a number of scientific arguments. Every reality contains "elements" that can be revealed by analysis. These constitute its internal order (its consistency and coherence) but appear to us in a state of disorder that yields information within redundancy (repetition of order, of a preexistent grouping made up of discrete units or cataloged elements). For information brings with it an element of surprise and increasing variety, a disorder that arises from a new form of intelligibility, a new redundancy, a different and more complex momentary order.[1]

The urban phenomenon is based on descriptive methods, which are themselves varied. Ecology describes a "habitat," inhabited areas, neighborhood units, types of relations (primary within a neighborhood, secondary or derivative within an enlarged space). Phenomenological description, which is more subtle, investigates the links between city dwellers and a site; it studies the environment, the disparities of space, monuments, the movements and boundaries of urban life. Empirical description emphasizes morphology. It accurately measures what people see and do within an urban framework, a given city, a megalopolis (a dispersed city that forms an administrative and political whole, including urban functions, even when the older forms and structures have disappeared).

These methods reveal certain aspects, certain features of the urban phenomenon, primarily its enormity and complexity. But will they enable us to get closer to this phenomenon? After a certain point, description, no matter how detailed, turns out to be inadequate, and the limits of morphology and ecology are soon reached. Description is unable to explain certain *social relations*—apparently abstract with respect to the given and the "lived"— which appear concrete but are only immediate. These include relations of production and exchange and market relations (although we should really speak of markets). These relations are both legible and illegible, visible and invisible. They are projected onto the landscape in various places: the marketplace, stock and commodities exchanges, labor exchanges, et cetera. Their projection enables us to identify those relations but not to grasp them. Once they are grasped at this level, the urban reality assumes a different appearance. It becomes the sum, the home of various markets: the market for agricultural products (local, regional, national), industrial products (received, manufactured, distributed on site or in the surrounding territory), capital, labor, lodging, land for development, as well as the market for works of art and the intellect, signs and symbols.

But it is not enough to define the urban by the single fact that it is a place of passage and exchange. The urban reality is not associated only with consumption, with "tertiary" activities, distribution networks. It intervenes in production and the relations of production. The constraints associated with description impede thought at this level. We elude the problematic, we avoid crucial questions such as those involving the center and centrality, and thereby risk promoting the decay of these centers or their development as elitist and authoritarian structures. In doing so we substitute ideology for description. In place of this, we should abandon phenomenology for analysis and logic for dialectics. To give you some idea of the analytical difficulties at this level, I'd like to refer to a study conducted by the Institute for Urban Sociology in France. The study attempted to break down the urban phenomenon into various factors, indicators, and indexes. It began with macro information (number of inhabitants per acre, age of the buildings, etc.) and gradually moved toward increasingly greater detail (fertility rates, education of qualified laborers, etc.). The number of indexes that were identified rose to 333. The analysis was stopped at this figure, arbitrarily, although an increasingly finer breakdown could have been attempted. After reducing the number to about 40 of the most typical indexes, the data set became difficult to manage, even on a computer. The urban phenomenon

was presented as a global (or even a *total*) reality involving the entire range of social practices. Such globality can't be immediately comprehended. It is far more convenient to approach the global through a series of levels and stages—a difficult procedure, for with each step we risk running into various obstacles and mazes. With each faltering movement, with every advance, an ideological interpretation arises, and this is immediately changed into some form of *reductive and partial practice.* A good example of these totalizing ideologies (which reflect harmful practices) can be found in the representations of economic space and development that culminate in the elimination of a specific urban space through the absorption of social development into industrial growth, the subordination of urban reality to general planning. The politics of space sees space only as a homogeneous and empty medium, in which we house objects, people, machines, industrial facilities, flows, and networks. Such a representation is based on a logistics of restricted rationality and motivates a strategy that destroys the *differential spaces* of the urban and "habiting" by reducing them.

Every specialized science cuts from the global phenomenon a "field," or "domain," which it illuminates in its own way. There is no point in choosing between segmentation and illumination. Moreover, each individual science is further fragmented into specialized subdisciplines. Sociology is divided into political sociology, economic sociology, rural and urban sociology, and so forth. The fragmented and specialized sciences operate analytically; they are the result of an analysis and perform analyses of their own. In terms of the urban phenomenon considered as a whole, geography, demography, history, psychology, and sociology supply the results of an analytical procedure. Nor should we overlook the contributions of the biologist, doctor, or psychiatrist, or those of the novelist or poet. Geography studies the site of an agglomeration and its situation in a regional, national,

or continental territory. Along with the geographer, the climatologist, geologist, the specialist in flora and fauna also supply key information. Demography studies populations, their origins, sex ratios, fertility rates, growth curves, and so on. What does the economist study, whether a specialist in urban reality or in general phenomena of growth? There is no shortage of objects: production and consumption within the urban context, income distribution, strata and classes, types of growth, the structure of the population (active or passive, secondary or tertiary). Historians are preoccupied with the genesis of a given agglomeration, the events and institutions that have affected its development. Without the progressive and regressive movements (in time and space) of analysis, without the multiple divisions and fragmentations, it would be impossible to conceive of a science of the urban phenomenon. But such fragments do not constitute knowledge.

Every discovery in the fragmentary sciences leads to a new analysis of the total phenomenon. Other aspects, or elements, of the totality appear, are revealed. It's not impossible that, starting with the theory of hierarchical interactions (homeostases), we could define certain urban realities by replacing the old organicism and its naive finality with more rational concepts. Starting with a formalized theory of graphs (trees and lattices), it wouldn't be impossible to elaborate models of urban space.[2] In terms of methodology, it has been recommended that we approach the urban phenomenon using the formal properties of space before studying the contradictions of space and its contents, that is, the dialectic method. Linguistics has recently made a number of advances, which have enabled it to identify the concept of a system of signs (and significations). Nothing prevents us from considering the urban phenomenon using this method or from this point of view. That the city and the urban phenomenon are rich (or poor) in signs, significations, and meanings is certainly not without interest. That the city and the urban phenomenon

constitute a *system* (definable by signs that can be identified using a linguistic model, whether that of Jakobson, Hjelmslev, or Chomsky) has become dogma. The concept of a system of signs doesn't encompass the urban phenomenon, however. Although there may be a language of the city (or language in the city), or urban discourse and "writing," and therefore the possibility of semiological research, the city and the urban phenomenon can't be reduced either to a single system of signs (verbal or otherwise) or to a semiology.

Urban practice overflows these partial concepts and, consequently, theory. Among other things, this practice teaches us that we produce signs and significations that we sell and consume (for example, the advertising rhetoric of real estate). Also, it is unlikely that there is, in the city and within the urban phenomenon, a (unique) system of signs and significations; rather, there are several, on several levels. They include the modalities of daily life (objects and products, signs of exchange and use, the deployment of merchandise and the market, the signs and significations of *habiting* and "habitat"), of urban society as a whole (the semiology of power, strength, and culture considered as a whole or separately), of particularized urban space-time (the semiology of features characteristic of the city, its landscape and appearance, its inhabitants). If, within the urban space, there were only a single system of signs, associated with objects or acts, it would become dominant; we would never be able to escape its power. But how would we have entered it? Whatever the limitations of semiology applied to urban reality may be, it is still remarkable that recent developments in science reveal new aspects of that reality. From this point of view, our research has just begun. It poses problems that we are unable to separate from the "urban problematic" but nevertheless need to distinguish.

Let's consider for a moment the speech act, the event, from a conventional point of view. Ever since Saussure, we

have analyzed discourse *(parole)* as a manifestation of language and language itself as a system. The actual manifestation (the event: I speak to someone) has as a precondition the existence of the system, its *virtual* existence. What makes communication possible—namely the act of communication as a succession of operations (encoding, decoding)—is a set of rules: phonological, morphological, grammatical, lexical, semantic. These rules enable us to construct, to produce, comprehensible arrays (sentences). Such an array is collective, whereas the act (the event) is individual. It has a coherent form (systematized, intelligible). However, this systematic array, which has been investigated over time from Saussure to Chomsky, controls the act (the event) without ever being completely manifested in it. Whether we are dealing with an ordinary succession of words or a subtle phrase, the system is the same. Speakers may employ it without realizing it, but they don't necessarily ignore it. The sentences produced have very different qualities (expressions, interdependence, relation to logical or practico-sensible referents). All speakers know their language. They have no need to deliberately specify the rules, and they use them as they see fit. A condition for the efficiency of this systematic array is the *absence* of system at the level of effects, acts, and events, even though its *presence* is manifest to varying degrees. In action the system operates within this *presence-absence.* Communication is possible only to the extent that the speaking "subject," the everyday speaker, remains blind with regard to that which determines and structures his discourse: the language system with its paradigms and syntactic structures. Once he begins to think about it, he enters a realm of metalanguage. And yet, it is not-being-blind that is responsible for the quality of the discourse. The system conceals itself from our awareness yet clarifies it more or less, for better or worse. This necessary concealment cannot be absolute, and understanding brings it out into the open. Incidentally, what is true for language

is true for music. The effect, the impression or emotion, in no way implies a knowledge of the system's laws (harmony, composition).

Couldn't the urban be conceived along these lines? Couldn't it be considered a virtuality, a presence-absence? In this sense, linguistics could contribute to an analysis of the urban phenomenon. This is not to say that the urban is a language or sign system, but that it can be considered to be a whole and an order, in the sense given to those terms by linguistics.

It would be tempting to adopt this approach, connecting it with a theory of blind fields and differential analysis. But we should be on our guard and not overlook the limitations (as shown by earlier studies) of conceiving language as a system of *differential* elements (strictly determined and defined by their differences). Such a theory claims that all *signification* results from a process of differentiation, whose elements (discrete constitutive units) have a given signification through their oppositions or combinations but not in and of themselves (unless they are ready to enter this system of oppositions and combinations). In this sense, phonemes (sounds, which are assigned letters in Western languages) and signs are arbitrary. As are words. This creates a significant problem. Can such a theory, developed by Saussure and Trubetzkoy and their disciples, stand, given that meanings are constituted from *relations among already signifying units?*[3]

The Saussurian postulate presents us with a rule, according to which analysis is based on differences within the object, which we can intelligibly subdivide and reconstruct. Can this be done with units that are already signifying? Can we broach the distance (which has almost become "institutionalized") between the data of "lived experience," that is, the data of social practice, and the discourse used to articulate them? Between reality and its description or transcription? Possibly, to the extent that signifying elements are grouped

into new oppositions and enter into clearly determined sequences. Is it the same for the urban, however? The urban groups elements from the countryside or from industry. Does it add to them or impose on them an order of some kind? Do known oppositions—center and periphery, open and closed, high and low—constitute urban paradigms or syntagms? Possibly. Only in-depth analysis can tell us whether the relation established between *distance* and *discourse* is valid or demonstrate the importance of such a formal structure and its limitations. Most likely we will have to refine our notion of difference, as developed by linguists, if we want to understand the urban as a *differential field* (time-space).

This complexity makes interdisciplinary cooperation essential. The urban phenomenon, taken as a whole, cannot be grasped by any specialized science. Even if we assume as a methodological principle that no science can turn its back on itself but that each specialization must maximize the use of its own resources to comprehend the global phenomenon, none of these sciences can claim to exhaust it. Or control it. Once we've acknowledged or established this, the difficulties begin. How many of us are unaware of the disappointments and setbacks that resulted from so-called inter- and multidisciplinary efforts? The illusions of such studies, and the myths surrounding them, have been abundantly criticized. Participants at colloquia speak at cross-purposes and without any common ground among them; their main problem is one of terminology. In other words, language. Rarely do they agree on the words and terms they use, and even less rarely on the underlying concepts. Their assumptions and theories are for the most part incompatible. Confrontation and disagreement pass for success. Discussions skirt controversial topics. Assuming they actually succeed in identifying the "objects" of their discussion, they rarely follow the well-known rule of substituting the definiens for the definiendum without a breach of logic.

The methodological and theoretical difficulty increases once we take into account the fact that individual researchers are attempting to synthesize information. However, so-called interdisciplinary research remains open-ended, or rather exposed, empty, inconclusive. Frequently, it simply wraps itself around some artificial synthesis. While it is true that the urban phenomenon, as a global reality, is in urgent need of people who can pool fragmentary bits of knowledge, the achievement of such a goal is difficult or impossible. Specialists can only comprehend such a synthesis from the point of view of their own field, using their data, their terminology, their concepts and assumptions. They are dogmatic without realizing it, and the more competent they are, the more dogmatic. This gives rise periodically to a kind of scientific imperialism in fields such as economy, history, sociology, demography, and so on. Every scholar feels other "disciplines" are his auxiliaries, his vassals or servants. He oscillates between scientific hermeticism and confusion—academic Babel. During interdisciplinary conferences, it becomes impossible to maintain specificity without separation, or unity without mixture. Because participants have to stop at some point, because seminars and colloquia—as well as academic recognition—are not limitless, the result is usually some form of mediocre compromise. Convergence fades into the distance.

