

PARIS, ARK ON THE SEA OF TIME
(Modern City, World Without Memory)

Preamble and Commentary on the Film Projection

by

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1

I must begin with a confession. Film director, in the service of film making for 25 years, I was a victim of inevitable job conditioning. Therefore, I couldn't escape from a certain type of understanding or even perhaps a certain deviation of the suggested theme by our 3rd Committee. This deviation expresses the spirit of the film making dynamism : that is an ever moving or even an existential obsession particularly true for the 7th art.

...So, the tittle "Fomrs and symbols" gave me the strenght or maybe the irresponsability to go beyond the cold, objective analysis of an iconography amongst many others, born from the inexhaustible mistery of the analogical thought.

My status as film director helped me to grasp the verb "TO FORM" beyond substantive "FORM"; so FORMS AND SYMBOLS became in my mind "THE FORMATIVE FUNCTION OF THE SYMBOLS".

In a "theologian film director's language" - which in fact doesn't exist (or doesn't exist yet) - I can confirm that I prefer orthopraxy to orthodoxy.

In the spirit of the vision of Mircea Eliade, tightly associating the SACRED and the SYMBOLS, we - that is to say the team and myself - accepted as beginnings of our research work and film making a few basic ideas:

- 1.) The symbol like the sacred is saturated by ESSENCE.
- 2.) Through the symbols we grasp the eternal power of the Sacred, that is to say : Real, Perennial an Efficient.
- 3.) The religious man deeply wants TO BE ; through the symbols he can participate in the entire reality of the created world.
- 4.) For the religious man, space is not homogeneous. There are portion of space qualitatively different from others.
- 5.) For the religious man, the only true geography is the Sacred Geography - the one which defines space in conjunction with the liturgical calendar and thus connecting time and space in a theocentric vision.

The expression "Sacred Geography" evokes a vision of the world which was rigorously applied in the past. The mason and wise men of every traditional civilisation considered the space where a construction was to be build as a receptacle that was waiting to be loaded with signification. Due to significations (such as the representation of Genesis, the glorification of the Creator and every other symbol able to reveal to us the structures and the laws of the world), a very well defined fragment of the visible and the invisible world is at the same

time reintegrated in the visible and invisible dynamics of the flow of time.

In other words, the meaning of Sacred Geography was a type of therapy : due to the symbols and rituals, the fragment, the place and the sanctuary fuse together in the harmony of the universe. Opaqueness of appearances was transformed into transparency so that the place was revealed to us as an integrated part of an eternal and infinite Reality.

The main elements of such a vision are the Monuments. They concentrate this vision of the world through the effort of re-memorizing. The latin word "monumentum" from which "monument" is derived means : "everything that calls up memory". This designates the architect as a fighter against oblivion. In the traditional civilisations to build monuments meant to take part in this liturgical re-memorization of the Fundamental Principles.

Thanks to this complicity, the architects, priests and congregation were united in an "analogical consonance" ; they were beyond "the place", "the present", "the generation" ; they were even beyond all generations, linked in a fraternity unifying the living and the dead.

These were the criteria for every known civilisation. The Tradition assumed with humility and devoutness was taken on differently according to the time and the place. If the variations are infinite, the Fundamental Principles remain intangible. The freedom of the Architect of sacred places is on a vertical plane ; it is unlimited and always creating harmony and beauty. The social order that it represents on other hand is in itself a projection of revealed knowledge.

The reading that we suggest in this film starts off from these principles ; the dramatical structure of our films is built on the tension that results from the opposition of memory and oblivion.

In other words God and the Devil are the two opposing forces. God, the great architect and harmonizer of the Universe, and the Devil that desarticulates and desharmonizes.

Through these T.V. shows fighting modern amnesia, we were trying to fight the Devil because he "sings out of tune". The modern world is in apostasy from architecture.

How did we get where we are today ? What did we do to give birth to such a civilisation that produces only meaningless, repetitive, mechanical shapes without reality, without memory and without spiritual direction ?

The ideologists are in power. They took the meaning of the world away. The Greek Utopia meteor left Athens ; badly understood by the Christian world, it reappeared with the Renaissance, to finally free its centrifugal dynamics in the Paris of the 18th century. This destructive tidal wave went on its way nurturing the illusion of a progress without end.

The Ideologist substitutes himself for the Architect. Even if they are in ruins, the monuments built by the Architect are always here and keep all their clarity of knowledge. The Ideologist's works have only the essence of hugeness of civilisation in decay. These productions get lost in the confusion of an unstructured universe, ruled by the law of the greatest number and their agreement with mass production.

