



## Freud and Chillida: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer\*

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### I. The Hammer

**N**IETZSCHE PHILOSOPHIZED WITH A METAPHORICAL HAMMER, WITH DRY AND SHATTERING BLOWS. ONE OF HIS CREPUSCULAR WORKS IS, PRECISELY, "TWILIGHT FOR THE GODS," OR "HOW TO PHILOSOPHIZE WITH A HAMMER." HE WOULD NOT REFUSE OUR APPROPRIATION OF HIS SUBTITLE IN ORDER TO APPROACH, FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK, THE SCULPTURE OF EDUARDO CHILLIDA, PRODIGIOUS FORGER OF FIGURES IN A VAST ARRAY OF MATERIALS, AMONG WHICH WE SEE IRON IN A PRIVILEGED POSITION—THE IRON WITH WHICH HE GAVE HIMSELF PERMISSION TO PRAISE THE HORIZON<sup>1</sup> AND COMB THE WIND.

above: Eduardo Chillida, *Peine de los vientos*, San Sebastián



Instrument for Johann Sebastian Bach Eduardo Chillida

Chillida uses a real hammer, a cannibalistic iron that strikes, swallows and transforms another iron, softened by fire, tempered by water, prepared to be rusted by the air. Already before him, another artist had worked with a fateful hammer. Although it is incorrect to translate *Hammerklavier* literally as "hammer keyboard" and thereby give Beethoven's sonata Opus 106 such a nickname, it is nonetheless true that all keystrokes set chords in motion that, in vibrating, emit sounds, are

"hammers"—and that the deaf man of Bonn, bewildering in Opus 106 and bewitching in Opus 111, showed that it was possible to philosophize with digital hammer blows. Chillida himself went no farther than this when he invented in granite, by means of subtle cuts that introduced a void into the stone, a kind of organ that he called "Instrument for Juan Sebastian Bach." Or when, in 1980, he built a house for Leipzig's Cantos.

Music is born of a hammer that couples with singing. What a range of music is released when iron, stone, wood, alabaster, and marble are struck—and Chillida has sculpted with them all. With one notable difference—that of mud, which lends itself more to caresses than to blows, which fears the destructive strike differently from the metal that rings out and challenges the hand the hammer extends. Perhaps for this reason there are more she-potters, zealous or not, than sculptors.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it would more suitable to add the pair hammer-and-anvil to the mallet-and-gong, tower-and-cistern, the i-and-the-o, as Octavio Paz proposed in his poem "Custody" ("Custodia"). Between anvil and hammer the work surges forth, daughter of the one as much as of the other, of force and of resistance, of the power of the mallet and of the endurance of this bold anvil able and even happy to survive so many broken hammers.

The hammer, quickened by the hand in the service of a project, gives form to its metallic material, it introduces spirit into it, separates it from nature, and makes it serve cultural ends. It acts through a series of blows in time and it creates space, human space, where we are bound to live. Could we risk saying that time and space are effects—we shall see which kind—of the philosophical hammer? And could we continue to trace its function (in the line of he who enlightens us—Nietzsche) as that of provoking the twilight of the gods, of taking them to the brink of falling into the realm of darkness?

To philosophize—noble and suspect occupation, praised exorbitantly and convulsively by those who practice it, dedicated to reflecting on and speculating about the most fundamental questions, stranger to simple explanations, burdened with the weight of a venerable history in which everything that can be said has been said already. Said and

refuted. But to philosophize with a hammer is different; it is to put philosophy under mauling blows, to destroy certainties, to break colored crystals and mirrors, mirrors that make mirages, tearing thesis and antithesis apart and making fragments out of synthesis. Chillida, by means of hammer blows, makes music, and without flaunting it iconoclastically, deconstructs convictions and conventions.