The urban phenomenon is *universal,* which would be sufficient justification for the creation of a university devoted to analytic research on the subject. In doing so, there is no need to insist on absolute priority over other kinds of research and disciplines that are already institutionalized—the humanities, arts, and sciences. What is needed is a department that can focus existing disciplines on an analysis of the urban phenomenon: mathematics (statistics, set theory, information theory, cybernetics), history, linguistics, psychology, sociology. This would require a change in our ideas about education, for such a discipline would be based not on a body of acquired knowledge (or what passes for such knowledge) that it can dispense but on a *problematic.* Paradoxically, at present a certain unity of knowledge can only be created around a coordinated set of problems. Acquired knowledge has begun to fragment; it crumbles in our hands, in spite of the pious efforts of epistemologists (who manage only to assemble the provisional results of the intellectual division of labor into little "balls" of knowledge). However, the status of such an institution—university or department—is not so clear. From the outside, such a project seems attractive, yet there are a number of obstacles to be overcome. For one, we risk duplicating, within an institution, the things that take place during intermittent exchanges among scholars. How can we manage to convince specialists that they need to overcome their own terminologies, their lexicons, their syntax, their way of thinking, their jargon, their professional slant, their tendency toward obscurantism, and their arrogance as owners of a domain? Imperialism remains commonplace. We see it today in linguistics and ethnology the way we once did with political economy. What can be done to deter specialists from trying to gain ascendancy for their discipline, which is to say, for themselves? We know from experience that anyone who is unable to maneuver with sufficient tactical skill is quickly reduced to silence and subservience. The project for creating a department of urbanism (or "urbanology" or "politology," dreadful neologisms) doesn't prevent us from yielding to the myth of interdisciplinary studies or the myth of some final synthesis. Research such as this can't work miracles. Creating such a department will not, in and of itself, ensure an exhaustive analysis of the urban phenomenon. Moreover, can there be such an analysis? Or of any reality for that matter?

The farther a given science pushes its analysis, the more it reveals the presence of a *residue.* It is this residue that

evades its grasp. And, although essential, it can only be approached using different methods. The economist, for example, is faced with "something" that escapes him, which is, for him, this residue. Yet this evasive "something" is a part of psychology, history, and so on. More generally, numbers and measurement reveal dramas of which they are not a part. The specialist washes his hands of them. Although psychology, sociology, and history can draw attention to these dramas, they are unable to exhaust them or reduce them to some definite and final knowledge, to known and classified concepts. This would be true of social work, productive activity in industry, political rationality and irrationality. It would be truer still of the urban phenomenon—number and drama. The science of such a phenomenon could result only from the convergence of all the sciences.

However, if every discipline were to succeed in bringing into view some residue, they would all soon become irreducible. Their difference is reflected in this irreducibility, which calls into question the possibility of any form of convergence. Either we affirm the irreducibility of the urban phenomenon with respect to the fragmentary sciences taken together, as well as the science of "man" and of "society"—which is not without risk—or we identify mankind (in general), society (in general), or the urban phenomenon with the residual whole. This has theoretical interest but involves risks of a different sort: irrationality, for example. The problem remains: How can we make the transition from fragmentary knowledge to complete understanding? How can we define this need for *totality*?

We can also assume that the complexity of the urban phenomenon is not that of an "object." Can the concept of an object (of a science) withstand close examination? Apparently more precise and more rigorous than the concept of a "domain" or "field," it nonetheless brings with it significant complications. For the object presents itself, or is presented,

as *real* prior to any examination. It is said that there is no science without an object, no object without a science. Yet can we claim that political economy explores or possesses or constructs an isolatable object? Does sociology or history? Can we claim that urban economy has its own subject, or urban sociology, or the history of the city? Not as far as I am concerned. Especially since the "city" object exists only as a historical entity.

Nor is it reasonable to assume that our understanding of the urban phenomenon, or urban space, could consist in a collection of objects—economy, sociology, history, demography, psychology, or earth sciences, such as geology. The concept of a scientific object, although convenient and easy, is deliberately simplistic and may conceal another intention: a strategy of fragmentation designed to promote a unitary and synthetic, and therefore authoritarian, model. An object is isolating, even if conceived as a system of relations and even if those relations are connected to other systems. It is the intentionality of the system that is dissimulated beneath the apparently "objective" nature of the scientific object. The sought-for system constitutes its object by constituting itself. The constituted object then legitimates the system. What is disturbing about this is that the system under consideration may purport to be a *practice*. The concept of the city no longer corresponds to a social object. Sociologically it is a pseudoconcept. However, the city has a historical existence that is impossible to ignore. Small and midsize cities will be around for some time. An image or representation of the city can perpetuate itself, survive its conditions, inspire an ideology and urbanist projects. In other words, the "real" sociological "object" is an image and an ideology!

The urban reality today looks more like chaos and disorder—albeit one that conceals a hidden order—than an object. What is the scope or role of what is referred to as urbanism? There are a number of urbanists, some of whom

are architects. If they are already familiar with the urban order, they have no need for a science. Their urbanism already contains this knowledge; they grasp the object and enclose it in its system of action. If they are unfamiliar with the urban order, whether hidden or being formed, they are in need of a new science. Then what exactly is urbanism? An ideology? An uncertain and incomplete practice that claims to be global? A system that implies the presence of technological elements and relies on authority to assert itself? A heavy, opaque body, an obstacle on a path, a false model? It is reasonable to ask such questions and to expect a clear, well-substantiated answer.

Rather than being an object that can be examined through contemplation, the reality of the urban phenomenon would be a *virtual object.* If there is a sociological concept, it is that of "urban society." And yet, such a concept is not limited to sociology. Urban society, with its own specific order and disorder, is in the process of formation. This reality envelops a whole range of problems: the urban problematic. But where does this phenomenon lead? Where is the process of urbanization leading social life? What new global or partial practices does it imply? How can we understand the process theoretically and provide practical guidance? Toward what? These are the kinds of questions urbanists face, and they have turned to specialists for the answers. But specialists have no answers, certainly no straightforward answers.

To become global, to overcome its inconsistency, social practice requires synthesis. Industrial practice, for example, has achieved a high degree of consistency and efficiency, mostly through planning and scheduling. Urban practice assumes it will follow this path. However, interdisciplinary research, which proceeds analytically, must avoid errors along the path to synthesis; more specifically, it must avoid extrapolation. Yet theoreticians and practitioners, conceptualizers and users demand synthesis. I must again insist that

such synthesis cannot be the work of the sociologist, or the economist, or any other specialist, for that matter. Although, as practitioners, architects and urbanists claim to fulfill this role by avoiding the imperialism of specialization. Why? Because they can draw, because they possess certain skills, because they carry out plans and projects? Hardly. In fact, they succumb to the situation mentioned above. The imperialism of know-how, of drafting and the draftsman, is no better than that of the economist or demographer or sociologist. Knowledge cannot be equated with skill or technique. It is theoretical, provisional, changeable, disputable. Or it is nothing. However, there is "something" and someone. Knowledge escapes the "all or nothing" dilemma. The technocratic ambition of being able to synthesize from a given technique or partial practice (the circulation of traffic, for example, or merchandise, or information) falls apart as soon as it is formulated.

Should we feed all the data for a given problem to a computer? Why not? Because the machine only uses data based on questions that can be answered with a yes or a no. And the computer itself only responds to questions with a yes or a no. Moreover, can anyone claim that *all* the data have been assembled? Who is going to legitimate this use of totality? Who is going to demonstrate that the "language of the city," to the extent that it is a language, coincides with ALGOL, Syntol, or FORTRAN, the languages of machines, and that this translation is not a betrayal? Doesn't the machine risk becoming an instrument in the hands of pressure groups and politicians? Isn't it already a weapon for those in power and those who serve them?

We could use forecasting for our synthesis. But forecasting extrapolates from known facts and trends—an order that is already known. However, we know that the urban phenomenon is characterized today by a critical situation in which we are unable to identify with any degree of certainty

either definite trends or an order. On what would we base such forecasts—that is, a set of investigations about the future—once we have identified the elements for our study? What would such an effort add to our previously formulated hypothesis, that of complete urbanization, a hypothesis that reflects the critical phase we are now entering? In what sense would a forecast be more precise and more concrete than the perspective that reveals the intersection of lines identified by the fragmentary sciences?

We know that this fragmentary (specialized) knowledge tends toward the global and that, in spite of its claims, it produces only partial practices, which also claim globality (for example, urban studies of highways and traffic). This fragmentary knowledge results from the *division of labor.* The division of labor in the theoretical domain (scientific and ideological) has the same functions and levels as it does in society. We need, however, to distinguish between the *technical division of labor,* rationally legitimated by the instruments and tools, by the organization of productive activity within the enterprise, and the *social division of labor,* which gives rise to unequal functions, privileges, and hierarchies, and which is related to class structure, the relations of production and ownership, institutions and ideologies. The technical division is modeled on the enterprise. The social division requires an intermediary that has become essential to it: the market and exchange value (commodities).

The division of labor in knowledge is transformed into institutions (scientific, cultural), together with their frameworks and devices, norms and values, and corresponding hierarchies. These institutions maintain their separateness and sow confusion. Thus, knowledge is based on distinct institutions and an entity, Culture. Created in and by the social division of labor, that is, in the market, these institutions serve it in turn, they adopt it by adapting it, as needed. They work literally for and in the social division of intellectual labor,

which they dissimulate beneath the "objective" requirements of the technical division of labor, transforming the "technical" relations among sectors and domains, procedures and methods, concepts and theories into a hierarchy of prestige and income, administrative and managerial functions. This vast operation is based on divisions, which it reinforces by sanctioning them. Under such conditions, how can we achieve, or even hope to achieve, totality? The operation of such scientific and cultural institutions may extend beyond the satisfaction of immediate market needs and demands (for technicians, specialists, etc.), but their "creativity" can never escape the domain of the ideologies associated with this market. And what are these ideologies? Like institutions, they are *superstructures* that are elaborated or erected during a determinate period, namely industrialization, within equally determinate social frameworks (competitive capitalism, neocapitalism, socialism). At one time competitive capitalism tried to adapt to industrialization superstructures that were marked by a long period in which agricultural production and peasant life were dominant. More recently, neocapitalism has continued this effort, although it has been unable to contain the urbanization of society. Yet, by pushing illusion and appearance as far as they will go, a given institution will attempt to assume control of totality, while sanctioning divisions and reuniting them only within some Babelic confusion.

With respect to the approaching urban society, wouldn't this now be the role, the function of urbanism? Classical philosophy and traditional humanism thought they could achieve this by keeping their distance from the division of labor (technical and social) and the segmentation into fragmentary knowledge, as well as the inherent problems associated with this theoretical situation. Similarly, the university has for centuries claimed access to universality, in cooperation with classical philosophy and traditional humanism.

But it can no longer continue to fulfill this "function" to the extent that it institutionalizes the social division of labor, helping to organize, nurture, and accommodate it. Isn't this the function assigned to the university today? To adapt itself to the social division of productive labor, that is, to the increasingly stringent requirements of the market, the technical division of intellectual labor and knowledge? Science (like urban reality) has become a means of production and has become politicized in the process. Can a philosophy that arises from the separation of physical and intellectual labor, and is subsequently consolidated in spite of or even in opposition to this separation, still claim to be a totality?

This is a difficult situation. At one point it looked like abstract thought had successfully undergone the most trying ordeals; it appeared to have come back to life throughout the sciences after our "speculative Holy Friday" (Hegel) and the death of the Logos embodied in classical philosophy. Pentecost held even more surprises. The specialized intelligentsia received the gift of languages from the Holy Spirit, and linguistics assumed the role of the science of sciences, a role that had been abandoned by philosophy, which was supposed to have supplanted religion. Under cover of this false unity and confusion, which by no means excluded the existence of fragmentation and arbitrary segmentation, industrial practice imposed its limitations.

