THE THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS OF AN ARCHITECTURAL ACTIVITY
IN A CHILDREN HOME

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Abstract

The authors, members of a team, can present two activities in which emotionally disturbed children were able to express their needs, wants and wishes about actual living spaces, then imagine and "build" some personal spaces. The authors could observe how contentious and unconscious revivals, the observation of the individual environment and a collective consciousness about the organisation of the living-spaces, were raised up by these activities. People (children and adults) discovered how architecture might occult a system of implicit norms and symbolic associations (according to a particular social system or to an individual's personality development). Thus there appeared three levels of therapeutic effects for the children. The paper is to be regarded as a clinical contribution to Architectural Psychology.

Introduction

The fact that a dynamic convergence exists between environment and the development of the individual and human behaviour is admitted nowadays. The individual does not perceive the environment as an objective reality but retains and selects part of that reality; each person apprehends space in a personal mode. It is not excluded that each system of culture gives an original interpretation to the physical universe in which it is contained. Ethnologists and anthropologists have often revealed these links that exist between the physical environment, the type of housing, and the structures of thought and symbolic systems.

Psychologists and architects share these points of view but do not ponder
together on the problem. And if the former put emphasis on the genesis of personality and its relation with a determined environment they remain on a strict human level (the human element of that environment): "significant" persons (father, mother), the "personality organizers", and the pedagogic attitudes of these persons... (cf. Lagnebe1): "the human world is involved in the experience and behaviour of a person by what is asked and demanded. The demand can be called an "exterior demand". Thus the relationship of a person with the world can be defined as a confrontation of demands: on one hand, demands from the person, on the other, demands from the world."

Although they are well known, the notions of housing, living-space, architecture and urbanism are discarded by the psychologist although a great part of human activities takes place in builded spaces. During a recent meeting on the theme: "environment and development", it has been said that "it is no use discarding a psychosociology of the environment, housing, organized societies" and "nothing has been said about the obvious role of esthetic elements: musical impressions, an harmonious surrounding, its dimensions, colours and different impressions." (19)

These elements were hardly mentioned during the meetings.

As for the architects, preoccupied with the problems of shape and volume, often working alone, they hardly wish or can take interest in the needs, desires, aspirations and demands of the users, and even less in the evolution of these problems. A desire for cooperation seems to take shape, in particular among psychiatrists and in hospitals. Institutional psychotherapy (Poucel24, Tosquelles25), schools (Meesmi14, De Brugel27), a new interest in the space reserved for children (Boris and Herschler3, Lefere) and by teachers as far as their pedagogical aims are concerned.

Our work is directed toward this movement of research (in particular the part dealing with children). We chose to work with a team of architects, psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, artists (sculptor, painter) and together we chose the options and theories with which we plan to work on "the spot" and use the clinical method (observation, interviews, questions).

1. We think that the act of building must be planned in its fullness, or in other words, according to its progression in time:

- the decision to build and to adapt.
- the research of the needs that forced the decision.
- planning: selection and nature of all the needed space.
- the project study: written and drawn description of the organization of space.

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- the building site, the building itself, the way the users accept it.
- the study of the possible transformation of the needs and of the building itself.

In general, the architect intervenes on the project and on the building-site. If the architect must intervene at all the levels, it means that he cannot work on his own but must be integrated in a team. The final aim was to find the best quality for the building since it was to be inhabited by people who had to face transformations of society, of their personality.

The investigation of the needs is usually vague and neglected. For one of us, the architect, the main problem was to participate in the investigation, to find a method of analysis and to experiment. In this way the field of handicapped children was chosen, because their needs are really crucial. These children, labelled by the specialists (teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists) as mentally ill, mad, ill-adapted or handicapped, do not always come from "bad" families with "bad" parents. But they often come from places characterized by terrible socio-economic conditions (slums, little place for large family...). Often they have lived in several places. As an example: Roger, twelve, has lived in 8 homes (2 countries and 4 towns) and has attended 7 schools.