## **II. Adumbrations**

The San Sebastian native is not a conceptual artist; he neither attempts to explain reality nor to decipher the presumptive meanings concealed within it. His works contain no meaning; they are provocations to the spectator who is met with surprising titles like "Dream Anvil" or "Eulogy for Water," or "Nothing is Deeper than Air." When pressed he makes it clear that he is not an abstract sculptor either. He says rather that he is a realist sculptor but that he omits formalisms. He neither imaginizes nor symbolizes; he realizes, makes, gives form, invents. To say it with ideas taken from Heidegger, to whom we will need to return, he imposes limits on space and in this way, he creates places. His raw material is a pure working of mind that takes hold of the hammer and uses it to inject light into matter and matter into light. What, then, is Chillidian sculpture? A making of those subtle, evanescent, patient and versatile objects that celebrate the copulation [copula] of matter with light: shadows. One has to see—one has always to see—the projection of sculpture on the ground or on the adjacent wall as an essential part of the sculptor's work. Because (and we must say so clearly), matter is not material. Matter ("the stuff") is what we are made of, that is to say, it is the same as dreams ("We are such stuff as dreams are made of," *The Tempest*, IV). Materials—these do obey the laws of gravity. They resist; and the work of the sculptor consists of overcoming the stubborn and blocked up opposition of stone, wood and steel. To sculpt, itself, it is essential to sculpt weightless shadows, eloquent witnesses to the artist's struggle against heaviness. His triumph or defeat is spelled out in the shadow cast by the work. Chillida demonstrates it thus in his monumental masses of iron or concrete and in his commentaries.

There is a word that exists in our tongue although the dictionary, forever running behind language, Achilles straining behind the tortoise, can never get its definition quite right. It is the word "adumbration," which is not just the action of shading in a drawing or a painting or just the name for their darkest portion. "Adumbration" in the sense we are giving it here is an idea or a representation—blurry, inaccurate—of something that can transmute itself into a real word, a real object or a real image. Adumbration, "glimpse" if you will, is a singular and unique occurrence—the reverse of the clear and distinct ideas dear to Descartes—that lies behind the work of art. It is a precursor of the artist's working against material: of the poet working against language, of the sculptor working against marble. And we say that it is matter because this glimpse becomes materialized, because it takes on body and "makes" bodies in the most restricted and yet the broadest sense of the word. Adumbration, vague intuition, reverie, make the unex-

pected well up and create completely new times and spaces, break with the time and space of science, invent new landmarks for the experience of being. And it is matter, moreover, because the hard philosophical hammer can befit it once again.

Idealism? No; quite the contrary. Chillida, by adhering to realism and to materialism, fights against Newton and against right angles, against universal truths, supposedly repeatable and unmodifiable, against the idealities of a space always identical to itself and indifferent to real space, which is that of the uncertain space of lived experience, marked out by the limits of the works, the human creations that construct it with art and with disdain for Euclid and his ilk.

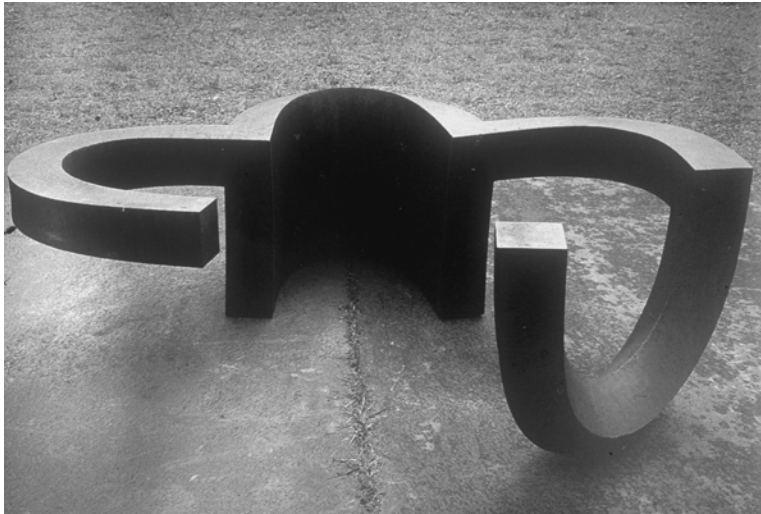
### III. The Bridge

Let us turn here to a very famous bridge and build a bridge between two ways of conceiving space. The bridge is the example used by Martin Heidegger in his famous article *Bauen, Wohnen, Denken* of which innumerable editions and translations exist. This bridge links the two banks of the river and makes them, one and the other, into two at the same time as it makes the river a place in relation to which dwelling, the world, and mortals are arranged. "It assembles the earth, as a region, at the bend of the river." The site of the bridge is, among the many spots the river passes through, the one that constitutes a singular and specific place (*Ort*), and it is starting from this milestone, from this construction, that space gets framed. The place, not the space, is the referral place for speaking beings (*parlêtres*).

