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The Primacy of Perception*

BOB SLUTZKY. ... some random thoughts to my good friend Jullian: (a la mode Celine) ... my words nestling within the matrix of the three dots ... as does the free plan within the columnar grid! ... (a few hyperbolic hyperboles hopefully not missing the point) ... a difficult binary interplay of words and dots ... but then the free plan is never that simple! ... no beginning, no end ... when did we first meet? ... seven years ago? ... Cooper Union ... slides of Carpenter Center ... your voice high pitched and slightly faltering, periodically punctuated by a smoker's 'hack' ... (nervous in front of an audience ... language uncertainty?) ... many slides of parti-pris drawings ... Le Corbusier's? ... yours? ... almost impossible to tell! ... your delightful and inciteful, it somewhat iconoclastic anecdotes about the atelier ... Andreini's nose and the east (?) wing of Carpenter Center ... madcap decisions! loony events! you, Chef d'Atelier, five years after the Old Man's last swim ... (who is this Parisianized Chilean with small darting eyes and a thin pursed lip?) ... must get acquainted! ... evolutionary friendship ... no cataclysmic confrontation here! ... Hispanic intensity molded by French Culture ... Picasso ... Gris ... Miro... like a painter with a startling facility for drawing ... astounding! ... L-C would have had to include Chileans with the Czecks who arrived at this office in possession of that rare talent ... more slides ... enough! ... over! ... Hejduk's introduction ... and so our friendship ... my understanding ... in America now ... vast land hosting the reclamation of troubled European souls ... the Baden-Baden for sore eyes and tired minds...exile (self-imposed) ... Saturn devouring his children (Goya) ... the ghost of L-C devouring his! ... escape and survival ... brooding introversion tempered by a joie de vivre ... in America now ... teaching ... lecturing ... designing real and imaginary projects ... a man of the perimeter, yet, a man 'on the go'! ... fueled by too much tobacco and alcohol, but more importantly by people, places and events ... ideas ... disputation ... the fresh challenge ... seven years ago ... seventeen ... photograph to Corb standing at the rear of his atelier in front of his mural ... hands behind his back ... a slight but commanding tilt of the

head ... stern countenance ... the glaze of the school-master! ... pupils to the right ... reading from front to rear; again Andreini's nose ... you ... then two unidentifiables ... José ... your head is turned to the lens ... the others in obedient profile ... peculiar perspective inverted psychologically ... who's the boss? ... you? ... Corb? ... hard to tell ... Chef d'atelier ... mixed identities ... confused handwriting ... Cambridge ... Stockholm ... Rho-Milan ... Zurich ... Strassbourg ... Brasilia ... Venice ... yes Venice! ... death of hermetic architecture ... incremental structure spurred by the plan/section cell ... the "basical" unit ... structural elements the sola architectural means ... 'the vaults implacably remain; the nuances of revetment and displacement transform their meaning' (Frampton on the Week-end House at St. Cloud) ... earlier precedents ... Maisons "Monol" ... Reorganisation Agraire ... Barcelona ... then later ... "L'Usine-Verte" (a symphonic arrangement of cells to site par excellence!) ... Venice ... city plan seen as clasped hands (Ascoral symbol; the architect/engineer) ... miraculous flatness encrusted by its luminous plastic evolution ... stalagmites of ebbing history reflecting stalactites upon its alluvial canals ... reflectivity and light ... Bellini Carpaccio ... Canaletto and Guardi ... hospital at its rear-end ... precariously hovering above that sedimentary plane where water touches land ... tethered by pier-pilotis and gently laced by over-extended ramps ... extruded sections truncated ... corridors abruptly elided ... a staggering precision of whole integer arithmetic ... the victory of air over water ... ether over gelatin ... lucidity over ambiguity ... death over death ... perhaps ... death over life! ... the monk's cell to mull that one over! ... making monks out of patients ... patient monks with windowless rooms lit from above by heavenly soffits ... the Great Beyond ... Corb-Man (a la egyptian) ... stamped on his prototypical cot, stamped in his prototypical room-cell ... within a prototypical pavilion ... gyrating within a most idiosyncratic Venetian site ... paradigm/program/paradox! ... Purist memories ... fading Cubism ... winged butterfly snagged by the grid-net! ... back to checkers on the chessboard ... no more chess on the checkerboard ...

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Vassarey to Gris; "Checkmate"! ... (the victory of system over image ... away with 'complications'!!! ... Le Corbusier/Jeanneret ... atelier 35 rue de Sèvres ... 8/27/65 ... Cap Martin ... coffin in a gondola ... life after death ... Venezia ... Valencia! ... my friend Jullian ... chef d'atelier ... basical squares ... cells ... eggs ... ova-nuova ... ova/over ... omelettes now, no more ragouts! ... crack the cells ... endless combinations ... cuisine provincial ... spice to taste ... a diet of tectonic staples ... no dissimulation ... raw rhythms concretized ... no nonsense here! ... shift the grids (moire) ... repress the free-plan ... puncture the flat roof ... crystal growth ... the romance in the Constellation (India-bound) replaced by non-aerodynamic LEMs ... Washington embassy ... more eggs ... Lexington ... even more! ... but wait!!! ... what about the silent contemplation at Chartres? ... the smells and sights of North Africa? ... Kentucky fried chickens! ... gorgonzola and calvados ... muscadet at Biols ... surreality ... horses and blue grass/Chartres ... magical montages ... "everything within the rules that my motto! Nothing outside the rules! If not, then I no longer have any reason for existing." (L-C) ... one month before his end ... to my friend Jullian ... the primacy of perception ... a return to all the senses ... picking up the pieces ... collaging the fragments ... chrysalis ... colt ... slow, painful maturation ... respite before battle ... the coming of age! " ... only those who play are serious types ... the mountain climbers, the rugby players and the card players, and the gamblers, are all frauds, for they do not play ... " (L-C) ... to my friend Jullian, questing to redefine his rules ... who has now begun to play ...