The first space known to a human being is the womb. There, he is protected and his development begins. A great number of these children were not wanted by their mothers. Sometimes, important happenings occurred during pregnancy (death in the family, separation or divorce from the father). A trauma took place within their first living-space, the womb.

1. We think that the organization, the distribution and the name of living places support a system of implicit norms of human actions. These norms rule the expected individual actions and behaviour. For example: In a big children house (an orphan asylum) the names, age and sexual distribution of the different units are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex distr.</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>la pouponnière (the nursery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>les jeux (games)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>les fleurs (flowers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>les sports (sports)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>la ruche (the bee-hive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>le travail (work)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Let us take into consideration:

a) sex-segregation is applied when the problem of sexual difference is very important (along with the Oedipus complex) and it usually is of great importance for the children (boys and girls).

b) Many psychologists have said and proved that sex-segregation is inadequate for the development of a self-sexual identity.

c) The names of places announce the activities realised by the children. It must be said that nobody knows the reasons for these names. In the bee-hive, girls learn chiefly cooking and are thought how to become a good housewife. (Cf. the associations: girl–woman–mother–family, honey–food–cooking, bee-hive–kitchen–house.)

In France we find a lot of ready-made expressions: "a mother is the chief of the house" (or of the kitchen) "women must stay at home", "cooking is not a male task" etc (a) Architecture implies a static dimension and if sometimes that dimension is in opposition with the growing personality, yet, it crystallizes and reveals the implicit norms of human actions.

Another example: in a school built two years ago in a Paris suburb, water and tile-flooring has been just put in the disturbed children’s class-room and not in the normal children’s class-room. It is as if expressive but dirty activities are only good for the "unable to work" children, the intellectual activities being reserved for normal children.

If the architect wants to take into account that problem of implicit norms, he may really have an educational role and perhaps a revolutionary role. (Cf. Le Corbusier(15). Another question remains: what is the power of an architect? The question is political.

3. Everybody has his 'unconscius' whose indestructible elements (the fantasias connected with parental figures etc.) proceed from the living-space. For example: the bed-room and the sexual relationship of the parents are very often associated (this is the Primitive Scene fantasim).

One can say that everybody has an unconscious image of his integration in space, time and institutions. The specific character of space and particularly built-space for an individual is to have a projected unconscious connection with his own fantasias, desires, and anxieties: the

(a) J. Eikambl-Schmidt said about the symbolical level of the kitchen that he finds again the same implications that we already quoted and adds the term 'Queen' which is associated with the bee-hive in our example.(9)
relation with himself, - the relation with others and - the relation with a community and what it becomes.

Bachelard writes: "the unconscious is well lodged, happily lodged. It is loded in the dimension of its happiness. Psychoanalysis helps the dislodged unconscious, the brutally and insidiously dislodged unconscious" (1).

The apprehension of the environment (structures and differences) reveals the person's unconscious. In clinical psychology, it justifies the use of projective techniques, such as the test of the Arbus Village. (Cf. M. Monod (21) and the test D10(2) of Le Men (15).

Let us remember what F. Lugassy says: "the ways of apprehending the environment and of reacting are determined by the conflicts one has had to face during one’s genetic development, by the compromises one had to make and the way these conflicts were resolved in order to retain the sense of one’s unity and integrity. By correlation, the preferential significations projected on the environment (those which tend to organize the perception, feelings and behaviour they bring about) vary according to the remaining fantasies of some extreme situations which occurred during childhood, in particular those which could not be properly assumed". (23)

From these notions, this is the hypothesis we formulated: under certain existing conditions (a delimited space, materials, a team animated by clear pedagogical aims) if a building-creation activity is proposed to children suffering from emotional difficulties, these children can succeed in expressing themselves through their own language (by talking, drawing, painting and modelling).

1) Such an activity helps them with their conflicts and traumas repressed in their unconscious, which justify their attending a special school. It allows the educators to understand these children and it allows the children to resolve their difficulties. It constitutes a first level of a therapeutic effect.

