

Attila Kotányi Papers

(Spanning Budapest 1924 - Düsseldorf 2004)

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Accession number: 2012.genm.35

1. Correspondence

Letters by Attila Kotányi

To Guy Debord. Carbon copy of typed letter, 11 October 1963, 2 pages 4to (third page missing). Concerning Debord's arguments in the discussion that led to Kotányi's exclusion from the SI.

Related: 1 page 4to, typed notes towards a letter to the SI

To Szabo. Postcard with mounted clipping, 21 August 1957.

Letters to Attila Kotányi

Hannes Böhringer. Autograph note, on verso of manuscript page of Kotányi, 1983.

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. Typed letter signed, 1 page 4to, letterhead of Institute of Design in Chicago, 11 November 1946. He is glad to hear that Kotányi and his friends are working on 'matters of culture for your own growth and for the benefit of your community.' He is very much interested in what Kotányi wrote him 'about the possible analysis of space', and he would be happy to receive an article on the subject for the Institute's review.

Roberto Ohrt. Autograph letter signed, 2 pages 4to, 28 September 1984. Concerning the book he is writing on the SI.

Raoul Vaneigem. Typed letter signed 1 page 4to, n.d. (2000?) Looking back on a stimulating friendship, when both Kotányi and Vaneigem ran the Brussels 'Bureau d'urbanisme unitaire'. Written on the occasion of an anniversary. 'L'effet météorique d'Attila sur ceux qui l'ont heureusement ressenti au passage produisait le seul choc qui vaille, celui de l'intérieur. Chacun se sentait renvoyé à son propre labyrinthe, tant il avait l'art de brouiller les pistes que la routine proposait sous la trompeuse apparence de la nouveauté.'

Letters in Hungarian, from different correspondents, 1950s-1980s; in all 13 pp. 4to.

2. Manuscripts

Note: manuscripts are written in German, Hungarian and French. After his arrival in Brussels in 1956 he will more easily turn to French, and when settling in Düsseldorf German will be the his main language, with shorter or longer passages in Hungarian

2.1. Notes in Grey folders (organized chronologically)

In all around 900 pages, format mostly quarto, autograph notes and drawings (portraits and self-portraits, abstract calligraphic drawings, sketches of architectural projects, form studies ...)

1947 'Megbeszélés műszaki-pedgogiai ...' ('A debate on technical-pedagogical matters'). Typescript, 6pp., 4to, 1947. Transcript of a debate concerning the teaching of architecture, with Kotányi as one of the participants.

1956 (24pp 4to)

1958 (13pp.4to) : among others thoughts (in English) about liberating uses of psychology, psychotherapy and its links to architecture - notes on Brussels World Fair of 1958, role of Unesco (a subject that occupied the situationists in the beginning)

1959 (45pp.4to): more on psychology, alternatives for religion, 'la grande révision'; on the 'irrational' elements in Marxism; alongside titles and authors of the revolutionary tradition Kotányi seems to entertain a continued interest in mystic and heretic authors, looking for a fusion of several currents of thought ('spiritual' and socially radical) into a basis for opposition to a society organized as a cybernetic system. In Hungarian: discusses behaviourism (a Kafka universe) and its opposite. Labels his own reasoning: 'philosophy of August', 'philosophy of October' etc. How can theory become practical? Already mentioning para-religious recuperation of the general uneasiness, criticizing Rexroth, the 'hipsters'. November 1959: about a conversation in Paris that functions as a catalyst. (More than probably refers to his first meeting with Debord.) Debord is no surrealist. Thoughts on criticizing Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, the functionalist myth. How cubism made the sign into a problem, and Dada produced signs without meaning. But images have to be images not only signs, the role of substitutes.

