difference between ‘he’ and ‘there’. Derrida would say there isn’t a difference, but a ‘differance’.

One can also say: ‘He’ is ‘the there’.

And here lies the very foundation of anthropological architecture. The human is ‘the there’, just ‘the there’, alone.... And that enables us to feel the lack of something that can contain ‘the there’, the absence that makes ‘the there’ possible: in architectural terms it’s the mute signifier – but without signification.

Proposition: the ‘there’ is ‘to be’

‘To be there’, in German is rendered by ‘das da sein’ (to quote Heidegger) And this proximity, between ‘to be’ and ‘the there’ – without any copula – gives rise to the question: can ‘the there’ mean ‘to be’? I repeat, can ‘the there’ mean ‘to be’? (as opposed to ‘the there’ meaning ‘the being’) (We note, in passing, that animals cannot be ‘there’, for they know no such distinction. ‘To be there’ is exclusively a human affair.)

Perhaps ‘the there’ could mean ‘to be’, precisely because ‘the being is not’ or, in other words, ‘das Sein is nicht’. And this is because Heidegger’s profound statement can be taken to mean that ‘das Sein’ is not a substantive, but a verb. Thus, ‘the there’ can certainly mean ‘to be’. A verb!

Proposition: the human anthropos is a verb

If ‘the there’ is ‘to be’, and not ‘the being’, Then it’s a verb, not a noun. ‘The there’ is a ‘verb’.

The human anthropos would be ‘the there’, which would be ‘to be’, which is a verb. The human anthropos is thus a verb, And ‘the there’ is a verb. (Longer explanations in a longer paper)

Proposition: the human anthropos equates to unbearable emptiness

The human anthropos, either as a ‘verb’ or as ‘the there’, is empty. As empty as a verb. (Longer explanations in a longer paper)

Proposition: the human anthropos lacks architecture

The human anthropos is circulating verb. He is ‘the there’, circulating. He is, in that ‘sense’, part of it, Empty, but not nothingness. And in that sense, anew, he lacks that which is ‘organised’ around this emptiness: the place. Or, he lacks the primitive architecture which can be defined as something organised around an emptiness¹ or around a human anthropos. (And emptiness, as we know from Lacan, can also be a metonym for human)

Proposition: being human requires stances without signification

¹Jacques Lacan, *La logique du fantasme* (1966-67), leçon du 18 janvier 1967, p. 74.

It's certainly not simple, and it's very hard to sustain.

So far, when it comes to the dis-stances and the dis-position, we've only looked at the 'dis-' and not the 'stances' or the 'position'. And consequently, the 'there' and 'the there' cannot yet be situated or posed.

Well then, how can we do that? How can we organise some 'thing' around emptiness?

In terms of the real, 'there' or 'the there' is nowhere because in the real (i.e. before reality) no-thing is distinguished (a 'thing' always emerges in reality). In the real, there is no 'thing', nothing, to refer to: the 'human' cannot be established. 'In' or 'on' the real there is no-thing for the dis-stance.

But we haven't finished with the dis-stance.

If we think of it as dis-stances, we can see how far it functions as a metonym: No stance or stanza alone. No stance without dis-stance. No dis-stance without stances.

We've lingered a while in the distance of the dis-stances. Let's us now consider the 'stances' of the dis-stances.

Accept, for a moment, that the human is 'the there'. Or is in the distance. Or, to abbreviate, think of it like this: human is distance.

But no distance, no 'pure distance' without stance or stanzas. Dis-stances need stances or stanzas, but without signification or, in other words: 'pure' distance. We could say: we need the stances or stanzas without signification in order to obtain the 'human'.

And for the stance or stanza, let me repeat: If I had to describe the stance as a stanza, I would refer to it as a signifier. And this, in the obvious absence of signification. Thus, without name. (A wall doesn't have a name.) There are only stances or stanzas in which distance can be held. In the vocabulary of this train of thought, it can be expressed in the following way: the human-distances are only contained in the 'stances'. Or, we can say: there are only stances to inaugurate the distance, to inaugurate 'the there', to inaugurate the human without imbuing him with significations, without imposing the weight of signification upon him.

I propose, for just a few moments, that you think of architecture as the disposition of stances at dis-stances, which contains the human, and nothing more.

Proposition: architecture, or metonymy by contiguity

This is a metonym: Stances at dis-stances for the human-distance. We could also write it: Stances at dis-stances / the human-distance.

I propose that, for a few moments more, that you think of architecture as this metonym. And nothing more than this metonym. Nothing more than the contiguity of, on one hand, the stances or the stanzas in this circulation of sense and, on the other hand, the human-distance. (The human as distance.)

I also propose that, for just a few moments longer, that you think of architecture as this metonym. And nothing more than this metonym. Nothing more than: / . ' / ' is the sign for the 'oblique contiguity'. (Oblique: that which

goes to the 'other'). Nothing more than an oblique contiguity. (Longer explanations in a longer paper)

Thus architecture establishes this metonym of stances at dis-stances, without weight or mass, for the human distance.

Proposition: architecture, 'arkhi' – the disposition of matter

Well then? How can the stanzas or stances of the dis-stances be established in architecture?