It is worth noting that *positivism* continues to present itself as a counterweight to classical philosophy, to its speculative developments. The positivist clings tightly to scientific facts and methodology. He sticks to the facts and treads lightly among concepts. He is suspicious of theory. There is a positivism of physics, biology, economics, and sociology, in other words, physicalism, biologism, historicism, economism, sociologism, and so on. Wouldn't there also be an urbanistic positivism, which accepts and confirms existing facts, which acknowledges them without asking questions, at times even

pushing any form of questioning aside? And wouldn't this be related to technocratism? For positivist thought, it is irrelevant whether the findings from which it proceeds result from division or illumination, whether or not there is an "object" before it. Facts are classified and specified as being part of a given science or technology. However, positivism has never been able to prevent the leap from empiricism to mysticism or from linguistic precision to jargon (more or less esoteric). Moreover, this trend, according to which philosophy no longer has, or never had, meaning, is not incompatible with full-fledged imperialism. The specialist affirms the exclusive validity of science, sweeping aside other "disciplines" or reducing them to his own. This is how a logico-mathematical empiricism has tried to impose mathematical models on all the sciences, impugning the concepts specific to those sciences. Economism, for example, excludes any level of reality other than that associated with political economy and growth models. For several years now we have witnessed a growing enthusiasm for linguistic models, as if linguistics had acquired but a single definitive model, as if this model could be transplanted from its original environment to confer on other disciplines—psychology or sociology—a rigorous epistemological status. As if the science of words was the supreme science because everything is spoken and written with words!

In point of fact, the above interpretation finds fertile ground in philosophy; it is already (or still) philosophy, although not as classical philosophy understood it. Whenever positivism attempts to extend its properties (its own domain) and scope of activity, whenever it threatens or invades other territories, it moves from science to philosophy. It utilizes, consciously or not, the concept of totality. It abandons the fragmentary, the divisional, the analytic. As soon as we insist on synthesis and totality, we extend classical philosophy by detaching its concepts (totality, synthesis) from the

contexts and philosophical architectures in which they arose and took shape. The same is true for the concepts of system, order, disorder, reality and possibility (virtuality), object and subject, determinism and freedom, structure and function, form and content. Transformed by scientific knowledge, can these concepts be separated entirely from their philosophical development? At this point we enter the realm of metaphilosophy.

Philosophy has always aimed at totality. But whenever philosophy has tried to achieve or realize totality using its own resources, it has failed. And it failed because it lost its way among speculative abstractions. Yet it is philosophy that supplies this scope and vision. And it is from philosophy that other fields have borrowed the concept of totality whenever they extrapolate from some form of acquired knowledge that they believe to be final and from which they attempt to draw some kind of universal rule. The philosopher and philosophy can do nothing by themselves, but what can we do without them? Shouldn't we make use of the entire realm of philosophy, along with scientific understanding, in our approach to the urban phenomenon? So we can examine its processes, its trajectory, its horizon, and especially, when considering "humankind's being," its realization or failure in the coming urban society? Nothing prevents philosophy and its history from assuming a different form as project (but whose?) while on this trajectory. Philosophy already assumed this guise when illuminated by industry and an emergent industrial practice. What prevents it from assuming the meaning it had in connection with the city and the town, *metaphilosophy* separating from philosophy the way urban society emerged from the dispersed city? This meditation won't take place outside philosophy or inside philosophy, but beyond philosophy, as a specialized, constituted, and instituted activity—the very definition of metaphilosophy.

Because it is situated beyond philosophy, metaphilosophy frees itself of the institutional discourse associated with philosophy as an institution (academic, cultural). Philosophy since Hegel has become institutionalized; it is a public service in the service of the state, and its discourse can only be ideological. Metaphilosophy does away with this servitude. What exactly does this enigmatic word imply (a word that corresponds to Aristotelian metaphysics, although on a completely different level)? That thought takes into account concepts that have been elaborated by philosophy as a whole (from Plato to Hegel) and not concepts specific to a given philosophy or system? And just what are these general concepts? We can identify and enumerate them: theory and practice, system and totality, element and set, alienation and disalienation.

The goal is not to reconstruct a faded humanism, which has been compromised ever since Marx and Nietzsche subjected it to their scathing theoretical criticism. But how can we know if urban society will enable the development of a new humanism, so-called industrial society, capitalist or not, having effectively rejected its earlier forms? There is always the possibility that such an investigation of philosophy, brought about through the intermediary of metaphilosophy, may end in failure. The urban problematic cannot reject such a possibility out of hand without falling back into the old idealist categories of faith and defiance.

What could philosophy provide? Initially, a form of radical critique. Then, a radical critique of the fragmentary sciences as such. This approach would reject any form of dogmatism, including that of totality or its absence, the efforts of the fragmentary sciences and their pretension to comprehend and clarify everything, as well as the withdrawal of the individual sciences to a well-defined object, sector, field, domain, or system considered as private property. In this way radical critique can define a methodological and theoretical *relativism*, an epistemological pluralism, which affects

objects (including the corpus constituted for and by a given specific field of research, and therefore including the urban phenomenon considered as a corpus) as well as models, which are always provisional. No method can ensure absolute "scientificity," whether theoretical or practical, especially in sociology (whether urban or not). Even mathematics and linguistics are unable to guarantee a perfectly and definitively rigorous methodology. Although there are models, none of them can be realized completely satisfactorily, none of them can be generalized, or transferred, or exported, or imported outside the sector within which they were constructed without exercising considerable precaution. The methodology of models is said to continue and refine the methodology of concepts. There are specific concepts, characteristic of each partial science, but none of them can completely determine an object by tracing its contours, by grasping it. The effective realization of an object involves considerable risk; even if the analyst constructs objects, these are provisional and reductive. Consequently, there are many models that do not constitute a coherent and completed whole.

The construction of models in general, and specific models in particular, is not devoid of criticism. A model is worthwhile only if we use it, and using it consists in measuring the difference between models, and between each model and the real. Rather than constructing models, critical reflection provides an orientation, which opens pathways and reveals a horizon. That is what I am proposing here: not so much to construct a model of the urban as to open a pathway toward it. Science, or rather the sciences, move forward the way we build roads or conquer lands by sea. How could there exist a scientific "corpus" *(corpus scientiarum),* a single definitively established "body" or unchangeable core? Constructing such a corpus would mean confusing experimental and theoretical, empirical and conceptual research and, in consequence, verifiable and therefore falsifiable *hypotheses,*[4] which are revisable and always contain an ideological component once they have been formalized and axiomatized. What appears to have been established through demonstration is transformed, appears (or will appear) under a different guise, including the axioms and forms that thought has isolated in all their purity. Sooner or later radical critique reveals the presence of an ideology in every model and possibly in "scientificity" itself.

Today, the philosophical approach can be used to destroy *finalism.* Originating in philosophy, and more specifically in metaphysics, traditional finalism collapses in the face of the onslaught of criticism. In terms of historical becoming, and given the inevitability of change, there is no definite, prefabricated goal, one that is therefore already achieved by a god or in his name, by an Idea or absolute Spirit. There is no objective that can be posited as an object (already real). Conversely, there is no preexisting impossibility associated with a planned goal, for an objective that is rationally claimed to be the meaning of action and becoming. No synthesis can be accomplished in advance. There is no original and final totality compared with which any relative situation or act or moment would be alienated-alienating. On the other hand, there is nothing to contradict the exigency, the will, and the idea of the total, nothing to enclose the horizon, except this alienating-alienated attitude, which declares the exclusive existence, theoretical and practical, of a *thing.* The urban (urban society) is not a prefabricated goal or the meaning of a history that is moving toward it, a history that is itself prefabricated (by whom?) to realize this goal. Urban society provides a goal and meaning for industrialization only to the extent that it is engendered by it, encompasses it, and directs it toward some *other thing.* It is no longer a metaphysical conception, naively historical, of finality. So from whom and from what can totality emerge? From a strategy and a project that extend ancient philosophy along a new

plane. Thus, the philosopher (or rather the metaphilosopher) no longer claims to provide finality, synthesis, totality. He challenges the philosophy of history and society just as he challenged classical metaphysics and ontology. He intervenes to remind us of the demands of totality, that is, the impossibility of accepting fragmentation and confirming separation. He provides a radical critique of finalism in general as well as the particular finalisms of economism, sociologism, and historicism. Once it has become metaphilosophy, philosophy no longer reveals an already accomplished or lost reality: "mankind." It points toward a path, an orientation. But although it may supply conceptual instruments to cut a path to that horizon, it is no longer the terrain through which the march of time occurs. It reveals the extent of the problematic and its immanent contradictions, especially the relation between a self-affirming, self-developing, and self-transforming rationality and an old, collapsing finality. Yet rationality seemed to imply finalism and in effect did imply it in its speculative conceptions of the universe. If rationality is supposed to evolve from speculation to global rational practice, from political rationality to social rationality, from industrial rationality to urban rationality, it can only do so by resolving this immanent contradiction. The goal? The end? They are conceived, projected, and declared but can only succeed if they are able to accommodate the most comprehensive strategy possible.

Current discussions of humankind, the human, and humanism duplicate the arguments used by Marx and Nietzsche against classical philosophy and its implications. The criteria put forward during these arguments, that of a rational coherence, which would be substituted for harmony and "human scale," clearly correspond to a need. Today's society is in such a state of chaos that it cries out for coherence. However, whether or not coherence alone is sufficient has yet to be demonstrated. The path that has been opened leads

toward the reconstruction of some form of humanism in, by, and for urban society. Theory is cutting a path toward this emerging "human being," toward fact and value. This "being" has needs. An analytic of need is required. This does not mean that a philosophy of need based on Marxism, sociology, psychology, or industrial rationality can be developed. Quite the contrary. Instead of a "positive" study of needs designed to establish and classify them, such knowledge could be constituted through the analysis of errors and inadequacies in architectural practice and urban ideology. Wouldn't an indirect and negative method be more pertinent than sociological positivism? If there are "functionalizable" needs, there is also desire, or there are desires, that straddle the needs inscribed in things and language. Moreover, needs are only retained, received, and classified on the basis of economic imperatives, of social norms and "values." The classification and the denomination of needs thus have a contingent character and are, paradoxically, institutions. Institutions are created on top of such needs, controlling and classifying while structuring them. Prior to those needs is situated, global yet indistinct, a "something" that is not a thing: impulse, élan, will, desire, vital energy, drive. Why not articulate these differences in terms of "id," "ego," and social "superego," the id being desire, the superego institution, and the ego a compromise? What prevents us from doing so? Still, we run the risk of falling back into the philosophy of need and the ontology of desire. Pointlessly.

Looking at this more in terms of our own day-to-day experience and speech, we can say that the human being starts life as a child, then enters adolescence, followed by adulthood. Prematurity and immaturity tend toward maturity, and life's end. Maturity arrests our human development, is our death warrant. The dialectical anthropology now being developed, which is based on a consideration of the urban (habiting), would find its point of departure and biological

support in the theory of fetalization.[5] The progeny of egg-laying species are left to fend for themselves. Once the eggs are hatched, usually in large numbers, the young that emerge nearly fully formed are left on their own. The waste is enormous. Fetalization protects the young, but once they are born, they are unable to take care of themselves. This leads to a long period of infancy and adolescence, when the offspring are simultaneously incomplete, weak, and educable—"plastic," in other words. This misery has a counterpart in educability, but even here there are problems. Sexual maturity doesn't follow overall maturity, whether psychological or social, but precedes it. This can result in disturbances (which have been investigated by psychoanalysis). The human group comprises both incomplete beings, some of whom have infinite possibilities (indeterminate), and mature, or complete, beings. How can we constitute a form, *habiting*, which would help this group to live? This—here anthropologically formulated—is the question posed by habiting (architecture). The concept deliberately rejects philosophical finalism, that of a human ascension free from disruptive contradictions, a preestablished harmony, which is still found today in the self-satisfied worldviews supplied by official Marxism, the followers of Teilhard de Chardin, and humanist theology. We know that the slow maturation of the human being, which results in its dependence on the family, on housing and on "habiting," on the neighborhood and the urban phenomenon, implies educability and, consequently, an astonishing degree of plasticity. This being, whose growth and development are out of sync, possesses both urgent and deferred needs. There is something in this being that makes it identical to its predecessors, analogous to its peers, and yet different. Its grandeur results from its misery; its lack of harmony and dysfunctionality propel it forward, toward its end. It never casts off this ambiguity. The dramatic and conflictual character of needs and desires has an anthropological

element. This still uncertain science can only be constituted dialectically, by taking contradiction into consideration. The human being has a "need" to accumulate and forget, as well as a need, whether simultaneous or successive, for security and adventure, sociability and solitude, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, disequilibrium and equilibrium, discovery and creation, work and play, speech and silence. Home, dwelling, lodging, apartment, neighborhood, quarter, city, and agglomeration have responded, continue to respond, or no longer respond to some of these needs. Theories about a family "environment," a work "environment," a "functional framework" or "spatial framework," supplied to meet these needs, are nothing but dogmatic monstrosities, which run the risk of creating monsters from the human larvae that are supplied to them.

The current (social and urban) reality reveals a number of fundamental needs, not directly but through that which repressively controls, filters, overwhelms, and distorts them. Those needs are discovered only belatedly. We know the past from the present, not the present from the past, thus legitimating a historicity without historicism. Marx indicated the theory and the process clearly in his work. A dialectical anthropology could be developed from an urban problematic. In turn this knowledge would provide data for the problematic and for the solution to related problems. But it couldn't claim to formulate or resolve all those problems by itself. Such knowledge is an element of the disciplines involved and possesses no special status of its own, other than to have come into existence along with the problematic in question.