The bridge is a mark left by being in nature, now "humanized," that constitutes itself as space (*Raum* in German, precisely "room" (English has the insightful expression, "to make room"). We might call this constructive activity "topogenesis"—what engenders places and makes space a historical product. The bridge, by raising a limit and framing it, defines a place. "For this reason 'spaces' receive their essence from places and not "from" Space.

From this the philosopher of the Black Forest derives the counterpositioning of (a) "spaces" defined through places, through the constructions that permit being to inhabit them and (b) abstract "Space," seat of idealities and subject to mathematization, space as extension, where certain analytic and algebraic relations find their application. To put it more simply, on one side, the space of experience, that (with perhaps justified shame) Heidegger does not call "vital space" (*LEBENSRAUM!*), and on the other, the space of geometry conceptual and abstract, measurable, that "contains neither spaces nor sites." Our world is the mystic marriage of *geos* (earth) and *metros* (measurement). The bridge may be a bad example and the sculpture of Chillida a good one of the philosopher's intended purpose. If the bridge bears up under the weight of vehicles and the force of the stream, it is because it was constructed according to calculations, theorems, and the insertion of ideal entities that were fastened in the earth and in the river. If, as Heidegger says "the pillars of the bridge, resting themselves on the bed, support the curvature of the arches that permit the river waters to run their course," it is because in

the bridge, engineer-type reasoning has materialized itself and for it is because of this that even though they "they would like the waters to idle by tranquilly and pleasantly or even if they wanted the rainfalls from the skies in storms and thaws to hurl themselves with gigantic wings upon the arches of the pillars, the bridge is prepared for the comings and goings of weather and its changeable essence. Besides, where the bridge



Eduardo Chillida, *Monumento de la Tolerancia*, Seville

bisects the river, it also arrests the sky in its movement, because in an instant it catches it in the gateway of its arch and detaches it farther from itself."

The bridge thus conjugates lived space and the ideal space of physics. For this reason it can be; such is its essence. There is design—the bridge is a sculpture. And there is calculation—it is a structure.

Tekhné has two faces, each one of them covering and masking the other: art and technique. The constructor of the bridge builds it as something useful and also thinks of its beauty: he complements engineering with design. On the other hand, the artist makes something that is useful for nothing, something unnecessary erected in the middle of the landscape and which tears it up. In this respect sculptures—Chillida's—are paradigmatic; they are graphisms constructed on the earth, unrepeatable geographisms, challenging practical reason. They would contradict geometry and its essential theorems in the name of contingency and of challenging the universal laws of Newton, the Newton we all know, not the hermetic Newton. For this reason, Chillida pleads for  $92^\circ$  or  $87^\circ$  angles and stubbornly persists in contesting the privilege of this tyrannical angle that the "right" angle is, the one of the "right side," of rules, of rigidnesses and of squares and squadrons. It is no accident, not at all, that a Chillida monument to tolerance has been erected at the very spot where the Holy Inquisition operated in Seville. (See illustration, this page.)

Faced with the "ever thus" of Euclid he proclaims the "never again like this" of his serendipity. His reasoning is that of the exception, of the not-all. He breaks with and breaks up material blocks. The enormous beam showing a square cut of the monument

to tolerance ends up by making a quarter turn that liberates it from all foreseeable geometry. In the island of Tinday he will excavate and make a hollow, secular temple comparable to the one that already exists in the salt mine of Zipaquirá, near Bogotá, where miners finished a formidable hollowed-out cathedral entered through vast arcades. His philosophizing with hammer blows shows up as the affirmation of poetic reason in the midst of a world whose landscape responds to an ever more utilitarian reason. There is thus another reason, third and decisive—a political reason—for his battle against the right angle.

#### IV. Spacing

We have spoken of geographisms. Sculpture is a writing on the broad parchment of the earth. If we adjust the metaphor we can say that a sculpture is rather a punctuation mark and that spacing is also a punctuation mark that is introduced between two words and that constitutes them as what they are and nothing else. We all know the enormous progress that, for the technique of writing, implied the tardy invention of blank space



Profundo es el aire Eduardo Chillida

—texts from antiquity know neither spacing nor punctuation (these inaudible graphisms), lacking representation in spoken discourse, but essential for the life of the text. Heidegger and Derrida authorize this procedure for us, which is something more than a play on words. Spacing (*das Raumen*) makes space. "Topogenesis." Space does not pre-exist sculpture and landscape does not preexist the point of view and the beholder. Both: space, landscape, are effects of the subject, of the speaking being, defenseless, terrified, à la Pascal, before the eternal silence of infinite spaces, which is remedied by placing limits, leaving traces, like the footprint left on the moon, like those of the sepulchres that world-wide denote the onset of language, that is to say, of civilization, characterized by the proper name and by the remembrance that follows death and is materialized in a place, the place of the headstone. That is culture.