1960 (20pp.4to): on Jorn's interpretation of dialectics; on uses of situationist critique; meaning of de Sade for the urban planner; Nietzsche's warnings concerning 'socialism'; on the dangers of subtlety and of unnecessary complicated reasoning; 'la beauté c'est la promesse d'une fonction'; notes on danger and necessity of irrational factors. (3pp., 12mo) about 'defending oneself' - listing his activities, professional, private, the SI, how to separate them or not; on urbanisme unitaire, a reference to Belgian industrial development after 1945 and to the FGTB (Belgian worker's association; the Winter of 1960-61 saw a sometimes violent general strike in Belgium) - on art as 'déconditionnement', on developing another type of 'conditionnement' at 'our service': liberty; on reusing powerful emotions of the old revolutionary movement. In Hungarian: 'situationism' and the importance of 'atmosphere' in the modern world, 'a sense of place'; not restoring the original community but opposing

the occupation of the space that is important for us (the I.S.), urban planning as occupation of the territory. Infrastructure should have a collective function, as a constellation, producing expectations. What to do in a time when no new movement seems on the make? How to behave ourselves in these times? Planning our lives like in American novels? There is something like a logic of tiredness. One has to choose between the escape into religion and the critical attitude that includes the liberating memory. There is no such thing as a 'third way'; and if you choose a god, do choose a difficult one. March 1960: difference between urban planning in Eastern Europe and the West. Urban planning in the West is no real planning, having excluded the 'word', having eliminated the need for totality. 'Word' as an almost physical entity, not taken serious by sociology, economy ... who are based on the scientific fiction that the 'word' is a minimal reality (space) and nothing but a word. Situationist critique is unified critique considering land as 'bark of the brain', geography of a map. – But later on Kotányi realizes that his dislike of 'Asiatic or European introversion' doesn't endure. Wonders about uses of *écriture automatique*, but judges it too artificial. A better example seems to be a painting by Cézanne which comes into existence in an ecstatic way which he compares to the Zen master who hits the target with his arrow and is united with it all in the act of shooting.

(1961) (14pp. 12mo) headed with 'Guy Göteborg' (Mrs Kotányi has added 'Debord') – notes taken during the 5th conference of the SI held in Göteborg, Sweden, 28-30 August 1961. 'Nash: l'ignorance, la farce ou la mauvaise volonté.' As can be checked in *Internationale Situationniste* #7, Kotányi was critical of so-called situationist art that could be turned against the radical theory and practice of the SI. On avant-gardism, on the future when 'all of Europe will be like this room' ... A reference to Henri Lefebvre whom he has helped greatly by barring him entry into an organization (the IS?). The tone of several notes is rather aggressive, one feels the tension building up within the IS before it 'moved' away from a neo-artistic perspective: 'il faut qu'on prévoit la fin, la destruction et tirer de ça une certaine gloire ...' -- 'la richesse de l'acte et la proportion de l'explication ...' Some quotes preceded by 'Ku' (Kunzelmann), others by 'Guy' (Debord), for example summarizing the strategy of the SI at the time : 'la menace doit nous accompagner comme une musique de fond' and, echoing Rimbaud, 'le véritable déséquilibre comme devoir et commencement de tous les jeux' . Remarks on the 'student' mentality of some participants. On Cardinal de Retz (probably by Debord, who loved to refer to that great playful sower of unrest, how in his memoirs Retz reports 'échec sur échec, joyeusement détaché'. 'L'organisation de l'orgie urbanistique.' Listing themes (of discussion, for the review?) – generosity and potlatch, specific capacities, 'les liens et les moments'. Guy again, 'affronter un milieu hostile – je ne peux ni plus, ni moins que dire: qui est-ce qui reste avantgardiste ...' – 'les fous qui peuvent pas communiquer' – 'on pourrait pas jouer sur "les meilleurs"? (Nous sommes quand-même les meilleurs)' – 'Château de Silling' and 120 days of Sodom ; projects for pamphlets : 'politique : HLM (la responsabilité des architectes)' – 'le principe de droit ... destruction'

1962 (2pp.4to and 9 filing cards 8vo): on themes discussed within the SI; abolishing reigning information systems in order to liberate general consciousness from the 'raison d'état'; real spontaneousness as complete opposite of its fake version that comes with the official addiction (for example, television); on the rhythm of meetings and separations within the SI;

the role of time in art, and art dominated by its past; can some aspects of art be saved to create a general consciousness?