Apart from words, what can be used to describe, that which is nothing more, and nothing less than, a 'signifier'? And for this thing, This thing that is nothing more, and nothing less, than a 'signifier', there is a word:

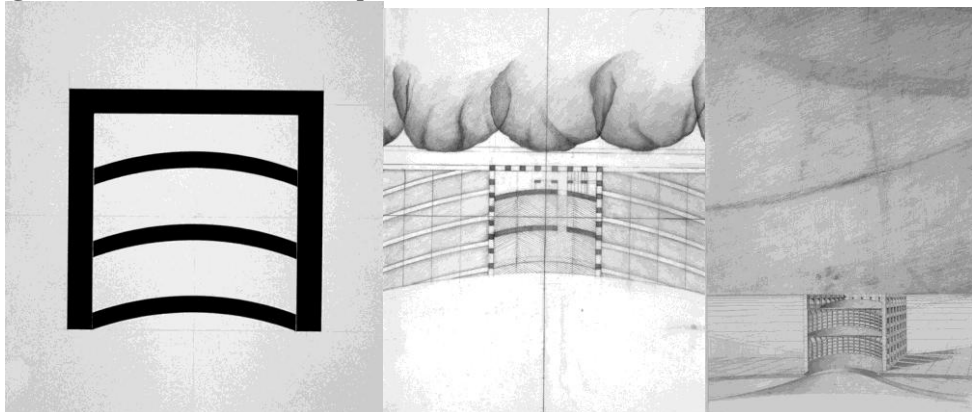
'matter'.

One has to understand it in the Greek sense: 'that which makes it possible'.

Matter. It... isn't a sign of anything or anybody, isn't a stamp of anything or anybody, isn't a figure of anything or anybody, isn't an inscription of anything or anybody, and it doesn't signify anything.

And, if there isn't the slightest connotation of mass and weight, or of any other material phantasm, then, in a certain way, matter is empty. Empty of meaning, even! The meaning being only in the 'circulation' between different types of matter which, by the way, are 'mute'. As mute as the stances. And so we maintain, simply by insisting, that logically, that architecture is there, at this logical moment: that architecture establishes a first, or arkhi-disposition of matters: empty and mute. It is worth noting here, that in architecture, conceptual drawings, plans or sections are always black: there is an absence of colour, of nuances. As we can see in Fig. 2.

Figure 2. Marc Belderbos, *Open Cubus* (1982)



Arkhi-tecture would thus be: dis-position or passage from matter to matter, or communication between them, or the circulation of meaning, in the way that we have come to understand it: without signification. And as a result: it's a passage: from real to reality, or the threshold between the real and the reality. (Longer explanations in a longer paper)

Proposition: architecture and significance

And there is a word to describe this beginning, comprised as it is of a dis-position of signifiers:

Significance.

Significance is: the operation of the chain of signifiers, or the operation of the dis-position of signifiers, or the operation of the dis-position of mute matter. The significance is the dis-stances – which are maintained through time.

Architecture thus founded itself, and remains in the significance without ever joining a signification, without ever taking a signification, without ever reaching a signification. (This doesn't, of course, impede the fact that an external signification can be given to architecture, which shouldn't be confused with explaining architecture or by incorporating it into a history.) Architecture never, as architecture, leaves the significance. So that, without any intellection by the 'mind' or the 'spirit', only the dis-position of mute matters, or the circulation of meaning between them, or the passage between them can be sensed.

Proposition: architecture, a thing for the body

Only that which makes body – not the body itself, but that which makes body – can be sensed.

At this point, and under these conditions – of significance in the absence of signification – the body experiences a certain degree of pleasure (*jouissance* in French) just because it senses a stance, or no-thing more than the first, pure dis-position that comes out of the real. Pure, because it is neither print, nor inscription. It means something else. It conveys a truth (In the way that Badiou intended). Or pure because he is with some-thing instead of no-thing. Or because he is with some-thing instead of an object. Or because he is with a thing and not with an object¹.

I insist upon, and insist again, upon the significance, rather than the signification. The body merely incorporates an operation: the operation of the dis-stances, the operation of this dis-position, the operation that makes a body, or which finds itself as body. It means that a stance, or stanza, is dressed like a body. The body remains at a sensory level (bisemic): It senses 'not alone'. It senses 'not alone in nothingness'. It senses 'not alone at the real'. The body remains at a sensory level: It senses the proximity of emptiness, an emptiness that is not nothingness. It senses the proximity of a dis-position. Maybe it even is the disposition (that he made). This dis-position, or the dis-stances, is 'the there' and, by incorporation, it makes the human into 'the there' of the

¹Lacan: '*sublimation is to elevate the 'object' to the dignity of the 'thing'*'. The thesis by Viviana Melo Saint Cyr transformed the world of architecture by powerfully arguing that 'to architect' means the elevation of the 'object' to the dignity of the 'thing'; 'L'éthique de la psychoanalyse' in *Le Séminaire, livre VII*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 133.

disposition. Disposition or dis-stances, in a certain sense are bound together in a 'stance. In a stance of a body.

Proposition: architecture as 'thingness', or 'thing-ity'

The silent and mute enjoyment of the dis-position, and its incorporation, inaugurates our corporeal knowledge. Which gives it a consistency. Which means it becomes a thing (without being an object). To become a thing...to have a 'thingness', or 'thing-ity'... It's very close to dignity, maybe even a synonym for it. Which is the unique intention of architecture.

This thing-ity/dignity is to be 'the there'. This thing-ity/dignity is 'das 'da' sein'.

Architecture inaugurates das 'da' sein by being in oblique contiguity ' / ' by being between stances at distances and the dis-stances. By between stances at distances and the human. So the human is inaugurated by his body...by architecture.

Proposition: architecture is an 'infinition'

I conclude this contribution to your conference, not with a definition of architecture but by a maxim. A maxim that I would call: the 'infinition' of architecture. Why infinition? Because architecture is an interrogative affirmation It is never finished, nor 'de-finished', and never defines the human. Architecture is the restricted action of the oblique contiguousness of stances at distance, and the human as distances becoming 'the there', the body in 'infinition'.

Architecture
establishes
on the real –
the pure dis-position of matter, called 'space'
or s-pass (signifier-pass or stances-pass),
for the corporeal well-being
of the one who, through it, becomes 'the there'

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