Now we understand the task of the sculptor which is to insert punctuation marks in the earth, capital letters like the Colossus of Rhodes or Egyptian and Mesoamerican pyramids, or small letters, like the things (signs) that make up places in gardens and in dwellings, rendering them unique and unmistakable.

Sculptures and furniture as well, all objects of human industry, are points of reference, they create inside and the outside, top and bottom, front and back, anterior and posterior. Capital letter, small letter. On which scale? Of course it is unnecessary to say so, in respect to man, measure of all things. With respect to the body as point of view, that is, as the place from whence the gaze is emitted which, in a flash, configures space. The moon and cheese are distinguished before everything else by the existence or not of the reach of the hand. Gulliver and Alice pass from the scale of the gigantic to that of the dwarf. The world presents itself as a space in which our glance outlines the mark and when it does not find it, calls that the "horizon."

The mirror and the photograph duplicate the field of the gaze and with their edges they delimit the scene of re-presentation. Both speculate, acting like spontaneous sculptors who produce a replica of "real" space in contingent space, that of our minds, a "virtual" space. What stands out is that these two artifacts act at the speed of light, they can create spaces that annul time, or almost, according to the time of exposure."

Chillida learns the lesson: space is defined by its mark, i.e., by the limit, and we could say that "boundaries are the protagonists of space," or that "nothing would be possible without this murmur of limits." Metaphors? No. We have to take them literally.

Space is dramatized, it is scene and scenario, a whispering music. There is an actor dominating the dramatic play: the actor is the border. It has a temporal expression; it is the present, the instant of the gaze, border between before and since. Therefore, space is compressed by opening and closing the eyes, in the instant, Augenblick. And then let us listen to the perhaps more surprising expression from the lips of this poet (definition of poet: specialist of the unexpected): "Space is a very quick material," swift, the swiftest [Rauda raud



Eduardo Chillida, *Elogio del horizonte*, Gijón, Spain

isima]. Space is decomposed and recomposed with each blow of the hammer. Nothing changes more rapidly than space. It is always never different and always never the same, like the music of Bach, according to Chillida himself.

Space is thus a function of spacing understood as an inscription of punctuation marks. To make a clearing in the woods, to erect a Cone (Th. Bernhard, Korrektur, "Correction") or an obelisk, to construct bridges and lighthouses, to dismantle them, or, as the sculptor did in Mexico City, to delimit a circle of lava 120 meters in diameter and surround it with sixty-four triangular watchmen made of concrete in a plateau

becomes *témenos*, temple, sacred enclosure where the geological violence of the burnt rock dialogues with the snow-covered volcanoes, with the distant city and with the blue of the sky torn at each moment by the thundering progress of airplanes going down to their haven. A similar site, monument to the hole (which belies the idea that all monuments are phallic), is igneous rock, signified and de-signified by the activity of the sculptors who underlined it by isolating it from the undifferentiated expanse in which it was found by means of tracing a cement circumference. There, the primordial fire is made visible in the ribs left on the black surface by the now unforgettable flow of the lava. Spontaneous lithography, *acheiropoiesis* (made by no hands). And the title of the work, exemplary for any work with this nature, is "Sculptoric Space." As it is Sculptoric Space The House of our Father is an amazing mass of cement an amazing mass of concrete pierced by holes that Chillida erected in Guernica from whence is discernible the sacred tree of the Basques at the foot of the hill. Looking down through a gap in the cement it is possible to feel, so many decades since, the sadness of the victims that still and for always howl in the painting by Picasso. As the immense unfinished circle, also in cement entitled *In Praise of the Horizon*, in Gijón, is equally Sculptoric Space: "a work that embraces you and defines you in relation to the horizon and to the sea" (Chillida, p. 45).