1963 (3pp. 4to and 10pp. 12mo) Typed text 'Introduction et Apostyle à la critique cacoteuse', May 25, 1963 – proposing a new form of 'art criticism', approving every artist and all art, in order to subvert the 'rules' of the accepted avant-garde. Draft of an announcement of 'grand spectacle antisituationniste', June 6, 1963 Notes: 'contre l'idéologie du hasard'; on the possible uses of psychoanalysis within the situationist context ('La psychanalyse apparaît dans le pôle positif de l'aliénation. '); notes on 'pour la révalorisation commerciale de l'art, antisituationniste, ou l'art tout simplement' – probably meant to expose the utter loss of meaning (or usefulness) of art in present society ; note on criminal behaviour of black people (going back to colonialism as maybe the worst organized crime in human history, extending to the confrontation of US black people with 20th Century repression and its language, language of culture based on repression). Press cutting of an Aztec eating the 'flesh of god', believing god 'touches' him. – According to Raspaud & Voyer Kotányi was excluded from the SI in October 1963.

1965 (2pp. 4to)

1966 (32pp. 8vo) reflections on architecture, urban planning (sketches); philosophical subjects, Heidegger (and his ideas on dwellings); on buildings that carriers of meaning like books until Gutenberg and his press came along; architecture as 'oeuvre totale' has become impossible in this age of information.

1967 (notebook 14pp. 8vo; 12pp. 12mo) Notebook dated, and titled 'Ingolstadt' – designs of urban diagrams linked to literature and art: Proust, Joyce, Poe, Kandinsky, Klee, Moholy – conflicting interests of functional solutions and emotional experiences (echoes of psychogeography)

1968 (circa 100pp. 4to; 20pp. 12mo) among other notes on philosophy, on gangsters, an extended, illustrated 'fable' of the wahlfish (elected fish, electing fish) with references to Cobra ('liebhaber der selbstwiderspruch und metafysische stalinismus'), to Maoism, to Dionysus, lots of puns ... interrupted by thoughts and drawings on space travel, Morgenstern's 'Fischgesang', back to the white whale, 'wal ist ikonografisch radarhaft, lettristisch verweilend ...', drawing of a 'walzeppelin venusberg made in usa' before the explosion'; portrait of himself (as if told by his wife) as a philosopher who has a job as architect on the side; March 26-27: on a discussion with the art dealer Schmela (gallery in Düsseldorf who exhibited Zero and other 'new' art), on 'commercializing' art, on the essentially narcissistic nature of art ...; July, notes on 'gangland', a central concept that keeps returning in his notes (see his article in *Internationale Situationniste* No.4, 1960 – 'gangland' being part of a city considered as a pathological element and the new techniques considered as therapy – referring to situationist methods such as *dérive* –); critical about the Smithsons and 'new brutalism'; September five drawings with text, titled 'blutverwanten' – comments in sort of art historical language 'tektonisches', 'späte pop', 'anscheinend jugendstil', 'neo inspiration us-antiinformell'

1969 (31pp. 4to) on Dada's unproductive attitude, no solution either from the con-men who propose a cybernetic future. Kotányi's reasoning (and readings) often turn around the 'chaotic', 'impossible' but necessary link between the individual's fate and history, all proposed 'solutions' for this problem – philosophical, psychoanalytic, aesthetic, political ... turn out to be too fragmentary.

1970 (80pp. 8vo) notes with drawings (architectural, self-portraits ...) on the role of emotions as generating more efficient 'structures' - from this period onwards, the notes (and the drawings too) probably have to be read in the context of Kotányi's teaching activities at the Düsseldorf School for Fine Arts, although it is difficult to picture him as a conventional teacher. There must have been a lot of provocation in his attitude, as he hoped to stimulate his students towards critical thinking.