The reading of the "burried" symbols in the sanctuaries could help the tourist to revive a part of the spiritual richness that justified in the past the movement towards the great places of pilgrimage. For a short while the tourists themselves will thereby become pilgrims : they will be like deaf people at a ballet who suddenly hear a few fragments of the music from which the gestures and dancing originate.

In fact, there is nothing that can exist, even in an illusive, temporary or artificial manner, apart from the sacred perspective. On the contrary, we can assert that the more we move away from the sacred, the more we express it.

An understanding of a civilisation through a city ! Through an archetype city like Paris where everything is meaningful ! Paris is the centre of this huge historical theatre where the western drama is taking place in the form of a tragedy called "The Crisis of the Modern World".

Architecture doesn't lie. It cannot lie.

From Notre-Dame to Concorde, from Concorde to Défense, from Défense to Beaubourg every scene is in its place.

The "De-construction" was not allowed to ruin the different stages of this huge involution of Art, of knowledge and of political and religious institutions that we still call "progress".

In this respect, the agressivity of the last stage of modernity is positive in the way that it fights the deaf and dumb ignorance of triumphant humanism, even more deaf and dumb that it is still full of ressources.

In a city like Paris, every monument shows a stage of the decadence of architectural forms. The journey through the architecture of Paris can help us to re-educate our un-initiated sight and to receive things in all their complexity. The total sacred vision is the only way to fight aesthetical, ideological and political totalitarianism.

A thousand different roads lead to a city as rich as Paris. The one we have chosen starts with the poetic idea that every being and every city is a Tree, whose roots reach up to Heaven. To know this Tree, its branches and its fruit, we must begin with its roots, which like all heavenly roots are both visible and invisible.

Let us try to understand this so-complex city, of which Henry IV said, even in his time, that it was a whole country in itself. We must transcend appearances and discard the usual prejudices. Let us go to its monuments, not forgetting that the latin word "monumentum" means "reminder". Let us try to understand the City in the light of its celestial Memory, as well as in harmony with all who may say, with Montaigne : "Ever since my childhood my heart has belonged to Paris. I am only French through this great City, wondrous and incomparable in its variety, the glory of France and one of the world's noblest adornments".

Paris was born from the crossing of a waterway with a footpath in that privileged island, so like a ship, that has always been consecrated to a female divinity : in earliest times it was Isis, and with the Christian era -the Virgin Mary.

Mainmast of this ship-island, the spire of "Notre Dame de Paris" is rooted both in Heaven and in a vertical axis, around which the Wheel of the City revolves, with all its symbolic meaning. It rises above the island's holiest sanctuary, where all the christian temples followed one another, and where, in the 18th century, an altar stone dedicated to Jupiter was found, built by the Nautes, when Paris was the Gallo-Roman city called Lutetia.

From the inexhaustible riches of its primordial memories, the Cathedral shines forth over all the Mother Island of Paris, as over the whole city and all France. It is the very centre of its own sacred geography.

Built on the mountain of Ste Genevieve, one of the seven hills of Paris, Lutetia, even at that date, already displayed all the characteristics of a traditional city. Two thousand years later, vestiges of the right angles, oriented to the sunrises and sunsets, may still be seen there. They prove that Lutetia, like Rome, belongs to the grand tradition of cities, from east to west, wich express a concept of the world as obedient to holy laws.

When the Seine settled into its present bed, six or seven thousand years ago, it was soon crossed by a neolithic road running through Europe from north to south, linking the fur producing peoples with the tin countries. Starting with Lutetia's two primitives bridges, the history of Paris has always followed the cadence of its bridge building progress.

Among the seven hills of Paris, the one that best fulfills its role as a protector nowadays, is the hill of Montmartre, which, after being dedicated to Mars and Mercury, became the hill of Martyrs with the christian era, and for the last century has been the seat of the Sacré Coeur Basilic, - the Basilic of the Sacred Heart.

Just as these hills enfold the sacred precincts of Paris in their protecting arms, so a personal protection is given by the guardian Saints : Joan of Arc, Ste Genevieve, St Marcel and St Martin. Kings such as Philip Augustus and St Louis, together with all the saints and angels, make a bridge between profane and sacred history, between the visible and invisible worlds.