An anthropology of this nature brings together elements or aspects of ancient philosophy. What can it learn from them? That there is a kind of "human material," which, although governed by laws (biological, physiological), assumes *no preexisting form* within so-called social or human reality. However, it is endowed with extraordinary plasticity and a

remarkable sense of educability and adaptability. Forms appear, conceived and willed, capable of modeling this material according to various postulates and possibilities. These forms act at different levels. Within the limits of the possible, doesn't urban society also present us with a new form?

Even the most die-hard specialists don't disdain the use of rationality. Can they be ignorant of the fact that the concept of rationality is inconceivable without philosophy, even and especially if philosophical reason is only a moment or an element of rationality? By claiming that rationality is free of context, absolute, we mutilate it and render it unyielding. This is an important point and not without controversy (see the diagram that follows). Over the years, reason has assumed a succession of different forms. The logical reason formulated by Greek thought (Aristotle) was followed by analytic (Descartes and European philosophy) and dialectical reason (Hegel and Marx, contemporary research). Each form served as a critique of its predecessors but did not destroy them, which led to new problems. Similarly, the philosophical reason developed by Western tradition was followed by *industrial practical reason* (Saint-Simon, Marx, etc.), which has been supplanted more recently by the emerging *urban rationality.* In a social rather than mental context, the rationality of *opinion* has given way to the rationality of *organization,* which must incorporate questions of finality and meaning associated with the rationality of *fulfillment.* With respect to that finality and meaning, abstract humanism (liberal and classical) has been able to maintain its ideological presence only by being subjected to the examination of critical humanism. This in turn gave rise to a fully developed (therefore tending toward totality), concrete humanism. The first stage of humanism corresponds to the image of the human being, an abstract project presented and represented by philosophy. The second stage corresponds to the awareness of the existence of a goal, a meaning. During

the third stage, the concept of and will to plenitude (finished, relative, but "total") was developed.

Reason and rationality

logic	philosophical	opinion
analytic	industrial	organization
dialectic	urban	fulfillment

Humanism

abstract humanism	image and project
critical humanism	challenge
developed humanism	finality (project)

Space (social, urban, economic, epistemological) is unable to provide form, meaning, or finality. However, it is common to see space presented as a rule, a norm, or a superior form, which has found consensus among intellectuals and even developed into a "corpus" for the sciences. Yet space is only a medium, environment and means, an instrument and intermediary. It is more or less appropriate, that is to say favorable. It never possesses existence "in itself" but always refers to something else, to existential and simultaneously essential time, subjective and objective, fact and value—because it is a supreme "good" for the living, whether they live well or badly; because it is simultaneously end and means. But this has nothing to do with philosophy or intellectuals—physicists, biologists, historians, sociologists. The articulation of "time-space," or, if you prefer, the inscription of "time in space," becomes an object of knowledge. Is this an object in the commonly understood sense, one that is isolatable, an object with a definite contour? Certainly not. Is it a sociological object then? Possibly, but only negatively, something felt to be inadequate. The relation between time and space that confers absolute priority to space is in fact a social relationship inherent in a society in which a certain form of rationality governing duration predominates. This reduces,

and can even destroy, temporality. Ideology and science are merged. The relation becomes part of an upside-down world that also needs to be "stood on its feet."

I'd like to return to those fragmentary sciences for a moment. How should we think of them? There are several hypotheses about how we should go about this:

1. *Convergence.* Convergence is the hope and myth expressed at interdisciplinary conferences. It is assumed that we can define convergence on familiar terrain, as if it were a highway intersection. But this intersection can't be defined and can never be reached. If convergence exists, it exists on the horizon, in perspective. But we still need to determine how to "put things into perspective." In the here and now, our orientation is not toward traditional "mankind" but toward the reconsidered and reconstructed "human being" of an emerging urban society.
2. *Integration* (of fragments defined by fragmentary disciplines). But with what? With some intellectual discipline that has been made dominant? This is unacceptable. With a praxis? But here the concept of praxis would collapse in the face of radical critique. If it isn't class strategy, it is merely a recourse, a postponement. And a likely failure made more likely by certain worrisome precedents such as the failure of economism, an ideology and practice based on a fragmented conception of the world.
3. *Pragmatism.* This is the use of information supplied here and there by someone or other (a sociologist, for example). This happens often. Scientificity turns into its opposite—the lack of rigorous criteria.
4. *Operationalism.* This is a variant of pragmatism. It is accompanied by an ideology of technocracy and bureaucracy, along with its attendant myths. Only operational concepts are sought. The validity of concepts is no longer demonstrated. We limit ourselves to demanding that they possess the ability to classify, that is, some *administrative* capacity. Sometimes we push them farther. Operator and manipulator act in concert.
5. *Hierarchization.* Who is going to establish valuations? Who is going to claim that sociology is worth more than geography or demography? Norms will become the norms of institutions and their rivalries, the last traces of free competition. Intellectuals will give politicians the keys to the city of science. They will decide; they will declare what is normal and what is not, which will result in a general state of anomie (the abnormal, the pathological), depending on their intentions and representations. Here the (methodological) concept of *level* can be used to bolster our argument. But if each specialist occupies a level in a hierarchy, questions of priority and precedence become essential. Which is, at the very least, inconvenient.
6. *Experimentalism.* Analysts provisionally dissect "abstract" objects; they study with the help of different descriptions, temporarily considered auxiliaries. They then compare them against experiments (testing) in the field. This is a feasible approach, but one in which we abandon totality and with it the objective (if not the object), and thus the goal and its meaning as well. With totality we lose finality and the coherence and rationality we have been looking for. We risk vacillating between abstract utopianism and short-term realism, between irrationality and utilitarianism. We also run the risk of handing over to others (and they are not even worth identifying by name) the power to make decisions.

None of these options is satisfactory, rationally speaking. However, they do reveal something: it is impossible to bring specialists (in the fragmentary sciences) together around a table on which we place an "object" to be understood or constructed. The most competent among them are the least

reliable. It is impossible to assume that such a meeting could even take place. Impossible to summarize such specialized, dispersed knowledge, analyses couched in divergent vocabularies, based on "points of view" that are already disjunct, particularized, and limited.

What is to be done? I would like to put forth again the concept of an *urban strategy.* This implies making distinctions between political and social practice, between day-to-day and revolutionary practice, in other words, between *structure* and *praxis.* Social practice can be analyzed as *industrial practice* and *urban practice.* The first objective of this strategy would be to strip social practice from industrial practice and orient it toward urban practice, so that the latter can overcome the obstacles barring its path.

4 || Levels and Dimensions

In analyzing the urban phenomenon, we can make use of the common methodological concepts of dimensions and levels. These concepts enable us to introduce a degree of order into the confused discourse about the city and the urban, which mixes text and context, levels and dimensions. Such concepts can help to establish distinct codes, either juxtaposed or superimposed, for decrypting the message (the urban phenomenon considered as message). They serve as lexical items (readings) in urban texts and writing, or maps, and as "urban things," which can be felt, seen, and read in the environment. Does this mean there are geographic, economic, sociological (etc.) readings of the urban text? Most likely. Obviously, ordering facts by means of these concepts does not exclude other forms of discourse, other classifications, other readings, other sequences (geopolitical, organizational and administrative, technological). Earlier I briefly discussed the problem of convergence, at least provisionally.

Diachronically, on the space-time axis, I indicated (without insisting on any absolute divisions) the levels reached by emerging economic and social structures or, as is so often

said, using a somewhat vague term, by "society." In short, the rural, industrial, and urban succeed one another. I would now like to construct a synchronic picture of this latter term. Looking at present-day society, I distinguish a *global* level, which I'll indicate with the letter *G;* a *mixed* level, which I'll indicate with the letter *M;* and a *private* level, *P,* the level of habiting.

Power—the state as will and representation—is exercised at the global level. As will, the power of the state and the people who hold this power are associated with a political strategy or strategies. As representation, politicians have an ideologically justified political conception of space (or no conception, which leaves the field open for others to promote their particular images of time and space). At this level, these strategies are accompanied by various *logics,* which—although with some reservations—we can refer to as "class logics," since they generally consist of a strategy that is pushed to its ultimate conclusions. Along similar lines, we can also speak of a "socio-logic" and an "ideo-logic." Political power makes use of instruments (ideological and scientific). It has the capacity for action and is capable of modifying the distribution of resources, income, and the "value" created by productive labor (surplus value). We know that in capitalist countries today, two principle strategies are in use: *neoliberalism* (which maximizes the amount of initiative allowed to private enterprise and, with respect to urbanism, to developers and bankers) and *neo-dirigisme,* with its emphasis (at least superficially) on planning, which, in the urban domain, promotes the intervention of specialists and technocrats, and state capitalism. None of these strategies is airtight, however. Neoliberalism leaves a certain amount of space for the "public sector" and activities by government services. Neo-dirigisme cautiously encroaches on the "private sector." Moreover, diversified sectors and strategies can coexist: there can be a tendency toward centralized planning or even socialization

in agriculture, liberalism in housing, (limited) planning in industry, circumspect control of the movement of capital, and so on. The global level accommodates the most general, and therefore the most abstract, although essential, relations, such as capital markets and the politics of space. This makes it more responsive to the practico-sensible and the immediate. Simultaneously social (political) and mental (logical and strategic), this global level projects itself into part of the built domain: buildings, monuments, large-scale urban projects, new towns. It also projects itself into the unbuilt domain: roads and highways, the general organization of traffic and transport, the urban fabric and neutral spaces, "nature preserves," sites. It is the level associated with what I refer to as *institutional space* (along with its corollary, institutional urbanism). This assumes, if not a system or systems of explicit action, at least some form of systematized action (or "concerted" actions that are conducted systematically). The very possibility of such logics, of such unitary systems, at the state level demonstrates that the old "town-country" distinction is in the process of disappearing. This does not mean that it is outmoded. And one has to ask whether the state, which claims to have undertaken this mission, is really capable of carrying it out. The *social* division of labor, in which the market (for products, capital, and labor itself) is implicit, no longer seems to function spontaneously. It requires the control of a superior organizational power, the state. Conversely, this power, this supreme institution, tends to perpetuate its own conditions, to maintain the separation of manual and intellectual labor, as it does the separation between the governed and the governing, and possibly between town and country. Doesn't this then introduce new contradictions into the structure of the state? As will, it transcends the separation of town and country. This would lead it to strengthen decision-making centers, changing the urban core into a citadel of power. And doesn't it also, simultaneously,

represent urbanization and overall development as being decentralized, dividing the country into zones, some of which will be singled out for stagnation, deterioration, and a return to "nature"? The state could then be said to be organizing a process of unequal development in an effort toward global homogeneity.

Level M (mixed, mediator, or intermediary) is the specifically urban level. It's the level of the "city," as the term is currently used. Let's assume we can mentally withdraw (remove) from the map of the city (large enough for this abstraction to have meaning) whatever is part of the global level, the state, and society—namely buildings such as ministries, prefectures, and cathedrals—and whatever depends on level P—privately owned buildings. Remaining on the map will be a built and an unbuilt domain: streets, squares, avenues, public buildings such as city halls, parish churches, schools, and so on. After withdrawing any global elements, we have intellectually removed whatever is directly associated with institutions and higher-level entities. What remains before us assumes a form that holds some relationship to the site (the immediate surroundings) and the situation (distant surroundings, global conditions). This specifically urban ensemble provides the characteristic unity of the social "real," or group: forms-functions-structures. In our case we can speak of dual-purpose functions (*in* the city and *of* the city: urban functions compared with the surrounding territory and internal functions) as well as dual-purpose structures (for example, for services such as trade and transport, some of which operate in the "service" of the surrounding area—villages, market towns, smaller cities—and others in the service of urban life strictly speaking).