1971 (circa 50pp. 8vo; some self-portrait drawings) Continuing into 1972, passages on the controversial role of Kotányi's colleague Joseph Beuys within the Akademie of Düsseldorf, where he taught since 1961 and was fired in 1972. Most reflections circle around 'communication' in its broadest meaning: on structuralism, on democracy not being a 'religionsersatz'; subculture and mass media; Shakespeare and Kurosawa; the building of cities has taken the place of socialism; 'humanized building' as opposing social theory and practice under growing computer control. It seems that Beuys' half-mythical/religious language, his 'social-artistic theory' influenced by anthroposophy trigger certain reasoning from Kotányi. Doubts on the link between language and 'action' (that Beuys so eagerly used); parallels between Beuys and Heidegger; compared to ideas on art of Klee, Kandinsky, Matisse. Beuys' theory turns out to be very 'minimal'; notes on Cage, role of coincidence; Cage-Beuys. One gets the impression that Beuys is no isolated case – there were more hippie/new age ideas circulating in Europe – and that he represents a sort of harmless alternative to the global radical critique that the situationists had been developing. For many youngsters in the cultural world this 'soft artistic' look constituted an alternative to the 'arrogant and superior' attitude of the situationists who condemned all ideas that lacked subversive efficiency.

1972 (20pp. 8vo; 15pp. 12mo)

1973 (6pp. 8vo) Foucault – Max Taut in Japan –

1974 (25pp. 8vo; 12pp. 4to) on contradictions of rational planning, freedom, cybernetics; on contradictions between scientific and religious attitudes to reality, what they promise, what they can achieve; more concretely: which solutions or methods of modernist architecture can still be of use for projects of new communal living; detailed notes on conditions of such projects, role of technology, of social psychology; the eventual emancipatory results. In teaching context, but also realistic projects.

1975 (30pp. 8vo; 40pp. 12mo – some tipped-on by Mrs Kotányi) regularly mentions Debord, as if to remind himself of the conditions of a global and radical social critique; echoes of discussions during meetings among architects (?) in Tangiers, related to a large scale project. Mentions Baader-Meinhof, notes on violence, on urban planning as large-scale therapy.

1976 (10pp. 8vo; 80pp. dinA6) on the still unsolved 'form and function' problem; technological and economical contexts; building 'houses' in philosophical, pragmatical and other senses; revising different positions – from Heidegger to Giedion; searching for meaning, in the arts, in 'new myths' ... architectural semantics, role of colour; complex versus simple (reduced) forms;

1977 (20pp. 4to; circa 90pp. dinA6) more on complexity, on all levels, social as well as in theory; can totality be combined with freedom ... Names that turn up more than once, from Horkheimer, Benjamin, Popper to Jencks and Tafuri or Ellul reflect the themes that were discussed during Kotányi's seminars (authors that of course were not only present in architecture teaching, but as well in the European art historical or philosophical university departments at the time.) On participation models, on frustrations generated by the seminars; discussion on ideas migrating from the USA – Paul Rudolph's mega structures, postmodernism, Venturi & Rauch; in order to create an 'inside' space the architect must go to the most intimate 'inside' of man – but how? with methods borrowed from the arts, philosophy, Eastern religions, etc.

1978 (circa 150pp. dinA6; 60pp. din A5) how Kotányi 'takes it personal' – for example the recurrent question on religion as an antidote for reductionism that he sees as essential to contemporary society;

1979 (circa 150pp. dinA6; 50pp. din A5) on Lasch, Baudrillard, but also on Zen – discipline, 'liberation'. One gets the impression that Kotányi's evolution towards a more esoteric position is linked to the ebb of the widespread revolt in Europe. Pragmatics seem to make place for a more 'absolute' position that often looks for arguments in a more remote past. Hence reflections on the character of utopia's, their 'real' meaning, from the gothic cathedrals until phantasmagoria.