2) Such a creativity allows the children to communicate (discussions, help, exchange of tools...). They also understand the links that exist between living-places and social laws. This arouses in them the desire to observe their environment (human and architectural) and to have an influence on it. Their socialization improves and their integration in society is made easier; this is important for these children who are unable

—Draw a landscape with a man, a woman, mountains, a boy, a house, a girl, a river, an animal, a car." (14)

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to start a relationship and thus become rejected and rejecting. It constitutes a second level of a therapeutic effect.

3) The reactions in their actual "living milieu" (special institutions, schools, families) increase because of that activity. The adults in this milieu face new questions that they must answer. They may have to reconsider their own relationship with their living places. According to their personality, status and profession they may even have to modify their places of living with the children. It constitutes a third level of a therapeutic effect but is indirect when compared with the others.

First experimentation

We were received in January 1971 by the Director of the Institution. The "architectural" activity was already planned and a group formed by those who thought they would be interested. We were presented as students in Architecture having chosen as a subject for study "the project of a center similar to the one in Toigman" and who needed their collaboration.

1) Analysis of the living-space.

During the first meeting, the plan of the existing centre was drawn freely and individually. The disposition of the buildings were on the whole correctly understood. Soon it became obvious that certain elements, the kitchen and common room for example, were proportionally more important than some others. On the other hand, certain elements as the psychologist's and psychiatrist's office and the sanitation were nonexistent. The symmetry in the disposition of the buildings was usually well defined because they surround a zone where no children can go, because it is reserved for the inhabitants of the centre, the Director, the charwomen and secretaries (this does not facilitate the relations in the house).

3) Oral description

In the general conversations which followed the systematic nomenclature of the places and activities, we asked for a description, an image of all the aspects of the centre. The main characteristics given were - The difference in height between the main building and the aisles and the profile. - The differences in materials: stone and slate for the former, rough-coat and tile for the latter. - The surroundings: the park, trees and rose-bushes.

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Later, they were asked to describe the first impression given by Toignan at the time of enrolment, and the actual image they had. Some said it was like a "castle", others "a school"; these images gradually becoming a "mansion-house". This was accompanied by a transformation in the perception of measures which we put to scale. At the same time we got in touch with the other adults of the centre during their activities by collaborating with the educators during meetings and meals.

3) Transformation of the living-space: study and elaboration of a space.

a) The gymnasium

At the end of the month of the following February, the group was asked by the Director to study the transformation of an out-house into a small gymnasium. The place was measured and each child made a project, trying to transform the vats into showers etc. The children looked for the minimal dimensions allowing them to have a shower in a restricted space, the height necessary to play volley-ball and hand-ball. Here appears the notion of dimensions measured in a built space and their relations with the human pace, the height of the body, the width between open arms and open fingers. The children were told to imagine all the transformations they wished to see in Toignan.

b) The models

When the study of the gymnasium was over and the existing Toignan analyzed, an ideal Toignan was envisaged. The common room was studied on plans (coupes) and facades. Models were made individually or in groups according to the desires of everyone. We made the children use already existing objects, empty yoghurt containers, all sorts of boxes, and we made them imagine new dimensions and a new scale for these containers. For example, they were transformed into window and door frames, the cream-cheese wrappings into roof-elements. We must note that the creation of these models was spontaneous and imagination played a leading role at that stage. A few children worked in groups of two or three or on their own, often outside Toignan, at home, far from us. If at the beginning "the building activity" could only work under our control, at this stage it was not necessary any longer. Lacking any educational or pedagogical experience, we could only allow as much freedom as possible, reuse energy and follow it rather than try to canalize and control it.

It is worth noting the differences between the works. Cyril made a model
as large as a book with two plastic boxes and a third one translucent and of half spherical shape (a stocking wrapping). All the elements were connected with plasticine. On the other hand Luc’c and Yve’s model measured a meter by a meter and a half in section and a meter in height and included three separated buildings, very different in shape (a workshop, a library and the common room itself) the limits being carefully indicated.

c) Enquiries, analysis of the needs of the members of the institution

A list of questions was elaborated, duplicated, distributed in the centre and studied by the group. It was made in order to determine the wishes projected on an ideal project for a centre similar to Toignan. There were eight questions. A second list of questions was proposed about the internal organization in an ideal centre.

d) The materialization of institutional needs

With the answers to the two questionnaires, the whole group created a model of an ideal centre. Its dimensions were two meters and a half by one meter and a half. It included four distinct elements – Administration and medical care (infirmary and lifts), – The school building (three rooms), – The common rooms (three elements), – A swimming-pool and sports grounds. All the buildings were distinct, on piling, connected by footbridges, with a lot of glass and terraces.