Level P appears (wrongly) to be somewhat more modest, even unimportant. Here only the built domain in the form of various buildings is of interest: housing primarily, including large apartment buildings, private homes both large and small, campgrounds, shantytowns. Although the

distinction between "habiting" and "habitat" is already subject to considerable controversy, I still insist that it is useful. "Habitat" denotes a concept or rather a caricatural pseudo-concept. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, urban thought (if it can be characterized as such), strongly and unconsciously reductive, pushed the term "habiting" aside, literally enclosed it within parentheses. It opted instead for "habitat," a simplified function, which limited the "human being" to a handful of basic acts: eating, sleeping, and reproducing. These elementary functional acts can't even be said to be animal. Animality is much more complex in its spontaneity. Level P can't be understood by opposing the "microsocial," or molecular, with the "macrosocial," typical of large aggregates or large structures. It isn't only the locus of minor economic or sociological "agents," such as the family, neighbors, and "primary" relations (the terms employed by ecologists and the Chicago school). Habitat, as ideology and practice, repulsed or buried habiting in the unconscious. Before habitat became commonplace, habiting was an age-old practice, poorly expressed, poorly articulated linguistically or conceptually, seen sometimes as vital and sometimes as degraded, but always concrete, that is, simultaneously functional, multifunctional, and transfunctional. During the reign of habitat, habiting disappeared from thought and deteriorated strongly in practice. It required the metaphilosophical meditations of Nietzsche and Heidegger to restore the meaning of the term. Habitat, ideology and practice, had even repressed the elementary characteristics of urban life, as noted by a very shortsighted ecology. These included the diversity of ways of living, urban types, patterns, cultural models, and values associated with the modalities and modulations of everyday life. Habitat was imposed from above as the application of a homogeneous global and quantitative space, a requirement that "lived experience" allow itself to be enclosed in boxes, cages, or "dwelling machines."

Although we cannot arbitrarily assimilate habiting to

the unconscious of psychology and psychoanalysis, there is a definite analogy—to the extent that our failure to recognize habiting can serve as an illustration of the theory of the unconscious. In order to rediscover the word and its meaning, in order even to utter them, we need to make use of concepts and categories that fall within the scope of the inhabitant's "lived experience," in proximity to the unknown and the misunderstood in the everyday, and go beyond, to general theory, to philosophy and metaphilosophy. Heidegger cleared the way to a restoration of the term when he commented on the forgotten (or misunderstood) words spoken by Hölderlin: "Poetically man dwells . . ." This means that the relation of the "human being" to nature and its own nature, to "being" and its own being, is situated in habiting, is realized and read there. Even though this "poetic" critique of "habitat" and industrial space may appear to be a right-wing critique, nostalgic and atavistic, it nonetheless introduced the problematic of space. The human being cannot build and dwell, that is to say, possess a dwelling in which he lives, without also possessing something more (or less) than himself: his relation to the possible and the imaginary. Philosophy tried to locate this relation beyond or within the "real," the visible and legible. It thought it had found it in transcendence or immanence, both of which were hidden. But if this relation is hidden, it is obviously so. One glance and the veil falls away. This relation resides in the dwelling and in habiting, in temples and palaces, the woodcutter's hut and the shepherd's cabin. A home and language are two complementary aspects of the "human being," as are discourse and urban realities, together with their differences and relations, whether hidden or evident. The "human being" (and not "mankind") cannot do anything but inhabit as poet. If we do not provide him with (as an offering and a gift) the possibility of inhabiting poetically or of inventing a poetry, he will create it as best he can. Even the most derisive

everyday existence retains a trace of grandeur and spontaneous poetry, except perhaps when it is nothing more than a form of advertising or the embodiment of a world of commodities, exchange having abolished use or overdetermined it. Concerning this poetry of habiting, we have a great deal to learn from the East—China and Japan. Japanese homes have a corner, the tokonoma, that contains a single object chosen in harmony with the season (the weather). This object can be simple or precious, a flower or piece of porcelain. Objects, whether in good or bad taste, and which may or may not saturate the space we inhabit, which may or may not form a system, including the most atrocious bric-a-brac (kitsch), are the derisive poetry men and women make use of to remain poets. Nonetheless, never has the relationship of the "human being" with the world, or with "nature" and its own nature (with desire, with its own body), experienced such profound misery as during the reign of habitat and so-called "urbanistic" rationality.

> Was bedeuten diese Haüser? Wahrlich, keine grosse Seele stellte sie hin, sich zum Gleichnisse. Nahm wohl ein blödes Kind sie aus seiner Spielschachtel? . . . Und diese Stuben und Kammern? Können Männer da aus—und eingehen?
>
> What do these houses mean? Verily, no great soul put them up as its likeness! Might an idiotic child have taken them out of his toy box? . . . And these rooms and chambers—can *men* go in and out of them?[1]

We have already seen that there is a relationship between the "human being," understood analytically, and the form that is given to it and that it receives by habiting. With respect to this human being, the formal knowledge accumulated by philosophy tells us that there is a contradiction between desire and reason, spontaneity and rationality. Anthropology,

with the support of other partial forms of knowledge, such as psychology and sociology, tells us that there are different ages and sexes. The simplicity of these statements is only apparent. The coexistence of ages, which is necessary if there is to be a group or a collective subject (family, neighborhood, friendships), is no less essential for the concrete (social) perception of time. This time has nothing in common with what we read on our wall clocks and wristwatches. It is a time of peril, of finitude, which fills every instant with gravity and makes every moment precious. The newborn child is not a tabula rasa, but is somehow still formless. It can only tend toward form, toward maturity, which marks an endpoint (in every sense of the word: finality, meaning, accomplishment, perfection, term, termination, conclusion). Maturity is fulfillment and already death. There is no reason for adults to behave proudly since they have already reached their end. Childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, which are deficient in reality, clumsy, pretentious, even stupid (see Gombrowitz, for example), are incomparably rich with the greatest and most deceptive form of wealth: possibility. How can we create a habiting that gives form without impoverishing, a shell that enables the young to grow without premature closure? How can we provide a "home" for this ambiguous "human being" whose only escape from ambiguity is old age, who is ill-formed but magnificent, filled with contradiction, but in such a way that no single aspect of that contradiction can vanquish another without serious mutilation, a contradictory situation from which this "being" must nevertheless somehow escape? These problems already assume a subversive intellect that overturns our "model" of the adult, destroys the myth of paternity, and dethrones maturity as an "end." This, once correctly presented by uniting scientific knowledge and metaphilosophical meditation, is the problematic of habiting. This level is no less complex than the others because it is "minimal." A very remarkable

and very strange ideology, based on Cartesianism and a degenerate form of analytic thought, identifies smallness with simplicity, size with complexity. Habiting should no longer be approached as a residue, as a trace or result of so-called superior levels. It should, it can already, be considered as a source or foundation, as essential functionality and transfunctionality. Theoretically and practically, we are reversing the situation, inverting meaning: what appeared to be subordinate is now dominant. The predominance of the global, of the logical and strategic, is still part of the "right-side-up world" that we need to overturn. What I would like to attempt here is a reverse decoding of the habitual situation, but taking habiting rather than the *monumental* (this being not so much condemned as reconsidered) as the point of departure. The dialectical and conflicted movement between habitat and habiting, simultaneously theoretical and practical, moves into the foreground. Semiology can play a role here, whether we use it to better understand the nonverbal signs and symbols scattered inside and outside our "dwellings" or the terms and syntagms used in the speech—monologues or dialogues—of architects and urbanists.

Critical analysis, however, need not be limited to semiology and linguistic methodology. The use of other concepts is inevitable, and it would be shortsighted to overlook the relationship (which appears to be misunderstood rather than simply unknown) between Eros and Logos, desire and space, sexuality and society. While it is true that during the industrial period the "reality principal" overwhelmed the "pleasure principle," hasn't the moment for its revenge arrived within urban society? Isn't sexuality a form of the "extrasocial social"? Social because it is modeled, fashioned, cultivated, and alienated by society. Extrasocial because desire, tending toward anomie, assumes the mantle of mystery, strangeness, secrecy, even crime, to escape social norms and forms. Love, conjugal or otherwise, seeks "intimacy." More intense, more

impassioned because suffused with guilt, because it knows it is being hunted, it acquires sociality and sociability only to spite society. How can we express, architecturally and urbanistically, this situation of a "human being" both incomplete and filled with contradictory virtualities? At the highest level, the socio-logic level, "objects" constitute a system. Every object communicates to every action its system of signification, which it acquires from the world of commodities, for which it serves as a vehicle. Every object contaminates every action. However, these systems do not have the characteristics of plenitude and completion implied by the assumption of a logic of space or things, for there are faults, voids, and lacunae everywhere. There are conflicts as well, including those between logics and strategies. The logic of space subjected to the limitations of growth, the logic of urbanism, of political space, and housing clash and sometimes break apart when they come into contact. The same is true for the logic of things (objects) and the logic of play (or sports). Social logics are located at different levels; there are cracks and crevices between them. Desire insinuates itself through these fissures. Without it "human material," being shapeless, would soon be forced into an absolute form, warranted and inspected by a state that is solidly resting on a mass of "subjects" and "objects." Without it everydayness would become hopelessly uniform. Even subversion would become unthinkable.

Along with the breakdown into various levels, we can also introduce the following:

1. The dimensions of the urban phenomenon. This refers not to the size but to the essential properties of the phenomenon:

   a. Social relationships have a surface area. This includes the most abstract relationships, those arising from commodities and the market, contracts or quasi contracts among "agents" on a global scale. The urban phenomenon and urban space, seen from this point of view, can be considered "concrete abstractions." Earlier, I pointed out how this dimension harbors a multiplicity of these abstractions (various juxtaposed, superimposed, and sometimes conflicting markets for products, capital, labor, works of art, and symbols, housing and land).
   b. The urban phenomenon and urban space are not only a projection of social relationships but also a terrain on which various strategies clash. They are in no sense goals or objectives, but means and instruments of action. This includes anything specifically associated with level M, namely, institutions, organizations, and urban "agents" (important people, local leaders).
   c. The urban phenomenon and urban space retain a reality and vitality that are specific to them. That is, there is an urban practice concerning space and its organization that cannot be reduced to global ideologies or institutions or to specifically "urbanistic" activities, which serve as means to often unknown ends.

2. Distinctions and differences concerning the *topological* properties of urban space, properties that theoretically constitute a network or system of pertinent oppositions (paradigm):

   a. the private and the public
   b. the high and the low
   c. the open and the closed
   d. the symmetric and asymmetric
   e. the dominated and the residual, et cetera.

This is an example of the well-known form of analysis by dimension, notably the *symbolic* dimension, which generally refers to monuments and, consequently, to ideologies and

institutions, present or past: the *paradigmatic*, a set or system of oppositions, and the *syntagmatic*, a sequence (or path).

Starting with the breakdown into levels, it is possible, after introducing the pertinent oppositions, to construct a grid of urban space. To each level we assign an index of appropriate topological properties. For example, anything associated with the global (G) and public level, which is generally associated with height (h+), comprises mostly open spaces and other, tightly enclosed, spaces (0–), places of power or divinity, or both combined. This space, the space of grandeur, is sometimes marked by imposing symmetries (s+) and sometimes gives "free" play to asymmetric elements (s–).[2]

This is about as much detail as I want to provide here for this spatial grid. It is a subject that would be more appropriate in a work devoted not to the urban phenomenon in general, but to the analytics and politics of space, to urban topology. Also, it would risk masking the contributions and point of view of the present analysis as well as its position. Essence, foundation, and meaning are supplied by *habiting*, not by the other levels. Yet, in considering the grid on its own, all the levels appear to be governed by some general coherence, by a logic of space. This point of view can't be explicated without an immediate *critique*.

As can be seen from the above, these levels have *relative* importance. For politicians, the government level is obviously the most important, since it is where decisions are made, at least bureaucratic ones. This group has a strong tendency, we could say a tendency backed by force, to conceive of the other levels and dimensions of the phenomenon in terms of their formal knowledge (representation) and power (will). It is at this level that industrial practice, that of the enterprise, becomes ideology (representation) and will (reductive). The state and politicians are therefore reductive by their very nature and frequently on the offensive. This is further exacerbated by the fact that during the critical phase,

these levels and dimensions tend to blur. The city explodes. The urban arrives. Complete urbanization is soon under way and yet, old-line bureaucracies (institutions and ideologies associated with earlier forms, functions, and structures) defend themselves, adapt to new situations.

The second level (M) appears to be essential. But to assume this would imply actively defending urban reality on the theoretical level. Yet this level is nothing but an intermediary (mixed) between society, the state, global power and knowledge, institutions, and ideologies on the one hand and habiting on the other. Wherever the global attempts to govern the local, whenever generality attempts to absorb particularities, the middle level (mixed, M) comes into play: it is a terrain suitable for defense or attack, for struggle. But it remains a means. It can never be an end, except temporarily and on behalf of a strategy that must at some point throw down its cards and reveal its hand. Can it protect existing urban institutions? Possibly. Can it promote them? Can it develop criteria and models? Can it extend to urban society (virtual and possible) the institutions and ideologies drawn from the city (of the past)? No. That would be impossible. Although urban reform might proceed in this manner, a more profound, more radical thought, one that grabbed things by their roots and was therefore more revolutionary, would affirm the durable primacy of habiting.