1980 (circa 50pp. din A5; 20pp. din A6)

1981 (8pp. 4to)

2.1.1. Folder titled 'Bibliographie' with bibliographical notes

2.1.2. 'Sanierung des Lebens, Sanierung der Stadt'

20pp. din A4, typescript with autograph remarks, in German, dated 22.05.1979, and dedicated to Hannes Böhringer. Theses on city planning, summarizing sketches, remarks in notebooks and scattered notes. Considers using Hölderlin's statement 'der Mensch aber wohne poetisch' in a therapeutic perspective, Kotányi's nevertheless concludes that 'sanierung' of the damaged life is impossible, the same applies to housing and cities.

2.1.3. 'Szabo Lajos Kepiro Dialektikaja' ('The Image Writing Dialectics of Lajos Szabo')– circa 100pp. din A4, Xerox with autograph corrections and additions, in Hungarian, dated 10 October 1988. Part of the text is an imagined interview. Joined: autograph manuscript of text for a catalogue on Szabo, 5pp. din A5, in German, 1992?

2.2. Notebooks

In all around 3600 pages, format: mostly DIN A5 (21 x 15 cm), autograph notes and drawings (portraits, abstract calligraphic drawings, sketches of architectural projects ...)

1950s (before 1957), 80pp.; 1957, 50pp.; 1958-59, ca.160pp.; 1959-60, ca. 100pp.; 1964, ca. 40pp; 1964-65, ca. 30pp; 1965, ca. 100pp.; 1966, ca. 240pp.; 1967, ca. 280pp.; 1968, ca.1600pp.; 1969, ca. 500pp.; 1973-1979, ca.500pp.

(1958-59) end 1950s readings of Bachelard, Heidegger, existentialism, cybernetics discussion, information theory; architectural history and its 'unsolved' questions (Sullivan, Loos, Le Corbusier); therapeutic function of architecture; recurrent interest in mannerism which then underwent revision (Baltrusaitis, Hocke and others); surrealism, Picasso, Hantai, Lukacs, history of the worker's movement; Adorno, Sartre; literature Walter Muschg, Benn, Beckett, Kafka, Jünger; references to Hugo Van Kuyck, Belgian architect who mainly designed office buildings, unités d'habitation - on how the split between working and living locations will radically change our cities; draft of 'theory of a general racket'; list of book titles - Frankfurter Schule, Bense, Lupasco, Blanchot, Moles, 'Vision in Motion'

(1959-60) first mentions of Debord - 'l'interrogatoire situationniste - enquête sur la vie' - more notes on IS - mentions Buonarrotti, Babeuf - 'la dérive et le vocabulaire' - appointment with Jorn and Debord - notes on the tasks of the IS - on Jorn's theories - on dada - 'matériaux détournés' - long reasoning on urbanism and architecture, probably in the context of 'urbanisme unitaire', the IS discovering architecture and urban planning as a much more important battlefield than fine arts; on the role of an architect in social-democratic societies - on leninist revolution eliminating freedom - urban planning and architecture in present western societies are bureaucratic; radical social change as the *conditio sine qua non* of a humanized architecture and urban planning - sketches for cover of 'alternativ' (magazine project?) In Hungarian: thoughts on how individuals can retain their individuality within the I.S., how he can integrate in the group, at a first stage for one year. Details on how and what to write (on Cobra, Bauhaus, Surrealism). Practical matters, budget of the review, critique of enlarging the group. But he definitely feels part of a community now, even if it is difficult to combine this with his private life. On Kepes and American and European versions of visibility. Role of theatre, ceremony in daily life, against the terror of the *bibelot*. The programme of the I.S. could fill two or seven lives ...

(1964-1965) some undated notes from 1960-64 must have slipped in these notebooks, among them a note with the contents of the only issue of 'Der Deutsche Gedanke', April 1963, with contributions by Kotányi - after his exclusion from the I.S., Kotányi pursues his researches linking philosophy and architecture/urban planning, mixing generalizing statements with highly personal reflections : on lying - readings of Kierkegaard - 'emotionalism' - but still

taking up again the 'social question', often unexpectedly : 'Die erste Räte waren die Soldatenräte in der Englischen Revolution, von Cromwell, Thomas Morus theologisch fundiert.'