Paris needed this crown of guardians to be able to invoke the Divine Spirit's propitious influence in a world continually subject to attacks by demons.

Gateway to Heaven, the facade of Notre-Dame is a rampart, guarded primarily by the Virgin, official protectress and Queen of France since the reing of Louis 13. Likewise, in the middle of the door, as of the battle, St Michael, Commander of the Heavenly Host and Guardian of the Gate of Death, watches over Time, protects the city, the nation, and the world.

To effectively play its part as a saviour, every city must reflect in its architecture the Laws that God, the Great Architect, has given His Creation. Holy Jerusalem is the archetype that God in His Mercy has given us, through His pro-

phets and His kings. The Cathedral concentrates its multiple meanings to become an inexhaustible source of inspiration and Memory for master builders and city planners. Based on its floor plan, as on each of its three facades with their specific rose windows, Notre Dame becomes, symbolically, a guiding diagram of the city. Seen as a circular calendar showing the twelve houses of the sun, each rose window is structured around a central cross, whose heart contains the Creative Word. This same cross, which is also the floor plan of the building, is found again at the city's crossroads.

A symbolic vision of both the invisible and visible rotations of the Church and the City emerges around the spire of Notre Dame as around the axis of the rose window.

In a rose window everything radiates from the original centre and, by analogy, everything in Paris unfurls in endless creation around the Mother Island.

Like a heart between two lungs, the island generates the "faubourg" on both banks and orders the successive precincts:

- the precinct of Philip Augustus
- the precinct of Charles V in the 14th century
- finally, the Turgot plan, dating from Louis 15th, showing a city already in explosion, while still following the traditional concentric structure pattern... The Seine Axis gave birth to parallel roads on the right bank, the latest being the "rue de Rivoli".

The Tour St Jacques, at the crossroads between the east-west and north-south axes, has become the new vertical axis: the CROSSROADS OF PARIS, pivot of the new sacred organization of the city of Paris. Around the four Evangelists on the tower, as around the spire of Notre-Dame, witness to the God-centered Vision of the Revelation of Christ, this symbolic dynamism rotates the city in Time and Space.

The new vertical axis has taken over some of Notre Dame's offices, although, as the first parisian "Axis Mundi", the cathedral is still always the fundamental source of the city's original collective memory. As long as the image of the world remains coherent, so does the development of Paris: that is to say everything is flexibly organised in relation to the symbolic meanings of the four cardinal directions, starting from a central point. Even after the collapse of the traditional world, Paris kept, and still largely keeps, this basic structure.

Thus the north-south axis, called the CARDO by the Romans, not only still exists as the rue St Martin, but was coupled in the Middle Age and the 19th century by two new roads - the rue St Denis and the boulevard Sebastopol.

Facing north, St James looks toward the city's guardian hill, Montmartre, which, ever since the martyrdom of St Denis in the 2nd century, has been an important pilgrim centre and which, for the last century, has housed the Sacred Heart basilica, and ever burning source of Divine Energy.

In the symbolism of the cardinal points, the north represents cold, darkness, and dangerous demons, which explains the presence of St Michael, in his role as Christianity's Champion against the Devil, in the north end of the basilica. Here, as in the baptistery of Notre Dame, the serpent reminds us that the north symbolises both the obscure origin of the Creation and a perpetual fountain of Evil.

Six months before Christmas, St John's fires celebrate with visible fire the Divine Word which is the invisible light. All these rites celebrating Fire and Light, all these guardian spirits, are only a means through which we venerate the universally creative Word, incarnate in Jesus Christ and his Passion. This is why on every Good Friday, the Way of the Cross must be retrodden.

The Axis of Fire, like the eyes of the pilgrims and the rose window of Notre Dame, points south beyond the "Isle de la Cité", following two ancient roads, the CARDOS of Roman times: the boulevard St Michel on the right and the rue St Jacques on the left. Crossing through today's Latin Quarter, this road which dates back to the beginning of history, was the road to "Compostella" in the Middle Ages and was at that time an uninterrupted row of churches, convents, and monasteries.

Up to the French Revolution, the 80 monasteries and 300 churches of old Paris - of which 270 were destroyed - provided a continuous symbolic ladder between Heaven and Earth.

How strange and striking to find that, in modern uprooted Paris, the Eiffel Tower unexpectedly reminds us of these vanished spires. If the tower was erected by companion builders it still bears witness to the excesses of modern technology.