Insistence of the circle. To draw or to construct a circular edge around something you can go in circles around is to create an *ambitus*, an ambience, to embrace what surrounds us, the atmosphere, to concretize our aspirations, i.e., our ambition, incorporating the world into our bodies by means of respiration. Curious, this topology of air entering the body, of the space of the world aspirated and aspired to by man, whose pulmonary alveoli are the edges of the air. Let us leave the topologists to account for the relation between living being and space incorporated in it with the term "Kleinian bottle" and let them describe its properties. Let us put a limit also to our discourse by noting this vital relation that we maintain with the atmosphere (the sphere that we respire) as a topological fact, like relation between places, as a space of events, as something susceptible to sculptural accomplishment.

All materials have been used by sculptors. Even flesh. A difficult material indeed, some will argue about its corruptibility, and we would agree. We ought to dare to think that flesh itself, in constituting a human body, is a sculpture, the result of a shaping/cutting, of cuts and incisions, drillings and trepanations, penetrations and groovings, resections and circumcisions made by the Other of language.

At any rate, human flesh is sculpture. The desire of the fathers and that of the polis, and even the traditions of culture, configure a conjunction of ideals to which the subject will have to accommodate the functioning of his body even to its appearance, not to mention its value or lack of it. The myth of Pygmalion, of the sculptor whose work comes alive by the will of the gods, permitting marble to become flesh, is a model for us. Each subject is formed like a moving and speaking sculpture responsive to the ideal

of the Other [I (A), Lacan].

We must conclude that culture begins with these sculptures made out of flesh. How beautiful the world would be without the amazing proliferation of bungling Pygmalsions!.

The body is geography assembled by the desire of the other who marks it with its caresses and its blows, with its kisses and lullabies, with its deprivations and its satisfactions, with its bosoms that smother or grow unattainable, with its sexual encounters marked by immediacy and by castration. Space is, for the being who speaks [le parlêtre], always corporal space right from the start. The first representation of space is applied to one's own body and this is the sculpture that we touch, that we feel, that we take as unit of measurement and that we project toward the exterior. When we allow children to play with putty and freedom, they show it loudly. Like all space—Chillida and Heidegger said it better than anyone—it is constructed starting from its limits, and those limits, the phenomenologist and psychoanalyst will add, are the sites where the interchanges with the Other take place, the orifices and sphincters that Freud baptized the "erogenous zones," the places where food, air, images, sounds, voices and a long et cetera enter and leave, sending us to the catalogue of the drives.

Aphorism 1: space is, before all else, the space of our own body

Aphorism 2: Space is an effect of spacing, that is, of the intervention of the other who marks a surface with punctuation marks and in this way raises it to the dignity of the signifier, a retroactive construction, a legatee of the signifier

Aphorism 3: space is not an a priori but a Nachträglich effect, an a posteriori, a retroactive construction.

## V. Psyché

If space becomes space for sculptural writing and place is what defines the spaces man inhabits, and if those spaces are the effect of having put limits on non-signifying extension, if the beach becomes human only through Friday's footprint, if archeology is paleogeography, if our more modern edifices can be seen with the eye of the archeologist who will encounter them, centuries from now, reduced to ruins, if what we construct are always future ruins, we will have to recognize in this maniacal need to write on the earth—and the rest of the universe if we could—a dominant passion of the speaking being [hablente], of the entity who accedes to being because he speaks, of the "spirit," if we must resort to a term brimming with metaphysical resonances (and what term does not have these in this realm of thought?). Our topogenetic activity covers the surface of the planet with tracks and imprints, with graphisms and sculptures, which attempt to deny death. But time, the most formidable sculptor, "will go on returning the statue to the shapeless mineral from which the sculptor extracted it." (M. Yourcenar). Chronos makes use of a chisel: Thanatos is the proper name of that chisel.

Arrived at these eschatological heights we can, thanks to Chillida, initiate a surprising dialogue between the sculptor and the father of psychoanalysis. Chillida has one adumbration, one more. He tells us, in substance: "I am a sculptor because I can put limits

on the physical world, because space permits me to inscribe this murmuring of limits on cement, wood or iron as well as on paper." But let us come to his questions, "What kind of space do limits permit in the spiritual world? Do limits exist for the mind?"

The sculptures of Chillida inspired Heidegger and Heidegger, with his article "Art and Space," (1962) inspired Chillida and drove the blood that has always run in his philosophical veins. The questions of the Basque sculptor suppose a possible analogy between two worlds, physical and spiritual. In both cases it is a matter of marking limits, and for him there remains no doubt that physical space is constructed thus. He does not know, does not need to know, that this questioning after the erection of limits in an apparatus of the soul was a dominant preoccupation for Freud from the moment he founded psychoanalysis until his death.