The two critical phases that intersect the urban in historical time can be defined as follows. During the first phase, the long dominant agrarian (agricultural production, rural life, peasant society) becomes subordinate to an urban reality initially propelled and soon ravaged by commerce and industry. There is a second reversal, a second inversion of meaning: a dominant industry becomes subordinate to urban reality. However, within this inversion a process of subversion is under way: a level that was always considered unimportant now becomes essential, namely habiting. At this point it can

no longer be considered an effect, result, or accident with respect to the specific level of the urban, less so with respect to the global, which remains dependent on the industrial period (of productivist ideology, of political space subject to the requirements of growth). The urban is defined by the unity of these latter levels, with the last, or P level, predominating. This inversion of meaning is conceived and projected during the critical phase, increasing the sense of confusion. Aiming for something doesn't mean we will achieve it. This confusion also promotes hostile activities, the extent of which I'll discuss later. Here, I assume that the urban is primary and priority is given to habiting. This priority requires freedom of invention and the establishment of heretofore unknown relationships between urbanist and architect, with the final word being given to architecture. Architecture itself responds to a vague social request, which has never succeeded in becoming a social order. The subversion (theoretically) consists in the following proposition: the implicit request will become an explicit order.

Until now these social "orders" arose from industrial growth, that is, the ideologies and institutions established at level G, the state level. In other words, the urbanist submits to the requirements of industrialization in spite of his reticence and awareness of, or desire for, something else. As for the architect, he condenses (in the sense in which the term is used by Soviet architects between 1920 and 1925, the architect as "social condenser") existing social relationships.[3] Whether he wants to or not, the architect builds on the basis of financial constraints (salaries and payments) and norms and values, that is to say, class criteria that result in segregation even when the intention is to bring about integration and interaction. More generally, the architect is caught in the "world of commodities" without realizing that it is in fact a world. Unconsciously, that is, in good conscience, he subordinates use to exchange and use values to exchange values. Social

orders are imperious, and the only request that is made is a direct or indirect expression of that order. If it aspires to something else, the request, being vague, is repressed. This is not a reason to abandon older cities and the virtual urban in the face of the attacks to which they are subject. On the contrary. Even if level M is defined only as a *mediator* (mixed) and not as something essential or central, it is still the site and nexus of struggle.

These statements may appear paradoxical. But there are untold numbers of unspoken paradoxes, and we do not create those we report, just as the person who warns us of a catastrophe or upheaval is not responsible for its occurrence. Some people, whether disingenuous or genuinely naive, blame meteorologists for the arrival of storms. During the process of general urbanization and the extension of urban territory, there was an attempt to liquidate urban reality. Wasn't this paradoxical? An empty challenge? The reflection of an ideology? Most likely. Yet this ideology drove a number of projects, or rather, was hidden behind projects with very different motivations.

These attacks against the "city" are not new. I would like to briefly summarize the arguments of its adversaries. As early as 1925, Soviet theoreticians criticized the large city, the metropolis before it came to be known as a *megalopolis*. They saw the metropolis as the creator of capitalism, a result of the maneuvering of the bourgeoisie to better control the working class. Although not false, the truth of this analysis is relative and short-lived. They demonstrated, not without subtlety, the defects inherent in the metropolis. Their argument was frequently used by others, even in the United States. The large city, monstrous and tentacular, is always political. It serves as the most favorable environment for the formation of authoritarian power. It is characterized by organization and overorganization. Large cities legitimize inequality. Faced with a choice between an overbearing

sense of order and the everlasting threat of chaos, power, any power, state power, will always choose order. The large city has but a single problem: number. A mass society is established within its circumference, which implies that these masses be constrained and implies, therefore, the existence of a permanent state of violence and repression. What about the insurmountable opposition between "city and country," whose interactions have become catastrophic? The countryside knows it serves the city, but the city poisons nature; it devours it by recreating it in imagination so that the illusion of activity endures. Urban order contains and dissimulates a fundamental disorder. The large city is nothing but vice, pollution, and disease (mental, moral, social). Urban alienation contains and perpetuates all other forms of alienation. In it, through it, segregation becomes commonplace: by class, by neighborhood, by profession, by age, by ethnicity, by sex. Crowds and loneliness. Space becomes increasingly rare—it is expensive, a luxury and privilege maintained and kept up through a practice (the "center") and various strategies. The city does indeed grow richer. It attracts wealth and monopolizes culture just as it concentrates power. But it collapses under the weight of its wealth. The more it concentrates the necessities of life, the more unlivable it becomes. The notion that happiness is possible in the city, that life there is more intense, pleasure is enhanced, and leisure time more abundant is mystification and myth. If there is a connection between social relationships and space, between places and human groups, we must, if we are to establish cohesion, radically modify the structures of space. Moreover, is there a structure to urban space? Isn't the large city just a chaotic jumble once it is no longer segregation and separation? The concepts that seem to designate places and the qualities of space in fact refer only to social relationships embedded within an indifferent space: neighborhood, environment, and so on.

Pushing this analysis further, we can say that only the village, or parish, had a social and spatial structure that enabled a human group to appropriate its conditions of existence (environment, occupied places, the organization of time). It's true that these harmonious (social) bodies, or what passed as such, were also dependent on a strict hierarchy, an equilibrium between castes. Space alone was entirely filled with meaning, completely *signifying*, and it openly declared to one and all (that is, to each member of a caste, class, age, or sex) what was permitted and what was not. The physical place stipulated the role. The equilibrium of the community required virtues, respect, submission, and custom perceived as an absolute. All of this disappeared in the large city.

Although they stopped short of fetishizing the community (tribe, village, parish) or the "non-city," some Soviet theoreticians, around 1925, formulated the problem of the *optimum*, an issue that has been discussed interminably since then. How can we determine, how can we quantify (in terms of surface area, number of inhabitants) the urban optimum? What criteria can we use? Attempts to do so have always raised serious objections. Assume that the desirable optimum, because it can be administered (within what bureaucratic framework?), is fixed at roughly three hundred thousand inhabitants. Rarely would a city of this size be able to maintain a large university, a large theater, an opera, well-equipped and therefore expensive hospital services.

Recent projects have been implemented in which French highways would become streets in a future megalopolis, while maintaining both the relations between neighborhoods and a certain centrality (crossings and intersections) as well as wilderness areas and "virgin" spaces, distinct from industrial zones. Which demonstrates that all thought in this domain is utopian! Projects such as these anticipate the process of generalized urbanization. But if this is the case, what authorizes us to bring urban space and rural space together

by building an urban society along our old highways? What motivates this movement backward, which, although it doesn't coincide with the shift toward a communitarian ideology (encouraged by ethnology), isn't necessarily distinct from it, either?

Arguments against the "urban" and in favor of the "non-city," and the corresponding principles, have more to do with morality than any connection between the real and the possible. The problems have been poorly expressed. Without trying to rekindle the controversy, I would like to point out that general urbanization and the extension of the urban fabric are already beyond their grasp. From now on society must confront problems of an entirely different order: either urban chaos or urban society conceived as such. More concretely, the attack on the (ancient) city and the (virtual) urban, whether or not they are intentionally confused, is being conducted on two levels: an upper level, G, and a lower level, P.

The attack from above, if we can call it that, includes a global project to subject the national territory to a process of "development" controlled by industrialization. There are two requirements here, and two postulates: space must be planned, and the particularities of sites and situations must acquiesce to more general constraints that are technologically motivated. At this point, *mobility* becomes essential for a population subject to changing constraints, determined by cataloged sets of variables, energy sources, raw materials, and so forth. Residential mobility, always fairly limited, will be resolved through increasingly greater professional mobility. (For example, because of labor costs and investment needs, the metallurgical industry in Lorraine shifted to Dunkirk, a port where minerals arrive from Mauritania; the town of Mourenx will disappear or be converted once its natural gas resources are exhausted.) From this point of view it is unacceptable that "sources of labor" will remain

unexploited simply because they are attached to the land, are immobilized beneath layers of history, have become enracinated, and so forth. Such harsh truths apply globally, anywhere that economic, financial, or technological pressures disrupt structures (local, regional, or national) that vainly attempt to resist.

At the P level, motivations (considerably different) converge with technological and technocratic concerns. The enthusiasm for the ephemeral and nomadic, the fascination with incessant departures, will supplant the earlier sense of rootedness in the home, the traditional attachment to the place of birth. What do human beings want? Shelter. No matter where it is. Yona Friedman has built portable structures and units (boxes) that can be joined together to create one or more rooms of different sizes, ephemeral groupings.[4] From this perspective, we could generalize and democratize the luxury life of millionaires, who move from home to home, villa to villa, or yacht to yacht. Which exposes them to the pleasures of the world. Or so it seems.

Whether from above or from below, this would be the end of both habiting and the urban as sites of bundled opposition, as centers. This end of the urban would be brought about by the establishment of *industrial organization* as a system of acts and decisions—the end of *historical value* with respect to values and the *transformation of everyday life* with respect to cultural patterns or models.

Resistance to these two sources of pressure comes from both reactionary and revolutionary forces, and they need to be distinguished. In other words, criticism can come either from the "right" or the "left." The same holds true for any critique of the critique. The critique of the city on behalf of the older community (tribal, village, parish) is a critique from the right; the critique of the city (and the non-city), which I have undertaken here, is a critique from the left. Conventional attitudes and a more or less folkloric parochialism

and regionalism protest the disappearance of the city. Protest based on *particularities,* generally of peasant origin, should not be confused with an opposition to repressive bodies or with an awareness and acknowledgment of *difference.* The affirmation of difference can include (selectively, that is, during a critical check of their coherence and authenticity) ethnic, linguistic, local, and regional particularities, but on another level, one where differences are perceived and conceived as such; that is, through their relations and no longer in isolation, as particularities. Inevitably, conflicts will arise between differences and particularities, just as there are conflicts between current interests and possibilities. Nonetheless, the urban can be defined as a place where differences know one another and, through their mutual recognition, test one another, and in this way are strengthened or weakened. Attacks against the urban coldly and lightheartedly anticipate the disappearance of differences, which are often identified or confused with folkloric particularities. Industrial ideology, whether technocratic or individualistic, is homogenizing.

It will be difficult for the defenders of the emerging urban society to avoid all ambiguity, to clear a path that leads straight to a goal. Take the question of the center and centrality, for example. There can be no city or urban reality without a center. Moreover, urban space is defined by the null vector. It is a space in which every point can virtually attract to itself *everything* that populates the surroundings—things, works, people. At every point, the time-space vector, the distance between content and container, can become zero. Although this is *impossible* (u-topian), it characterizes the dialectical movement (the immanent contradiction) of urban space-time. Therefore, it is theoretically impossible not to support urban concentration, together with the attendant risks of saturation and disorder, and the opportunities for encounters, information, and convergence. To attack or destroy it implies a form of empiricism that begins with

the destruction of thought. The center can only be dispersed into partial and moving centralities (polycentrality) whose concrete relations are determined circumstantially. This being the case, we risk supporting decision-making and power structures, those that involve massive concentrations, enormous densities, of wealth and power. This means there can be no sites for leisure, festivals, knowledge, oral or scriptural transmission, invention, or creation without centrality. But as long as certain relationships of production and ownership remain unchanged, centrality will be subjected to those who use these relationships and benefit from them. At best it will be "elitist," at worst controlled by the military or police. Can we do anything other than accept the ambiguity and contradictions—that is, the dialectical nature of the situation and its processes? Accepting the situation does not mean supporting the dictatorship of centers of power and authoritarian planning. Far from it. Or rather, quite the contrary.

One point worth noting is that the social and professional mobility so desired by planners (primarily urban planners and moving companies) is fundamentally superficial. It does not refer to the intense mobility that can only occur near a center, but to the displacement of populations or materials that leave social relationships intact. Needless to say, such mobility can result in chaos. However, there is an even greater risk that it will end in "equilibrium" or "stability," since the displacement of people and their activities is highly programmed and "structured." This is not the disorder characteristic of information or encounters, but of boredom and neurosis. Within this a contradiction appears, which an intellectual strain known as "urbanism" attempts to resolve: order and disorder, equilibrium and movement, stability and mobility. To succeed it must tighten any existing constraints by imposing homogeneity, a *politics of space,* a form of rigorous planning that suppresses symbols, information, and play. Urbanists fail when they propose temporary constructions

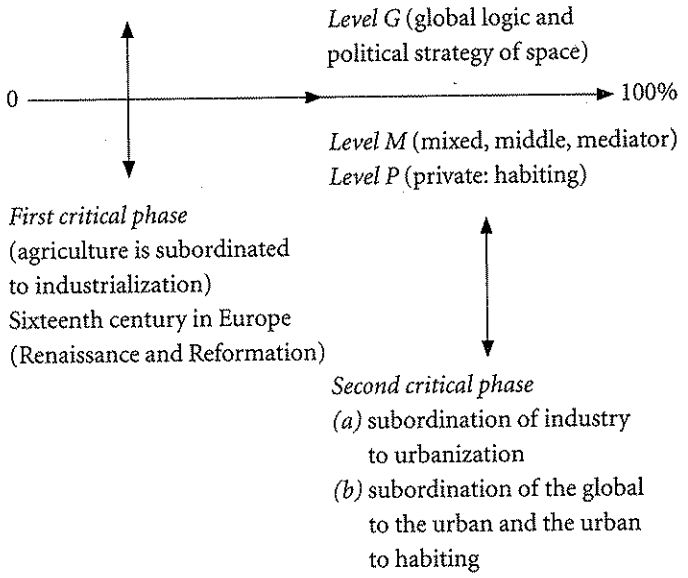
that endure: a monotonous morphology, a kind of stasis for people passing through because they want to go somewhere else to find something else. In this sense the urbanist and architect blend together. The architect thinks he is an urbanist, or vice versa. However, both of them, whether together or in opposition, receive orders and obey a single uniform social order. Moreover, they soon abandon the small grain of utopia, the slight touch of madness that might still distinguish their work and render them suspect of ill will, disobedience, or nonconformity. The politics of space implies a strategy that aligns levels and dimensions. Order cloaks itself in morality and scientificity. The dictatorship of the right angle merges with that of industrialization and the neocapitalist state. Gropius followed a similar orientation when he conceived of a "logical and systematic coordination in the treatment of architectural problems," when, during the founding of the Bauhaus, he anticipated a "total" architectonic that could be transmitted through "coherent, operational, and systematized" training.