The east-west axis, the Water axis, reflects the sun as it moves along the same path. Mother-water and the word-light in their daily union sanctify the whole city in both Time and Space. East of this Axis, the city watches the sunrise every morning through the eyes of the Kings of France, who stand on the columns of the throne, today : Place de la Nation.

First, to greet the sunrise at the extremity of the eastern axis in front of the Chateau de Vincennes, is St Louis, the paragon of priestly kings.

In the middle of the Place de la Nation, Dalou's statue of the Republic turns its back on the sunrise of its origins and looks toward the sunset, symbol of Time to come.

Going west along the same axis, the Bastille, entrance to old Paris, became in 1789 the gate through which History hustled the whole city to a different destiny. High on its column, the Genius of Liberty also seeks the future in the sunset.

Thus the current of History drags the whole city westward and the ancient "DECUMANUS" of classical times is coupled by the axis of Triumph, whose direction exactly parallels the Seine and the nave of Notre-Dame.

After 1667, André Le Notre started to impose this dynamic on the western axis, hoping to see the road of Triumph climb the Etoile hill and continue another 20 kilometers to St Germain en Laye.

Orienting the city to the sunset, that is the far west, symbol of the End of Ages, this road of Triumph shows that Le Notre was an instrument of Providence and, from this time, it seems that Le Notre and St Michael see eye to eye.

Given the identity of orientation of the tympanum of Notre Dame's last Judgement and the Arc de Triomphe, the latter seems to focus its meaning as the symbolic Gate to the Hereafter, Gate of the Great Night of the Dead, Gate of Memory, which must be eternally revived like the flame to the Unknown Soldier.

To honor the dead and those who accept a hero's death is to fight against oblivion and give homage to those who personify the ultimate generosity, the sacrifice of their own lives.

Here, the Head of State's duties, borne in the nation's collective memory, extend beyond the visible, in a rite encompassing all generations - past, present and futur.

It is moving to observe that the 26th inclination of this axis on the parallel corresponds to the points on the horizon where the sun rises and sets on the 8th of May and the 11th of November, the 1945 and 1918 Armistice dates and also the feast days of France's guardian Saints: St Michael, Joan of Arc

and St Martin. Believers call this.... Divine Providence.

In addition to profane hero-cult celebrations, the churches' west doors repeat the christian idea that the sunset is the symbolic place of the End of the Ages when all the Apocalypses will have been accomplished. In the rose window of the Sainte Chapelle, St John says: "I saw seven golden candlesticks surrounding one like the Son of Man... His voice is as the roar of Great Waters, His Face is like the Sun shining with all its brilliance..."

If Notre Dame's west rose window was, as we have seen, the archetype of sanctified space, this window also signifies Time, as ordered by the liturgical calendar throughout the 12 solar months and the 12 signs of the zodiac.

The stages of the liturgical calendar between the winter St John, symbolising Death and Rebirth, and the summer St John, celebrating the apogee of the annual solar cycle, are set in a row along the western horizon between the 22nd of December and the 21st of June, like figures on a huge stage at whose central point the sunset of the Paris DECUMANUS marks the middle of the four seasons.

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When night falls, Paris dreams and, harkening back to its origins, seems to float upstream. Every night, accompanied by its praying guardian spirits, part of the city drifts eastward to meet the dawn.

Like a flagship leading all the other vessels, Notre Dame navigates eastward day and night, that is toward the origins of creation, sailing upstream on the Seine as it goes backward in Time. According to a very old tradition, the History of Man and his Fall is shown as a river, flowing, like the Seine in Paris, from East to West. In this river, says the tradition, live two kinds of fish: the awoken, heedful ones who struggle against the current. Bearers of the memory of the Golden Age, they return to their origins, that is the East; the other still unawakened, allow themselves to be carried away to the west until they reach the ocean of dissolution and oblivion.

The great axis of Paris appears as the scene of a fiery and endless battle between these two tendencies. The space between the columns of the "Nation" and the "Arc de Triomphe" at the "Etoile" is peopled by statues proclaiming the promise of Progress and of Liberation of Man. They look to the future as to a Paradise to be won, some seeking it in their origins in a rush to the east. This is a struggle between complementary forces. The great ideas of Liberty, Humanism and Progress, which bespeak

the pride of modern man, can be found in Paris, as everywhere else, in opposition to their traditional counterparts: Redemption, Divine Providence and the hope of Salvation.

Thus the east-west axis extends toward the End of the Ages, the hopeful yearning gaze toward the west of Dalou's statue triumphantly asserts the choice of modern man who, seduced by a profane vision of history, has forgotten God.