In his final days, in the summer of 1938, already in London, in a notebook of jottings published posthumously, Freud makes an enigmatic notation:

Spatiality may perhaps be the projection of the expansive character of psychic apparatus (seelische, of the soul). No other derivation is likely. Instead of the a priori conditions of Kant, our psychical apparatus. Psyche is extension, but it knows nothing of it.<sup>4</sup>

And, in a virtually unknown contribution that is not found in any collection of "complete works" except in the report of a discussion that he had in his Psychoanalytic Society of Vienna, the 8 of November 1911 these curious affirmations:

a) "This would be a consideration of the psychic as something objective, after one has freed oneself from restriction to the forms of conscious perception."<sup>5</sup>

And in an other allusion to both Kantian a prioris:

b) "If the philosophers maintain that the concepts of time and space are the necessary forms of our thinking, forethought tells us that the individual masters the world by means of two systems, one of which functions only in terms of time while the other only in terms of space (ibid., 308).

What does Freud say concretely in these two sketches? Our naïve representation of psychic functioning leads us to imagine that mind acts like a cinema screen and that our representations, thoughts, and ideas are unfurled on it along the temporal axis, like a film that runs endlessly and takes the form of a series of fleeting and momentary states of consciousness. We cannot "see" what we think and much less what everyone else is thinking or imagining (on this consult the delicious *Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury). And since we cannot see it or locate it. We guess (or suppose) that they are purely temporal processes, outside of any space other than the "virtual" space of our minds.

The image of a "space" or a "spiritual scene" (we are deliberately oscillating among "mental," "psychical," "spiritual" and "of the soul" since none of these terms is adequate except for the conceptual difference among all of them) seems to us in sum an idle and unnecessary metaphor. It would be a virtual space, dimensionless, passive, and like that of the cinematic screen a space of "make-believe," not of a "true" one. In trying to

account for this series of transient contents we do so by means of discourse, of a chain of words that also takes place in time without taking up any room in space. Grippled by our own consciousness, we believe, and live denying our belief. We ought to dare to think that the psyche is not objective but "purely subjective," to which we add the qualities of the illusory, changeable and relative. Just shadows; nothing else.

This distribution is convenient and appears to respect the facts, but we soon are forced to recognize a complicating factor. Thought and word are the form and the very essence of the temporal ... until we write them. When we do, spatial relations become clear to us. Time is spatialized. And when we read what is written we notice that these spatial relations that make the text possible have become temporalized in speech. If what we do upon thinking and talking is to decipher prior inscriptions and to order them temporally, then the spatial will have preceded the temporal; and what we call "persona," "subjective" and "temporal" will be nothing other than the projection into time of certain spatial relations that our psychism knows nothing about, relations derived from an arché-writing and from "spurs"—if we follow Derrida's terminology.

Let us add a second complicating factor that will wind up taking us to a clearer intellection of the psychic setup's spatiality. We conduct ourselves with the intuition common to isolated minds, thinking and speaking as points (without extension) of emission and reception. But the psychical is always constituted and it acts at every moment in relation to an other. Psychic space is always intersubjective and intersubjectivity ['transsubjectivity' would be a better word] is delimited and is played on the field of the Other of language. The functioning of the mind is given, from the first relations with the mother starting at birth (parturition; *parire*, to give birth to; *separare*, to separate from) as a relation between bodies parted by a distance, by a spacing, by exchanges that the apparatus of language comes to organize. To live in the human world is to administer the differentiated spaces in which bodies move. The psychical is organized in a double scene where the subject ex-sists in a relation with the Other, with the symbolic system, in a space that belongs neither to the One nor to the Other, a space that Winnicott called "transitional space," the space of cultural experience.

