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The following remarks were delivered at the celebration held on April 2, 2017 to mark the concurrent publication of Figures of Space: Subject, Body, Place and the 30th anniversary of Après-Coup Psychoanalytic Association.

It is my pleasure to welcome and thank you all for being here today for this very (very) happy double celebration. It is time to toast the publication of Paola Mieli's book, *Figures of Space: Subject, Body, Place* which -- with the kind of timing that knots fate and chance -- comes precisely at the moment of the 30th Anniversary of Après Coup Psychoanalytic Association, of which Paola is the founder and president.

Paola's remarkable book, which I had the good fortune to preview, is -- as she describes it -- "gathered aspects of a reflection covering a thirty year span on the way the subject inhabits space", inspired by her practice of psychoanalysis and her involvement with art. With extraordinary depth and breadth, including observations on prehistoric rock art, literature, Mannerist painting, and Philippe Petit's World Trade Center tightrope walk, *Figures of Space* (beautifully translated by Jacques Houis), is a sustained meditation on that strange "it" which only appears in the spaces: the ever-ephemeral subject, destined to erupt exclusively in the gaps. "How should we conceive of the territory where the subjective event is expressed?" Paola asks. With deft and elegant strokes, she truly "figures" the apertures out of which the subject emerges in its origins and its pulsations; not pinning it down like a specimen butterfly, but tracing its flutterings, its appearances and non-appearances, its departures and arrivals...

Approaching the subject by way of space, body, and place, Paola invites us to re-consider and discover anew the dimensional figures of speech and language through which we glimpse the subject, beginning with Freud's fundamental description of the unconscious as *ein Anderer Schauplatz*, "the Other scene". Far and away from reifying spatial relations, *Figures of Space* dis-places and re-situates the insistence of the problematic Cartesian subject/object, mind/matter separation as a question for psychoanalysis which is presented here in its most radical, subversive and innovative instance. The psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan, as Paola reminds us, unveils how a speaking being lives and experiences the world, undermining the shared delusion that the world can be studied 'as it is' and observed without mediation or limitations to knowledge. "We are *simultaneously* the products and the producers of our landscape," writes Paola, describing the subject's curious topology, "we carry it within us and unfold it outside of us. We are inside it." *Figures of Space* alerts us to the perils of continuing to veil this truth, of the consequences for the social bond (for civilization) of ignoring the "dit-mension" of the world as scene, and the place of *jouissance* in the life of the subject.

Most fortunately for us, the originality, clarity, and scope of this text will undoubtedly give it a crucial place as an invaluable elaboration of Freud and Lacan, one that is driven by the vital importance of psychoanalysis to figuring new possibilities for the subject and the collective from which he/she cannot be separated.

Thinking about the joyful co-incidence of Paola's book publication and Après-Coup's anniversary, it struck me that the ethical dimension of psychoanalysis as making space and place for the subject has been the unerring and enduring compass of our association. For 30 years, Après-Coup, with Paola's leadership, has been dedicated to the development and transmission of psychoanalysis in the "*esprit*" of Freud and Lacan and to the formation of analysts, one by one.

How to create and sustain an association that can uphold the subversive quality of Freud's discovery while maintaining the rigor necessary to support the desire of the analyst is a question that calls for ceaseless innovation and acceptance of risk. This is a question that has always animated the association alongside the importance of never attempting to answer it once and for all. In fact, we could specify *heterogeneity* as Après-Coup's unique trait, the desire for difference at the very heart of its structure, the pulse of its life, the contrapuntal rhythms of its existence. With international scholars and researchers from many fields, plus analysts from all over the world who come as interlocutors, faculty, and supervisors, Après-Coup honors Freud's ideal of the plurality of an analytic school. Why is this so important? For one thing, Après-Coup permits the subjective encounter with Otherness necessary to the formation of analysts, including the possible rendezvous with languages other than one's Mother tongue and the chance of finding oneself in an unfamiliar sonorous soundscape. Experiencing the practice of translation, the passages and obstacles to moving from one language to another (and back again) can be a gift. There one can discover the oscillation between possibility and limits, gains and losses that

characterize translation and language itself. With a ticket to this unexpected terrain, one may find the opportunity to be taught by what one hears while keeping understanding in suspension – that singular listening that distinguishes the analytic ear from all others.

Recently, after so many years as a member, I heard for the first time Paola tell the story of how she named the association. While her initial enthusiasm was for naming the association *Nachträglichkeit* she told us that she was surprised to discover so many people say to her, “Nach-what? Oh my god, really? Anything but that!” Hence, the name *Après-Coup*, an unfamiliar phrase to English-speakers that invites questioning and invokes the dimension of the Other in all its resonances. What marks us is that in any language -- except for the problematic “Strachey-an” *deferred action* – this names a concept that summons us to return to Freud’s radical discovery of psychical reality, a strange land estranged from “rational thought” where a “second” beat creates the “first”. It is this reversal of cause and effect that gives psychoanalysis its specificity and its power to subvert, reminding us as well that the function of analyst arises only as an effect of the formations of the unconscious.

To conclude, I would like to thank Paola for giving us this name which continues to orient our work. I would also like to express my appreciation for her tireless and passionate work of figuring a space – and now a book --devoted to the singularity of the subject and the specificity of psychoanalysis as points of departure for discovery, innovation, and the creation of the “new”. This is her signature. Cheers!