(1966-67) often mentions Böhme, Eckhart, Paracelsus – 'heretic' tradition (influenced by Vaneigem?) – switching to notes and drawings on architecture as an art form, a form of painting – and then back to urban planning, conflict between 'scientific' planning and 'artistic' architecture – sketches of skyscrapers, urban grids – linked to 'collective' decisions on building houses, entire cities, notes on what an individual can stand for, on the 'death' of the individual, on ideas on individuality in Eastern thought and religions – these notes are not just 'freewheeling', they seem often to be related to events in Kotányi's professional life, such as his participation in architectural contests (among others a project in Ingolstadt). Pop art as well as 'lsd-religion' catch his attention.

(1968) the sheer volume of notes for that famous year (notebooks totalling more than 1500 pages), testifies to Kotányi's emphatic attention for the social revolt that swept the world, a revolt deeply influenced by subversive thoughts he had helped to generate – one of the notebooks has on the cover a press-clipping about Lukacs' critique of Stalin in 1962 – global distribution of US model (economy, way of life etc.) as the realization of 'totality', in a perspective diametrically opposed to the critical tradition's totality – the total project of religion and similar structured 'explanations' – notes on art: happenings, documenta – on the film 'Goldfinger' as metaphor – notes on Ezra Pound – more or less fragmentary notes towards an architectural theory that takes into account the avant-garde art tradition as well as philosophy, psychology and literature, certainly a sequel to Kotányi's time in the I.S. (and their talented re-use of other authors) but probably also triggered by the widely read texts of Heidegger on 'dwelling', 'space', maybe echoes of Bachelard, his *Poetics of Space* (1958) – passages related to intimate relationships (with other women?) – on 'gags', pop and post-pop in art, the flood of new isms, thoughts on contemporary art and its eventual emancipatory effects clearly triggered by the daily events in an around the Düsseldorf Akademie – same question about 'swingin' London, hippies, lsd etc. – and what is the fate of artists-theorists such as Klee, Kandinsky, Dubuffet in this context? – 'Dutschke wurde heute tödlich verwundet.' – 'literary' texts full of wordplays on 'wal' (German for 'whale') – notes towards a 'critique de la vie quotidienne de l'artiste en jeune saint' – on links between rhythm and space, ending in a 'lautgedicht' – a 'poem for Parmenides' – 'Gegen die Koketterie in der Philosophie' on the need of something new after Hegel and Marx – on Piaget, Gadamer – 'sisyphilosophie' – again on cybernetics – the nature of religious experience – on alcohol – November 1968 in Paris, conversations with friends (?), one of them summarizing what happened over the past months: 'le pivot de la vie est devenu le thème de la vie, la vie même, à savoir autre chose que l'idéologie ou la puissance de l'inconsciente. La parole empoisonnée étant notre affaire et qu'il reste inconnu même à Paris à l'heure.' – reading Descartes' 'Traité des passions' – draft of a letter to Richard Dabrowski (former member of 'Socialisme ou barbarie' and psychiatrist) on the theme of righteousness – on the evolution of sacred sites to cities as symbols of hierarchical power, the chiefs inheriting from the priest's powers – how this evolution influences architecture, city planning or city growth; the forms of early religious buildings surviving, being reused etc. – symbolic and practical meanings of

geometry – often returns to Pound's *Canto's* – a definition of 'adornoisieren' – architecture and fine arts as metaphors – the late Benjamin – theories of language, its uses as a tool by the powers that be.