A few remarks

We have been able to observe the three levels of therapeutic effects.

1st level

At the different stages the boys often evoked their conflicts and problems (parents, school, money, freedom with the girls...) with the architect. Later, we noticed that they could more easily discuss them with the educators and psychologists of the centre. It was as if the fact of discussing these questions with somebody outside the centre helped them to discuss them with the "specialists". It was significant that the children who felt abandoned chose that activity and let us note that the conclusions drawn at the end of the school-year put the accent on a positive personal evolution of the majority of these children.
The participating children met outside the centre to carry on with their activity. This is very rare. They went to the architect’s where they met new adults. They also observed a lot (buildings, spaces in town) that helped them in their discussions and questions asked to the adults. All this shows that their sociability increased and let us not forget the role played by the questionnaires.

The children told us that a segregation existed between the passages reserved to the children and those reserved to the adults (more functional). At that time, a few children obtained from their parents a room of their own at home. Discussions about urban problems took place with the parents and where followed by other topics (money, freedom to go out in the evening). Finally, let us note that the team of the centre reconsidered space in the pedagogical project and that in the last annual conclusions, for the first time, we find a few chapters concerning the relations between space-distribution and the pedagogy that they allow.

Second experimentation

The team of architects, psychologists and teachers that we constitute proposed an experiment in order to try to observe the effect that the appropriation of personal space has on emotionally disturbed children. It really was an experiment and we wanted to find a programme for our activity and observe the children’s own organization of space.

Persons: Children: emotionally-disturbed children who belong to the lower class. One of them is a psychotic, four boys and four girls aged from nine to eleven. Adults: every day about six persons were with the children and among them five persons of the staff (headmaster, two educators, one psychologist, one psychiatrist) and seven other persons (one psychologist, two architects, two technicians, one sculptor and one pedagogue-educator). Of these persons the headmaster, two educators, one psychologist and one architect remained during the whole experiment.

Every day the adults had to assume three functions: - animation (presence and help), - observation (with special cards), - technical jobs (camera, visual tape recorder)

Time: The experiment took place during the last holidays and lasted five
days. A day was divided into several phases:

- 9.30 to 11.00: imagination and dreams connected with houses, drawing, modelling, painting etc.
- 11.30 to 12.30: huts
- 12.30 to 14.00: lunch
- 14.00 to 15.45: huts
- 15.45 to 16.30: meeting
- 16.30: departure of the children
- 16.30 to 17.30: the adults analysed all the happenings of the day.

Every day was planned according to the same programme except the first morning reserved for the presentation: “we are going to study the building and settlement”.

Place. The children were not in their usual institution but came from a small town situated 30 kilometres from Toignas and travelled by coach. They could be in different places - inside: a room with little material (paint, plasticine, panolla, glue...), - outside: a place in the institution, with tools and a lot of material (the first day slabs, boards, plasterboard and pneumatics). Later, the same material with rafters and battens. - an extension place outside the institution. The children were allowed to go to the village with an adult, there was an certain amount of money for the group, - an interior place inside the little hut which was very important.

Control. When we could we taped the discussions on recorders. - the activities were filmed with TV-cameras. - we had cards for observation (one card pro child and phase). The method we used was based on a clinical approach, or in other words, we took into account the maximum observations and tried to discover the significant links between these different elements of observation.

The results. It is difficult to present here all the observations that were made during the experiment and to describe in detail all what happened during its progression. We will only report the elements able to consolidate our hypothesis. They also allow us to plan to use the activity in psychotherapy and in reaction to the environment.