What of that residential nomadism that invokes the splendors of the ephemeral? It merely represents an extreme form, utopian in its own way, of individualism. The ephemeral would be reduced to switching boxes (inhabiting). To suggest, as Friedman does, that we can be liberated through nomadism, through the presence of a habitat in the pure state, created with metal supports and corrugated steel (a giant erector set), is ridiculous. If at some time in the near future, the ephemeral becomes more prevalent, which is entirely conceivable, what would it consist of? In the activities of groups that are themselves ephemeral, that would invent and realize various works. Their own. In which their lives and their group existence would be realized and exhausted by momentarily freeing themselves of the everyday. But what works, what groups? The answer would render the fundamental question of creation irrelevant. Those groups, should

they come into being, would invent their moments and their actions, their spaces and times, their works. And they would do so at the level of habiting or by starting out from that level (without remaining there; that is, by modeling an appropriate urban space). The few attempts in this direction, the few attempts to break through the system or systems of things and make the impossible possible, demonstrate nothing either by their failures or their successes. Such attempts would only be significant during the course of a revolutionary reversal of the upside-down world. They are and will be the work of what are referred to as "leftist" groups, whose designs existing society will attempt to co-opt. Unless, that is, the movement is able to win over society and push it in another direction. What about architectural initiatives? Or those of urbanists? It would be naive to think, as Hans Meyer did in 1928, when he replaced Gropius as the director of the Bauhaus, that "building means organizing social, psychological, technical, and economic life."[5] Architecture's demiurgic role is part of urban mythology and ideology, which are difficult to distinguish. Gropius, moreover, saw things in broad terms, suggesting that the architect serve as a coordinator who would unify problems, proceeding from "a functional study of the house to that of the street, from the street to the city, and finally to regional and national planning." Unfortunately, the opposite took place: structural planning subjected lower degrees and levels to its own constraints. Can this situation be reversed? The possible, associated with socially transformative activities, is currently impossible. It is not the architect who will "define a new approach to life" or enable the individual to develop himself or herself on a higher level by throwing off the weight of the everyday, as Gropius believed. It is the new approach to life that will enable the work of the architect, who will continue to serve as a "social condenser," no longer for capitalist social relationships and the orders that "reflect" them, but for shifting and

newly constituted relationships. The architect may even be able to function as a "social accelerator," but the economic context that would make this possible must be examined carefully so we are not fooled by words or appearances.

Based on the above, we can redraw the space-time diagram as follows:



A twofold reversal takes place here. The subordination of urban reality to its antecedents and conditions is overcome, as is the subjection of habiting to so-called higher levels of social practice. This results in a *fundamental* (in the sense of a bottom and foundation) reorganization.

An especially audacious, albeit very simple, interpretation of Marxist thought views Marx's work (*Capital* primarily but also his philosophical and political works) as an exposé of the world turned upside down and the attempt to right it; that is, to get it back on its feet. It is not only Hegelian philosophy and dialectic that has its head in the sand, its feet in the air and that finds itself discomfited (alienated) by a situation that custom has attenuated and made to appear normal. According to Marx, the world upside-down is a society with the following characteristics:

1. The intermediary replaces the producer (worker) and creator (artist, inventor, producer of knowledge and ideas) when he can enrich himself at their expense by capturing the results of their activities, leaving those who assumed the risk of creation in poverty. Who are these intermediaries? They are merchants and the many others who succeed in branching out into the circuit that runs from production to consumption and back again. In the immediate foreground would be the capitalist, whether rentier or active.
2. The state, which should serve all of society and extend its capacity for organization and rationality within it, manages to achieve the exact opposite. It strengthens the exploitation of society as a whole, it sets itself above society and claims to be the essential element of social life, its *structure*, whereas it is merely an accident (a *superstructure*).
3. Bureaucracy can develop its own interests and the means to serve them, where competence and formal knowledge become the means of selection for bureaucracy.
4. Effects appear as causes, and the end becomes the means and the means the end.

I have added a few elements to the theory of the upside-down world that strengthen the mission to reverse this world and complete the Marxist ideal of a revolution in the system of industrial organization with the addition of a planned urban revolution. It isn't hard to demonstrate that any other interpretation of Marxist thought is merely an interpretation, a weakened version, intended to address a given aspect of the upside-down world or a given institution: the state, philosophy, the division of labor, an existing morphology, and so on. It is just as easy to show that without such complete

subversion, including the subversion that foregrounds problems about the actual locations where social relationships are conducted, whatever is being said about those relationships is nothing more than ideological discourse. It has been said many times, in keeping with Marx, that the "essence" of "man" cannot be found in the isolated individual but consists of a set of relationships or concrete (practical) social relationships. Generic Man (in general) is only an abstraction. What can we use as a reference to discern the traits of an individual? For a long time, this reference was biological. We borrowed it from the theory of Pavlovian reflexes, from the physiology of the brain. The cortico-visceral defined the individual. This reference was also, and still is today, most often technological (and therefore economic). It is in relation to productive labor that we can conceptualize and determine the constitutive relationships of consciousness (of personal life), assuming we are not talking into a void and we make an effort to reach a praxis of some sort. Would anyone deny that the references to industrial practice or biology are relevant? References to desire and the "unconscious" are as well, providing we don't fetishize this unconscious by substantializing it.

But can we examine such questions—about consciousness, about the development of the individual (within the group he or she is closest to or within groups in which he or she participates, from the family to globality)—without taking into account the morphology and forms offered by *places,* or the relationship between those places and institutions (school, university, business, army, state, etc.)? Such speculations persist, embodied within heady abstractions, covered by a mask or veil of philosophy.[6] The introduction of topology (analytic considerations of topoi in the mental and social space) can help us remain focused on the philosophical scope of these conceptions while eliminating any traces of philosophizing, that is, speculative, attitudes.

5 || Urban Myths and Ideologies

There is little doubt as to the existence of agrarian myths or their ideological extension. Although the myths of the agrarian age are not necessarily agrarian myths, they incorporate elements (themes, signifying units) borrowed either from nomadic and pastoral life or nonagricultural productive activity (hunting, fishing, artisanship). There are no specific dates attached to the use of these myths. Here I define the myths of the agrarian age not by the agricultural nature of their themes, figures, and characters but by the fact that they respond to the questions and problems of a peasant society (predominantly agricultural, even if it comprises political cities). When Fourier imagined the emancipation of the community and a new model for the division of labor, one that was not based on agricultural labor (where everyone took turns assuming responsibility for all the tasks to be done), he was referring to an industrial myth that made use of agricultural elements, not an agrarian myth. A myth such as this is so close to an ideology that it is difficult to separate them. At the same time, the Fourierist utopia prepared and anticipated the most powerful affirmation of the industrial

epoch, which was taken over by Marx and made the core of revolutionary thought: the transcendence of a fragmented division of labor. There are two aspects to the analysis of a myth: the search for the elements of the myth and the determination of their reuse in another context. The elements can come from a period other than the one in which they are reunited, reused, or reworked. This, rather than the analysis, can be used to date the myth.

Can the myth of Atlantis in Plato's *Critias* be considered an urban myth, or an anticipation or presentiment of such? The myth reveals the contemporaneity, the nonpacific coexistence, of town and country from the very beginnings of Western civilization. Agricultural production and the peasants' relationship with nature give rise only to a cyclical image of time, which has no sense (direction), or rather, no other sense (interpretation) than that of the Great Year and the Eternal Return. As the image of a time that advances toward a final outcome or a cosmos that is harmoniously arranged within a luminous space, the City imposes its mark on thought. Atlantis, the magnificent, harmonious city, merges with the territory that it organizes and dominates. Doesn't Plato's mythic tale contain the Greek image of the Oriental city, the European echo of an "Asiatic mode of production"? However, in Greece, the political city is forcefully present and barely differs from the Oriental city. Around it are assembled peasant groups, villages, and producers (synoecism). It was an Eden in an ocean of fields, forests, jungles, and deserts, a land devoid of oppression or exploitation. It introduced a sense of harmony within the reciprocal tension of elements, like Heraclitus's lyre and the arch. It was like the memory of a lost continent, where the separation of life and work had no meaning, no place. Plato retained the myth and gave it form, which is to say that philosophic thought (which is based on the division and separation of activities, precisely when it struggles against them to restore a totality) addressed the

problem of the ancient City and its rational, although threatened, institutions (the Logos that speaks and acts).

Conversely, the City provides philosophical reflection with re-presentations of its political existence—that of a center—within the immense rural environment. What do these reflections supply? What prophecy? What impossible-possible future? A kind of urban communism that would not be rural, or ascetic, or artisanal, but specific to the City, although not dependent on existing institutions associated with the City. It would be a utopia inherent in urban thought, through which the mythic text transcends its context, a utopia that had successors: the City of God, the City of the Sun. Utopian communism had urban as well as agrarian sources. If we had to classify and date the myth of Atlantis, we would classify it among the urban myths. But wouldn't the *Critias* be unclassifiable as a philosophical narrative, a mixed form of discourse consisting of myth, ideology, and utopia? Myth could be defined as a *noninstitutional discourse* (not subject to the constraints of laws and institutions), whose elements are taken from the context. Ideology would consist in an institutional discourse justifying and legitimizing (or criticizing, refusing, and refuting) existing institutions but unfolding through them. Utopia would transcend the institutional by making use of myth, the problematic of the real and the possible-impossible. Needless to say, noninstitutional discourse cannot occur just anywhere, or be uttered by just anyone. It arises from a specified, if not specialist, group with anomic tendencies (the extrasocial social). Philosophers represent such a group. They elaborate a particular code for reading texts and contexts. They situate themselves on a *cosmological* level that cannot be institutional. At least not in Greece. And not before Hegel.

Faced with the triple alliance of myth, ideology, and utopia, conflicts and contradictions are resolved by magic: they are consigned to the past or put off until the future.

They show up in works of art. How can we understand Greek tragedy? The political city, whether small town or organized urban core, seizes its conflictual relationship with the countryside, with its own countryside. It returns to the themes that have been lived and played out by the peasantry; it gives them another meaning. The city gives birth to the Apollonian spirit; the countryside gives birth to Dionysus. The scene of the massacred god who is devoured by his followers becomes a second-order event; it is reproduced or repeated at an assigned location for the re-presentation of malefic forces. On the stage of the theater, the City, home of the Logos and Apollonian force, exorcises chthonic violence by means of a controlled act of mimesis. The distance afforded by re-presentation and cathartic repetition serves as a buffer for those threatened by the danger of Dionysiac forces. It offers them a glimpse of the future of the City. The tragedians composed for the glory of Athena, in order to resolve the dilemma of law against custom, of justice against violence, of the individual against a brutal community. The succession of tragedians (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) can only be understood in this way, including the disappointment and bitterness that accompany them.[1] So many threats weigh upon the ancient city. Tragic themes are attributed to the urban, just as agricultural themes have been absorbed by the City. But these are not myths. Moreover, how could *urban myths* exist before the enormous shift that pushed society as a whole over to the side of urban reality, while diminishing the specific weight of agriculture, rural life, and the problems faced by the peasantry? From this moment on, the modern city began to take shape. It wrote itself into its blueprints and created a new identity for itself through its dreams, confessions, novels, and melodramas. Rural elements—myths, ideologies, utopias—are here taken up again as signifying units used with a different meaning. In Rousseau the City is a place of decay or corruption—in

other words, civilization. It is contrasted with nature the way inequality is compared with equality and wealth with moderation. Jean-Jacques Rousseau thinks and works inside ideology, on the institutional level. Which is why he is important. Sometimes he makes use of myth, but rarely. This stripping of peasant themes from their context and initial meaning, this transformation of the ancient myths into an urban mythology, is more obvious in Restif de la Bretonne than it is in Rousseau. His unsettling work is entirely mythic and utopian (not ideological according to the definitions given previously, because it doesn't justify or refute any institutions but tends to ignore them), which is the source of its limitations and the reason for its greatness. Isn't it astonishing that at the very moment the physiocrats are beginning to theorize about the waning supremacy of nature and the countryside over the city, where this mixture of ideology and formal knowledge lags social practice, the mixture of myth and utopia goes deeper and farther, simultaneously announcing what is and what will be?