At this point we may think that the spatialized scenario is that of relations with other subjects, where the comedy and tragedy of life is played out, except that the subject is one and singular. Other teachings that come out of psychoanalysis complicate this simple schema. To start with, the dream about which Freud signaled from the beginning, following a physicist of his era (Fechner), that it passes into an other scene (*eine andere Schauplatz*), foreign to the subject of wide-awake life. In this other scene different relations of the temporalization of space and the spatialization of time are in force, there is a spatial projection of mental functioning and, on the other hand, the feeling that what is happening in the dream escapes the waker as much when he is sleeping as when he is awake. Between the nighttime subject and the daytime subject we must make a trans-lation, an interpretation and the association between the two subjects, two in one, sup-

poses a dissociation that is as much temporal as spatial. The interpretation of dreams and the acceptance by the subject of its latent meaning are not superimposed but co-exist "side by side" (Freud expressed it thus at the meeting of 1911 mentioned above); therefore, psyche could not be conceived at the margin of spatial relations. In summary, spatial relations exist not only in intersubjective space, transitional space, that separates the one from the other, but also in the interior of the self. It's worth saying it again: "Psyche is space, but it knows nothing of it."

Let us write three other aphorisms:

Aphorism 4: The mind is spatial when we conceive it in terms of writing and it is temporal when we consider it as a verbal chain, as a non-spatial series of speech or ideational phenomena.

Aphorism 5: The spirit unfolds in the space of the relations between subjects in a common field, which is that of the word governed by the laws of the Other. The notion of field is, already, in itself, topological.

Aphorism 6: The subject is not at one with itself unless there exists in it strata or differentiated layers (at least five, Freud said in one of his most daring psychological formulations, letter 52 to Fliess, 1896) that require transitions (translations) from one to the other and, therefore, the subject is a country with states whose relations are not always harmonious and where there is mutual misrecognition. (L. P. Hartley: "The past is a foreign country. Things look different there." Marcel Proust, *passim*.)

## VI. Topics

The entire theoretical life of Freud is signed by this project of formulating in terms of "psychical places" his conception of the mind, by working to mark off the limits that exist between one region and the other, by defining the modes of crossing borders. The almost agonizing note of 1938 shows in an astonishing way this passage from hypothesis to conviction: "Spatiality may perhaps be the projection of the expansive character of the psychic apparatus into space..." And immediately afterwards, without hesitation: "No other derivation is likely." It might be thus, but only thus might it be.

There is an antecedent that becomes precious at this point in our exposition. Freud compared the mind with those toys where children write with a sharp punch on a celluloid surface that is erased in an instant without leaving traces. But at the same time, it remains written in the layer of waxed paper that is there underneath. This is the Wunderblock, the mystic writing pad, inspiration for the memorable article of 1925 where Freud proposed it as model of mental activity. Upon lifting the celluloid sheet (equivalent to the successive functioning of instants in consciousness), an inscription is discovered in another place, in another scene, inscription of something that are no longer fleeting moments but a plane of graphisms where the spatial relations proper to writing are conserved. Psychism, in this model, is the memory of the passion of an engraving, of the chisel acting as a hammer, a conjunction of traces, of tracks. And for

this reason, Psyche would be "objective," an object or thing that is complete in the instant, outside of time. Now of course, and this is one of the Freud's most ancient conjectures or adumbrations, the "apparatus of the soul" would be composed of the various successive layers of inscriptions that configure psychical agencies (Instanzen). Its places, topoi, spaces that lend themselves to being described in terms of "apparatuses" like optical gadgets, microscopes, telescopes, wherever we find virtual sites to which images become attached.

Psychoanalysts know very well the series of spatial models Freud sketched out to make this psychical topology patent: the Project for a Scientific Psychology, Letter 52 to Fliess, Chapter 7 of the Interpretation of Dreams, where various systems that the require a process of translation or transposition in order to come and go from one to the other are demonstrated; and at last the system of Id, Superego and Ego proposed in The Ego and the Id of 1923. Topics, always topics.

After Freud, when the most consequent of his successors, Lacan, wishes to give an account of subjectivity he finds nothing better than to return to topology and he is seen obsessed with discovering spatial models that can show the relation established between the Subject and the Other. He is seen immersing himself in the exhausting continuities of the Moebius strip, the cross-cap, the projective plan, the Klein bottle already mentioned, the torus and finally, the theory of knots with particular reference to the Borromean knot. His last regular seminar was dedicated to the theme that stands out at every moment in this text that we were writing on Chillida: Topology and Time, 1978.