Boys and girls, the differences between the realisations

1. All the children respected the spatial limitations of the experiment, but only the boys built several huts, left the initial place of experiment and used natural elements (trees).

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2. The boys "invented" the structure but the girls imposed the personalization of the huts (flowers, coloured paper, paint).
3. Direct observations tend to show that the adults helped the girls more than the boys. On the contrary, the study of the films show that the boys were more filmed.
4. The girls took more advantage of their situation as "neighbours", appreciation of the constructions, help, common meals...
5. Isolated children (those who had most difficulties in their relationships with the others), the implication of the hut appeared to be very much on an individual level. great interest in the building design, worries (mentioned fears of rain and destructive elements). The more invested huts were those of two homeless children, a boy who had lived in an orphanage and several other places, a girl who lived at her brother's after her mother's death. Her father was divorced. Let us note that if we use the word "hut", we should use the word "house" to express the relation existing between the children and their buildings. As Bachelard writes: "any really inhabited place is by essence a house". (1)

Appropriation of a place and self-expression

Each hut figured a personal place in which it was possible to meet others (adults and children). For each meal, invitations were delivered and they were real exceptions. When the people met, self-expression together with its conflicts and worries were prodigious.

Alain: He told us about his father, his doings and his admiration for him. He also gave us the name of his hut. It was the name of a chalet he visited with the centre and where he was happy.

Fabienne: She told us about the death of her mother and what it meant to her. Another time she mentioned the relationship with her grandmother which she described as a repressive woman. She also mentioned the rivalry with her niece who is of the same age and whom she lives with. Self-expression really changed in these moments of meeting with the persons present in the hut. Expressed confrontations sometimes occurred on conscious themes, but also on repressed subjects which came to the surface (reaction after her mother's death in the case of Fabienne).

Patrick: During one of these happenings (meal/reception) he narrated the story of a wedding during which people eat and sing, it is the feast of the couple. That was for him a way of expressing his lack of a parental couple and of all that is attached to it, "the pleasure of the food and of the relation".

One must insist on that form of appropriation of the space which transformed the hut and mainly the inside of the hut as a part of the body itself. This was expressed by Fabienne during a meal taken inside a hut: "one
feels comfortable here, my skin is itching, look, touch my arm ... we should stay here and sleep'. She really was enjoying looking at people, she was happy to be in her house. The way she expressed herself was striking. This allows us to write about the personification of the huts. The girls wanted flowers (tulips and pansies) but some of the boys chose cacti, thus expressing the wish to protect their huts against aggression, and their own aggressivity towards the others. The children used paint or varnish (demanded by a girl of obvious hysterical psychic structure), colours were used only once. This was a source of problems at the end of the experiment when the centre could not use the same rafter because each child recognized "his planks" and refused to let the others use them for something he had not invested himself.

The experiment and the team of the centre

We noticed that such an activity solicited the individual "unconscious" of the children and allowed them to project some of their conflicts. At the same time the institutional unconscious (that of the members of the team) could be apprehended. For example, when the group of children involved in the experiment was constituted, we wished to have children of both sexes and of different ages. We were asked if it was possible to include a "psychotic" child in the group and finally we were told: "you have three boys, four girls and one psychotic". If we consider the configuration of the buildings at the end of the experiment we find the same distribution (cf. annexe III); the three boys, the four girls and the psychotic. In any case, the persons external to the centre were those who were "invited" by the so-called psychotic boy. Since that experiment we must realize that the taking account of the institutional space (configuration, organization and decoration of the buildings) has been modified. Several projects have been proposed and the works are taking place.

Time

During the experiment the children realized time-limitations. Patrick said: "we are told to build huts but at the end of the week we'll have to go and we won't come back". This aspect of time-limitation did deeply mark that activity and contributed to give it its experimental aspect. From the third day onwards, the children who were getting more and more attached to their houses expressed their anxiety at the thought of leaving them at the end of the week. The adults could also feel that anxiety all the more because they could share it. This was expressed during the time devoted to the analysis. So, to prevent such a general anxiety and the desire of destruction expressed by the children who would rather have
be modern ideas have incorporated a psychiatric unit into the medical block with highly inadequate results.