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, Nature, as image and concept, nostalgia and hope, came into view, in opposition to the City. At the same time, music, that is, harmony, dethroned architecture as the leading art of its time. Yet, a century later, the City dethroned Nature. The re-presentation of nature could no longer be elaborated except through, by, and for urban reality, which emerged as such. Nature was reduced to being a vehicle for regret, melancholy, and seasonal decoration. If we return to an analysis of dimensions, we could say that the symbolic dimension of the City was discovered by Victor Hugo, its paradigmatic dimension by Baudelaire, and its syntagmatic dimension by the many poets who inhabited the city and wrote about their travels: romantics and minor poets, from Gérard de Nerval to Lautréamont and Rimbaud. In this way, an image of the city tending toward a concept (that is toward an understanding)

was discovered through myth, ideology, and utopia. And, remarkably, this took place, dimension by dimension, form after form. Hugo described and wrote of the symbols that could be read on buildings, in streets, even in sewers *(Notre-Dame de Paris, Les Misérables)*. Baudelaire delivered and exposed a set of pertinent oppositions that characterized the urban (water and stone, immobile and mobile, the crowd and solitude). It is also worth noting that a large city, such as Paris, where the opposition to nature is so strong, has already entered the period of expansion. Baudelaire was present for the transformation of Paris through Haussmann's urbanism, the way Rimbaud was present for the Commune, an urban revolution. Ideology and utopia were already part of narrative, a form of description that was enriched by mythic themes. Paradise was no longer located in Nature, in the origin that preceded original sin. Through nostalgia, an artificial paradise (Baudelaire) supplanted a natural paradise, yet these artificial paradises are clearly urban. Although nature supplies certain elements of this paradise—wine and drugs, fabrics and metals, carnal desire and violence—reuse alters their meaning.

The urban looms on the horizon as form and light (an illuminating virtuality), as an ongoing practice, and as the source and foundation of another nature or a nature that is different from the initial nature. This takes places through mixed re-presentations that are too quickly dissociated here in this brief analysis: myth and utopia, ideology and science. The urban problematic announces its presence. What will come of this witches' cauldron, this dramatic intensification of creative powers and violence, this generalized exchange in which we no longer see what is being exchanged except when it is all around us: money, outsize and vulgar passions, desperate subtlety? The city affirms its presence and bursts apart. The urban asserts itself, not as some metaphysical entity, but as a unit based on practice. World and Cosmos,

the old themes of philosophy, meet in action in the city, or rather, in the urban: the World, a path through shadows; the Cosmos, a harmonious scaffold with illuminated contours. Poetry no longer celebrates the beauty of the cosmos, its admirable "economy"—or the hieroglyph of the mind, the meaning of the path taken through shadows, through a tunnel or tortuous corridor. The poetic work becomes the "self-fulfillment of origin in beginning" (Maurice Blanchot). The scholar's path is the same as the poet's.

What is there to be said today about Haussmann's urbanism that hasn't already been said? He gutted Paris according to plan, deported the proletariat to the periphery of the city, simultaneously creating the suburb and the habitat, the gentrification, depopulation, and decay of the center. I would, however, like to emphasize certain aspects of this urbanist attitude. It harbors a logic that is inherent in class strategy and tends to maximize this type of rational coherence, which originated with Napoleon I and the absolute state. Haussmann cut through the urban fabric, was implacable in inscribing straight lines throughout the city. This isn't exactly the dictatorship of the right angle promulgated by the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier, but is already a regime governed by straight lines, alignment, and geometric perspective. This kind of rationality can only come from an institution. And in this case it was the highest, the supreme institution, the State, that intervened. It emphasized a tendency that originated in antiquity, in Rome, and through Rome, the Orient. Ever since its origins, the State expressed itself through the void: empty space, broad avenues, plazas of gigantic proportions open to spectacular processions. Bonapartism simply carried on the tradition by applying it to a historic city, to a highly complex urban space. And it altered the city immediately. It determined its logic, strategy, and rationality. To Napoleon's contemporaries, the ideology that underlay and supported that rationality and made it seem absolute looked

very different. Most of them admired it. Those who were more reticent were aggrieved; they had lost the picturesque, they had lost hope. But they were old-fashioned. No doubt those who longed for the past were criticized because they also mourned the destruction of hovels in Paris. And their critics were not entirely wrong. However, the truth (the fragmentation of the city through gentrification) was hardly apparent to their contemporaries. What would it have taken for the truth to become apparent? The Commune, considered as a revolutionary urban practice, with its myth and ideology, its utopia (decentralization, Proudhonian federalism). The workers, chased from the center of the city to its outskirts, returned to the center occupied by the bourgeoisie. Through a combination of force, luck, and good timing, they took control of it.

Socialism, when it attempts to predict or imagine the future (which Marx refused to do, since he conceived of a *path*, not a *model*), provides us merely with an improved form of labor (salaries and material conditions on the job). But to offer nothing more would be shortsighted. For socialism soon finds itself confronted by the urban problematic, armed with nothing but childish concepts and ideologies. The labor and socialist movement has not yet been comparatively examined from this point of view. What effect, for example, did urban problems have on the various parties? Or on the Second and Third International? Municipal socialism, shortsighted, lacking a vision, failed miserably, even faster and more miserably than state socialism, which did not produce socialism (in Marx's sense) but large, powerful states. What did the "municipal socialists" accomplish, then? Their architects built subsidized housing projects. They "precipitated" (condensed) class relations within capitalism. Which proves that the reformists approached a problem that had not yet reached its current state of maturity and scope through the eyes of reform. How was this problem studied,

resolved—or not resolved—in the Soviet Union after the October revolution? Or in the so-called socialist countries after the Second World War? Or in China during its ongoing revolution? Why is it that the Commune was not conceived as an *urban revolution* but as a revolution of an industrial proletariat moving toward industrialization, which does not correspond to historical truth?

I can only touch on such historical and political questions here. It appears that a nascent and uncertain socialism failed to avoid myth or ideology or utopia. Socialist thought, filled with self-confidence and never at a loss for dogmatic statements, claimed to transcend the town-country separation along with the division of labor into intellectual and manual labor, just as it believed it could transcend the market, money, the law of value, profitability, and so forth.

How can we overcome the town-country dichotomy? Through the disappearance of large cities, by scattering businesses throughout the countryside. The antiurban urbanist movement made its debut shortly after the October revolution, according to Anatole Kopp.[2] Although it resulted in projects remarkable for their architecture, it failed as an urban project. Soviet cities continue to grow in terms of size, productivity, and political importance to this day. In other words, in spite of the efforts of utopian thinkers at the exact moment when they thought they were being most realist and rational, the urban revolution in socialist countries proceeded without a conception of the urban that differed in any significant way from what was found in capitalist countries. Their political projects follow a distinctly anti-city line. And this is true even today, in Cuba and elsewhere.

Some have claimed that the cultural revolution in China will eliminate the difference between city and country, between the agricultural laborer and the industrial laborer, between manual and intellectual labor. Their approach resembles that of Marx and Soviet ideological claims. There is

little novelty, however, in sending intellectuals to the countryside for a dose of manual labor, to work in fields or neighboring factories. Does this overcome the division of labor? Hardly. Can the revolutionary project be realized without advanced technology? Wouldn't the extension of the urban fabric, the disappearance of the countryside and agricultural labor as such, be accompanied by industrialization, mechanization, and overall automation? So that, at this level, overcoming the earlier situation would assume a new meaning? In the meantime, Marxist-Leninist thought in China has denounced the city as a center of despotic power (which is not without an element of truth). The cities harbor bastions and fortresses directed against the peasantry. The large cities, the headquarters of companies and banks, trading posts, human trading posts that attract millions of the hungry, would be destroyed. The global city, surrounded by a global countryside and peasantry, would serve as a background for revolutionary activity. As for the commune (in the Chinese sense), it would serve as a means, a step along the road to the urbanization of the countryside and the ruralization of the cities. The commune supposedly has hospitals and schools, centers of culture, commerce, and leisure. There are no shanties, there is no overpopulation. The commune alone can assimilate the groups that compose it and the individuals who compose those groups into a collective "we." It avoids sedentarism as well as nomadism. Technology is no longer destructive but collectively controlled. Power has limits. The Chinese commune would be capable of replacing the old feminine city, protective and passive, as well as the old masculine city, active and oppressive. At least that's what certain defenders of the "anti-city" project claim.

Their argument can be contested on several grounds, for it is not only ideological and political (in the short term used to promote a given policy or short-term policies), but utopian in a conventional sense. In China today, as in the

Soviet Union yesterday, cities continue to grow along with the economy and, possibly, the increase in speed. As they do elsewhere. The demographic, ideological, and sociological reasons, the economic and political advantages of the city, are the same in China as elsewhere. Long-term global urbanization is under way. The urban space is no differently defined in a socialist country than it is anywhere else. The urban problematic, urbanism as ideology and institution, urbanization as a worldwide trend, are global facts. The urban revolution is a planetary phenomenon.

Moreover, if the "global city" is of interest to the theoreticians of the "Chinese way," the eventual "suburbanization" of a large part of the world is of no less interest to urban strategy. Can such a strategy assume, however, that the countryside will encircle the city, that peasant guerrillas will lead the assault on urban centers? Today, such a vision or conception of the class struggle on a global scale appears old-fashioned. The revolutionary capacity of the peasantry is not on the rise; it is being readsorbed, although not consistently. On the contrary, a kind of overall colonization of space by "decision-making centers" seems to be taking shape. Centers of wealth and information, of knowledge and power, are beginning to create feudal dependencies. In this case, the boundary line does not divide city and country but cuts across the urban phenomenon, between a dominated periphery and a dominating center.

Globalization and the planetary nature of the urban phenomenon—specifically, the urban problematic and critical phase—appeared in science fiction novels before they were revealed to our understanding (or through that ambiguous blend of ideology and knowledge that we analyze under the name of urbanism). In science fiction, optimistic predictions of the urban phenomenon are rare; pessimism is much more common. The ideology inherent in these mythic stories often extends the imperatives of industrial planning,

without clarifying all the implications of the urban phenomenon. Nonetheless, this general pessimism is part of the problematic. In science fiction, the city of the future is broken; it proliferates as a disease afflicting humanity and space, a medium for vice, deformation, and violence.

For the moment, we can only acknowledge the multiplicity of lexical items (readings) associated with the urban phenomenon. The myth has filled a void: knowledge that is oriented toward and by practice. It continues to occupy that place, mixed with utopia and ideology. There are various ways of reading this highly complex phenomenon. There is a *morphological* reading (practiced by the geographer and possibly the urbanist). There is a *technological* reading, practiced by the administrator, the politician looking for a means of intervention. There is a reading of the *possible* (and the *impossible*) that provides us with an image of the variations of finite existence—that of the human being—supplied by urban life in place of the traditional unity that encloses "drives" and values within its narrow boundaries. Perhaps the mythic tale, formerly the medium of the philosopher and poet, and now of the science-fiction novelist, combines the various "lexical items" associated with the urban phenomenon, without worrying too much about classifying them according to their provenance or signification. Perhaps this narrative is less reductive than the fragmentary readings and understandings it makes use of by detaching them from their context and their isolation. Perhaps it projects an image of the urban problematic only by dissimulating its contradictions. The scenario of the future has yet to be determined.

6 || Urban Form

What exactly is the essence, or substance, of the urban phenomenon? Until now, I have not provided a definition based on substance or content. The associated functions, structures, and forms (in the usual sense of the word), although necessary, have not appeared sufficient to define the term. We have cataloged, located, and observed the growth over time of the political and administrative function, the commercial function, the productive function (artisanal, manufacturing, industrial) within the classical city. These functions have a twofold character: with respect to the territory that urban centers administer, dominate, and cover with networks, and with respect to the city itself, which is administered, dominated (to the extent that it is and because it is dominating), and integrated with networks of production and distribution. The characteristic of the urban phenomenon is obviously located at the juncture of these twofold functions, their point of articulation. Therefore, simply listing those functions serves little purpose. Their description, their detailed analysis breaks apart, depending on the discipline (economy, politics, sociology), without ever achieving that