The position of the Louvre Palace in relation to the city shows that even in the 12th century, the beginning of a slide to the west can be discerned. Nevertheless, for another 500 years, faithful to its baptism at Reims, France continued to live by theocratic principles, which saw the King as the Lieutenant of Christ on earth. When we come to François the first and Henry the second, we have reached a stage in history when christian symbolism gives way to a heterodox mixture of neo-paganism. The rediscovery of classic realism reduces thought from the symbolical to the allegorical level.

Even so, the Colonnade of the Louvre, built by Le Vau and Perrault, as well as the entrance to Versailles, still respect a traditional orientation for Royal residences : they too celebrate the dawn and the Sun King.

The successive fragments of the western axis correspond to stages of our western civilization. If Notre Dame embodies the Middle Ages, the Louvre is a reflexion of the intermediate era between the Renaissance and the Century of Enlightenment. Here, over two centuries, the collective Memory

slowly declined, although this only became obvious during the Second Empire.

While Louis 14 looked out toward the sunrise across the Cour Carrée from high on his colonnade, Napoleon, on the Sully Pavillon, at the beginning of the great axis, fixed his visionary gaze toward the End of the Ages, reminding us that it was he who opened the door to modern times.

Is it possible to explain by anything other than a divine inspiration the presence of the contemporary work by Paul Landowski, "The Sons of Cain", at the very beginning of the road of Triumph? According to the Old Testament, the sons of Cain, on whom rested responsibility for the murder of Abel, were condemned to build the first city, which was destined to follow the pattern of Heavenly Jerusalem. They refused the Divine command and thus became the forerunners of the rejection of God, which was lead to a progressive desanctification of the City and, from one utopia to another, to the modern city.

The eyes of Cain appear to be the tragic focus of an ever open debate, which started in the 13th century at the Sorbonne, when new-born rationalism generated a new force in the city: that of the intellectuals, followed by the ideologists.

These, glorying in the victory of humanism over theology, even went so far as to say that man is no longer subject to Divine Providence and turned into unreason the medieval idea which said:

Everything by Reason

Reason Everywhere

Everywhere Reason

In the courtyard of the Louvre which is called the Napoleon courtyard, a tribunal of 86 stone dignitaries continue a dialogue which embraces the most antagonistic currents of all western thought. An intellectual confrontation between thinkers such as St Bernard, Pascal or Bossuet, philosophers such as Abelard, Voltaire, Rousseau or Condorcet, in the setting of the 18th century, transcended the simple quarrel between old and new and became the cradle of the French Revolution. These arguments are part of a much wider discussion which since the dawn of history, divides the anti-traditionalists from the defenders of tradition. What is too often presented as a conflict between reactionaries and progressives is really the immemorial battle between Memory and Oblivion.

In the middle of this same Napoleon Courtyard, Lafayette, on horseback to greet his Emperor, appears as the Messenger of the Revolution, sabre in hand, preparing to take the torch of Enlightenment to the Place de la Concorde an even far beyond it, across the Atlantic. Last of the five royal squares of Paris, the ancient Louis 15 square is crossed by the city's DECUMANUS as it traverses the Old Regime's last protecting wall and enters the modern world by way of the Revolution.

In fact, the murder of the King interrupts the covenant of Reims established by Clovis and St Remy in 496 bet-

ween God and His people. The word "Revolution", literally "a return to the beginning", was corrupted to become the driving force for living on borrowed time. The apostles of new Golden Age, carried away by their enthusiasm, henceforth mistook the twilight for the dawn.

When, on January the 21st, 1793, the priest Edgeworth, called out to the King, from amid the rioting mob : "Go up to Heaven, Son of St Louis!"... the guillotine's blade separated the apex of the visible social pyramid from the celestial hierachy, thus severing a bond considered fundamental by all traditional societies.

A Cycle comes to an end; God is apparently excluded from History, replaced by the Goddess of Reason.

The new Cycle started with the new Calendar, from which the saints and liturgical feasts were absent. Thus France abandoned its Jacob's Ladder and history became horizontal. The compass represented by the Place de la Concorde, bordered by the eight statues of French cities, but cut off from the Heavenly Memory, becomes the image of a strictly profane and merely geographical space.