The third group are those consisting of old hospitals which have been renovated and one or more buildings set aside for a psychiatric unit, often with considerable modification. When successfully carried out these can be adequate for the needs of the patients and have the advantage of being near to the home and also associated with a well-established general hospital.

The ideal situation is found in the fourth group where there is a purpose-built unit in a general hospital setting. This should be situated alongside the general hospital, linked with it preferably by covered corridors or under ground passages so that patients may use the facilities but have an area of their own which provides the specialist requirements of the psychiatric patient.

Needs of a psychiatric unit

These must be considered both from the point of view of patients and their visitors and also from that of the staff.

Location

It should be close to the population that it serves with transport to all areas. It should be able to participate in an acceptable charisma - a place of cure and care, comfort and kindness, one which welcomes rather than overwhelms.

Building

This should not be too imposing or forbidding but should retain some aspect of domesticity. This is difficult to achieve in a building which may be expected to house 300 or more individuals. It may well be that it is only the internal environment which can be dealt with on domestic lines. Some compromise has to be achieved between the need to keep most of its functions on ground or first-floor levels but not to cover so great an area that communication between various parts of the building is unreasonably lengthy. On the whole psychiatric patients are physically well and therefore need adequate space in which to carry out their day-to-day activities. This is necessary both within the building and outside. Some external recreational facilities are desirable although the extent of these will depend on the distance of the hospital unit from community facilities within the town.

A small patch of ground on which to kick a football and an area
destroyed the huts than have abandoned them for others a feast was de-
cided for the end of the week on the theme: "when a house is finished one
gives a house-warming". This allowed the children to remain interested
enough to achieve their buildings and forget their anxiety and the desires
of destruction that it provoked. The end of the experiment with it's fan-
tasmatic expression (in the games, stories and attitudes towards the
adults) was the most important on a collective level. The signal of de-
parture was given during the feast.

The problem of socialisation

1) The relationships established between the children changed during the
experiment. The analysis of meal-time shows it:
- 1st day: individual tables.
- 2nd day: individual tables for some children, collective tables for the
  others.
- 3rd and
- 4th day: meals inside the huts, friends and adults being invited.
- 5th day: meals inside the huts, meeting after the meal around Fa-
biesme's hut, with games and stories, it was the beginning
of the feast.

Analysis of the passing round of the dishes would lead to the same con-
clusions.

2) The "invitations" produced a set of social behaviour connected with
the "reception": the guests were offered (fictive) arm-chairs, they were
well looked after, the first to be served, they were offered all what they
asked for. The desire to please the guests was obvious, even if these
guests were not adults.

3) The sum of money given to the collectivity was not accorded any atten-
tion until the third day. As it was impossible for the whole group to go to
the village, a vote was proposed to elect a delegation (the election be-
ing a basic social event). The vote created occasional leaders of the
children. The delegation had at heart to bring back what was ordered.

4) The most marginal child (rejected and rejecting) could not build a hut
of his own. He was so marginal that the group tried to entice him by un-
consciously electing him as a delegate to go to the village. This was
apparently not enough since during the last meal taken inside the almost
finished hut, he could not bare sharing the meal with the real owner of
the hut in which he was supposed to eat. He locked himself up in it and

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ordered to be fed through the interstices between the planks as an animal in a cage.

A few remarks

All along the experiment the children put their personal activity in question, the building activity itself as well as the discussions. The most characteristic of this group of children is their taking into account the interior spaces. The interior of each hut seemed to condense all the functions (protection, intimacy, social gatherings...) of a house and it also seemed to be in direct relation to the owner’s corporeity. This reminds us of a quotation of Wallow: "For the young child there seems to be round his body a space-margin which is not already the exterior world but in which he could extravagante his sensibility by apprehending or refusing to tolerate others. If that margin is violated without his realizing it or accepting it, he reacts as if he was in pain. It is his security margin. This explains the above-mentioned pleasure felt by Fabiene. The children who were placed in an institution because of their affective problems, associated to their space the idea of interior, one could say, of womb. In fact there exists an obvious link between the inside of their hut and their mother’s womb and the importance accorded to meal-time. Hereunder, we have the following associations:

A quotation of Henri Bosco in Malherbe (Gallimard 1948) illustrated these elements which are associated. Evoking a house in a storm, he writes: "Even if the storm insults the shutters and the doors, shouts terrible menaces, howls in the chimney, the already human being in which I sheltered my body did not yield to the storm. The house tight-
ended round myself like a she-wolf and by moments I could feel its smell coming down maternally into my heart. That night, it was a real mother for me."

Nonetheless, the most disturbed children could not assume these maternal projections: Thierry, after having participated in the building of a hut with a friend of his, build his own hut against a tree. He hardly got into it and finally destroyed it to go back to his friend Patrick, an orphan. Alain, the so-called psychotic, could not build a house on his own but only with the help of adults. His hut was open on both sides and he never went inside by himself, and he did always evoke his father. All along the experiment, he tried to close the extremities (asking for help without ever managing to close them and without being able to bare it if somebody did it for him.

The importance of the taking into account the inside of the huts can be explained by the difficulties the children had to face and by the lack of time they had at their disposal. None of them delineated a territory round his hut, which has often been noticed with "normal" children. But we believe that if we had carried on with the experiment, feeling secure and identified by their construction, they would have envisaged these delineations.

This problem seems to have hovered over the experiment all the time. It provoked a general anxiety linked with coming separation: separation children/adults, children/huts, adults/experiment, adults/adults, people/place of experiment. Actually no participating adult wished to start a new experiment under so limited time-conditions. Building-time was very important for both children and adults. The latter admitted the limitations and progressively, the days got divided into building-time and meeting-time.

The adults' place in such an experiment is fundamental and this means that each of them must discover his own relation to space. The adults felt concerned by the way they reacted to their own problems. The desire to replace the child (builder) was a difficulty that not all of them could face. As for their attitudes towards the girls it is obvious that the cultural stereotypes prevailed (they were given more help "because girls need more help, they don't know how to handle a hammer, a saw etc..."). It is probably because they were with the adults most of the time that they hardly appear on the films, the operators obviously refusing to film the adults.
Conclusion

The three levels of therapeutical effect have been observed with both experimentations. Yet they seem more obvious with the first one which was longer. It is very important that the building activity with all the benefits that it can bring to the children and staff, requires a long time. As far as our professions are concerned, here are the main elements:

1) The gaps noticed in the organization of the buildings of French institutions for handicapped children are due to an incomplete, conventional and administrative programming of what has to be done. Thus the architect does not receive all the information necessary to realize these gaps. Neither can he criticize the program he is told to follow as he lacks scientific and administrative education. So it seems necessary for the architect to integrate into a team of psychologists and educators of different capacities. Thus he can approach the real needs and wishes of the future users of the future construction. He can also transform the environment of the concerned people according to the pedagogical and institutional aims, trying not to impair them by too rigid or too slack an organization. This will allow the planning of a built space for handicapped children.

2) Activity as well as the other traditional projective techniques "seems to have brought about fantastical remains of the different modes of relations with reality which constitute the structure of personality" (23). Activity is different because it allows the children different modes of expression, the relief of their mechanism of defense against projective trials because the relation with the set of building is more free and situated in more natural surroundings. This seems to correspond with the therapeutic model by Poncin (24): "What is essential is the human relationship and practical activities by which the ill person starts rediscovering "his self" through the fantastic stages that he can grasp."

3) Finally, the participation of normal or handicapped children favorizing taking into account the actual environment (the house, the school, the town), can instigate the emergence of a new type of adult citizen. But for the children belonging to that special branch of handicapped childhood, a particular reflection about the not immediately political dimension of the re-education should have to be realized.
The Architects actual involvement.
Annexe 2

1. Clever structure, self-supported. Mainly boys.

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
References

12. G. De Brigode: L'Architecture Scolaire. PUF.