"But psyche knows nothing of its spatiality." That is to say, we do not ourselves know, we do not know that we know. Our mind is space. The old Cartesian opposition, *res cogitans*, *res extensa*, dissolves because the space that we perceive outside of ourselves is connected to the unknown horizons of our psychical activity. We are close here to jumping into that confused intuition, that forethought of Freud's in the session of 1911 referred to above: there are two modes of psychical functioning, one that operates in purely temporal terms, the one we normally recognize, and the other, which functions in purely spatial terms, i.e., in terms of uncrossable lines that demarcate places. And now, with these two Freudian conjectures: "What if..." in the conditional. What if our external spaces, marked by the signifier, injected by the word that binds them, engraves them, names them, designates them as the dwelling places of being? What if these places were a projection of the spatial nature of our psychical setup?

## **VII. The Body**

Now, where would the psyche draw its spatiality, its topographical reality from? We have already hinted at it: from its relation to the body, and very particularly, to the body as the place of exchanges with the Other. The first spatiality is corporal and results in a synaesthetic complex. "Data" issuing from all sites of the body are processed, designated, fantasmicized, through the relation with the Other who brings the treasure of language, maternal language. Anatomy offers points, surfaces, and volumes that await and that end

up being included in the field of the word. The body becomes a geography and geography becomes cartography. A prolux net of signifiers captures each strand of hair and each fingernail, each tint of skin color and each atom of fragrant substance, tear, sweat, and blood. The body is a world and because of this, it is easy to conceive that the world is made in the image and likeness of the body insofar as a lived body. Childhood drawings and modeling show us repeatedly this unity of the "interior" spaces (psychological and bodily) and the "exterior" spaces (spaces, *stricto sensu*).

We can now leave the conditional, though without misrecognizing the risky character of our reflections. The world that surrounds us, the *Umwelt*, the *milieu* (surroundings) receives its human determinations from our psychical functioning, from the complex warp (Proustian) of our memories and our relation to the others through language. It is difficult to decide if we are capturing the real of our mental being or if we are moving in a domain of metaphors: the magic slate, books translated from one language into another, relations between systems of lettering, Freudian topology, Lacan's topological figures, geometry, geography, sculptures that are punctuation marks on the surface of the earth, archeological and geological layers.

Nevertheless, we are on the fertile terrain of adumbrations. We can say (at least for the moment) that we have no solid means of reaching the intellection of what we are proposing.

Let's return to the sculptor's question: "What kind of space permits limits in the spiritual realm?" or to query like Bachelard, friend and admirer of Chillida: "In what space do our dreams dwell?"<sup>3</sup> Stanislaw Lem in *Solaris*, a novel that anyone can also see as a film by Tarkovsky, tried to materialize such an oneiric space and left in his text abundant suggestions as to how to characterize Freud as the discoverer and first explorer of that spatial body. Flights to the planet of dreams depart each night with a return ticket in each awakening. The country in question is difficult, steep and craggy—geographical, not geometrical. Artists, and I am thinking predominantly of those who work in the plastic arts, are dedicated to this, to the cartography of the unconscious, to the creation of spaces that conjugate the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, and they materialize it, corporealize it (*Verkörperung* is the word that Heidegger uses) in employing the most diverse substances.

The response to Chillida passes or can pass through the Freudian path: it is the subject who is spatial, and I say "the subject" in order not to decide falsely between its body and its soul. The spatiality of the subject results from the laying down of limits and from the erasures in its most deepest interior that leave entire zones inaccessible, unconscious, "extimate." What the subject is unaware of and what cannot be reabsorbed by language, the internal alien, the extimate, is projected through an action that fills the world with writings, signs, marks and limits. The world is a more and more motley combination of engravings, traces of the passage of other men who built the places we

dwell in. The space in which the sculptor works is already demarcated. It is not the pure space of analytic geometry, nor is it the phenomenological space of lived experience. It is the place, the Bay of San Sebastian, the isle of Tindaya, museum, city of Gasteiz, space allocated by the work of art which, we already know, can be a bicycle wheel or a urinal. There, in the designated spaces, the artist can act with his philosophical hammer, strike, and strike again, leaving an indelible mark, hammering furiously upon the anvil of his dreams.

\*Translated from Néstor Braunstein, *Ficcionario de Psicoanálisis*, Mexico City: Siglo 21, 2001, pp. 230-250. Published in English here by permission of the author.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Chillida's *Elogio del horizonte*, Gijón, page 45 of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La potière jalouse*, Paris: Plon, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> Chillida, *El derecho de soñar*, F.C.E., p. 197

<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, vol. XXIII, London: The Hogarth Press, 1968 [orig. 1938], p. 300

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, vol. 3, p. 308.