In spite of numerous festivities aimed at blotting out all memory of God and His Royal lieutenant, Divine Providence resanctified the Concorde in 1836, when, on the pite formerly occupied by the King's statue, the obelisk from the Temple of Luxor was put up, symbolising both the Solar Fire and the Divine Origin of all true kingship.

By the end of the 18th century, all the festivals to the glory of the Liberation of Man began to be transformed into a historical fulfillment of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

By its very name - The Champs Elysees - which designates the Abode of the Blessed, the western axis reasserts its office as a road of pilgrimage leading to the world beyond death.

This triumphal road, which should have been the road to a radiant future, now proceeds to the achievement of History and introduces ideology, henceforth the only manifestation of human plans for the future.

Napoleon looks to the east, seeking legitimacy, but in crowning himself, he trampled tradition underfoot, asserting the immoderate pride of an individual who bowed to no authority but his own.

Covered with names, this monument, erected to the glory of Napoleon's victories and their heroes, records a decisive moment in this drift away from the Memory of traditional values. Hence the desperate frenzy to enumerate names, dates and events to compensate for this alienation.

Even though the Etoile has realised Le Notre's project for a rose window, the surrounding City is no longer a sanctified area nor structured to achieve salvation. The fragmentation of the collective memory generates a proliferation of building, destruction, over-growth and perpetual new beginning.

Ever multiplying man will extend the city even beyond the horizon.

Creator of the visible world, he glorifies himself in the form of the sculptor Dalou's Victory, whose outstretched arm heralds the future city, now realised...

This Triumphal Road, according to Le Notre's vision, should have continued as far as St Germain en Laye, but it stopped abruptly 12 kilometers short of its destination, due to an unpredictable acceleration of history.

What future is left us, if we take our place on this balcony of history, which seems more like an unfinished bridge? Have we, at last, got to the end of Cain's immemorial voyage, which, on this Axis, started in the Louvre courtyard in the middle of the intellectuals' arguments?

It must not be forgotten that, until the middle of the 19th century, the Tuileries Palace blocked off the sight of the achievement of their utopias from the stone tribunal. The communards set fire to the Tuileries on May the 24th, 1871, brutally raising the curtain on the great psychodrama of the End of the Ages.

This lucid and tragic view is here the reflexion of all the exaggerations of an urbanism that in a hundred years opened the roads to the future in every direction.

In this century of counterfeits, some succesful, others not, the only real innovation is metallic structure.

Pretexting purity of form, the 20th century, with but few exceptions, has refused all decoration, thus banishing memory and symbolic meaning. Aesthetic excess has resulted in a dehumanisation of the city. Incoherence and derision have become the rulers of the urban desert.

The torch of the century of Enlightenment thus passed through History, continents and oceans... and to understand the consummation of the Fate of the Sons of Cain, condemned to live rootless in their city, we may go to the La Défense section of Paris, where the loneliness and alienation of our modern Babylons reaches its zenith. Where can we find a contemporary Voltaire to reanimate our hope of future progress? The monuments around us are silent and amnesic. They incessantly repeat the present - a present that loudly proclaims its anguish - but only an empty echo replies. Only a huge mirror, installed at the end of the Axis could reveal us to ourselves through our past.

Is not this already the place of the final questions and the beginning of the Last Judgement?

Here we are, then, at the terminal point of a continuous obliteration of the original collective memory. From Notre Dame to "La Défense", passing through the Louvre, Concorde and the Etoile, Man has progressively banished God from his history and finds himself brutally faced by the Divine Revelation's Day of Reckoning. In fact, APOCALYPSE means REVELATION.

Besides the very centre of sacred memory, Notre Dame, the Beaubourg centre personifies, on a high technical

level, the indifference of an amnesic monster.

Cathedral in reverse, glorifying the curse that weighs on the Sons of Cain that we are, the building operates as a veritable annihilation factory, where the fragmented elements of our civilisation are swallowed without discrimination or distinction.

This blind amnesia generates a sinister vacuum, which provokes an implosion capable of consuming everything like a yawning black hole.

It works like a sponge in the hands of the Divine Will, which wipes the board clean before starting to write again. Seen in this perspective of Sacred Geography, the Beaubourg Centre foreshadows the hope of a New Cycle and brings us back to the cathedral.

The zero point of the square in front of the cathedral has become the Sign that announces both an End and a new Beginning.

The New Beginning described by St John in his Apocalypse : "Then I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth had disappeared... An I saw the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, come down from beside God in Heaven... He who sat on the Throne said : ' Behold I renew all things. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End'".