(1969) the object of philosophy – his own position, how his job relates to his 'real' life – science as an essentially quantitative operation - ästhetik oder informationsästhetik? – sprache-fetishismus – where and how do artists fit in – Warhol and 'industrial images' – Bazou Brock – the Marshall McLuhan myth evoking a world where one has to be 'in' or 'hip' ('dabei sein') not a world where one lives, acts, dies – regularly returns to relationship between philosophy, language and analysis of the role of criminal behaviour ('gangland') – 'Debord had already noted that the new police technology takes the lead.' - a solution may come from artistic practice, into developing an 'Entfesselungskunst' – on how authority is contested, in the art world since Baudelaire, Dali, Mathieu, Warhol, Spoerri (who at the time ran a restaurant in Düsseldorf as artistic performance), on another level: Dubuffet, Guy (Debord), Breton; and how post-war capitalism is 'more realistic' than its fascist or Stalinist 'enemies'. – How to 'describe' social reality, in more useful ways than novels, films? – Returns to Beuys and his re-use of certain artistic and non-artistic strategies, his shamanistic act – 'pop et structuralisme – c'est la tension insupportable de l'époque?' - 'pop' not only as a 'style' but as mass phenomenon, from business management to political parties – common points between Max Bense, McLuhan, Warhol – on Warhol's Marylins and younger artists who look like 'Beuys Schüler' (notes on an exhibition).

(1973) notes on Marx and Marcuse, triggered by Arnason's book; on parallels between ideology and religion, propaganda and control tactics; notes after having seen violinist Isaac Stern playing.

(1975) on transfiguration, linking the image of Andreas Baader to ancient symbols of power, everybody's continuous battle against schizophrenia, where do art and myth meet, and back to the power of religion in giving man a key to the 'mystery' of reality – even when that 'solution' has as many defaults as do have philosophy and science. Conflicts between philosophy and myths and religion : 'es ist eine neue ungläubigkeit möglich.' ... on the economic 'crisis' of the mid-1970s; notes triggered by his trip to Tangiers for a city planning project; our faculty of judgment and its eventual reductive consequences, the relative value of judgments, the role of dialectics; differences between West and East . 'Es sollen neue Techniken und Machtzentren der 'dépassement' geben ...' But absolute freedom leads to a state controlled by gangsters just like madness overtakes an individual who thinks he is absolutely free; Don Juan as a symbol, life as war, based on strategy; limits to expectations – individually, for society as a whole; role of psychoanalysis (Lacan); freedom in 'moral' and in 'factual' reality.

(1976-1979) 26 January 1976: retrospective view of his years in avant-garde circles and thoughts on what he considers being the contradictory effects of radical critique. In the great theatre of art Dubuffet takes on the part of Don Juan; 'avant-gardism' and tradition, the soviet-inspired ambition to be 'revolutionary and progressive' at all cost becomes traditionalist; his 'difficult' relationships with Debord, Sartre ... because of his old-fashioned upbringing, full of respect for authorities. For the present (1976) progressive-anarchist

positions become childish, and the ideology of progress eliminates all traces of liberalism. 'Est-ce que ce sera leur tort à eux, les Jorns et les Jean Dubuffets et Debords et les autres jacobins si le progrès parasitaire devienne galopant ?' Or will societies become 'schizophrenic' like France, minority of progressive intellectuals and a politically conservative majority? Suddenly on the city: 'Pour le paysan de Paris: la ville c'est l'extase.' On 'drunkenness' as a value since antiquity, its function as brain storming, drunkenness in poetry – Rimbaud, Verlaine, Baudelaire ... Pragmatics, usefulness of cybernetics for solving philosophical and moral problems (at a time when cybernetics was fashionable with architects and urban planners); on Heidegger's 'black box philosophie'; Sollers and Bataille, and the radical literature that excludes reality (Mallarmé?), lost in language. Notes on the theatrical nature of art, from Cage and Warhol to happenings; notes on the Bauhaus, its practice and its ambitions. Cities as cities of doubt, of despair ... with a sketch of a boat sinking in a cube of water. (June 1976) Notes on Heidegger; on different views of 'heimat' – philosophers, poets, psychoanalysis, 'heimat' and 'unheimlich', the city as understandable mirror of its inhabitants; the ethnological approach being broader, more profound than the usual sociological view of city life, of the city as a 'cosmos'. ((September 1976) Related to a seminar, notes towards a theory of architecture, based on a theory of the world, of the environment, and on practice and theory of architects as well as artists and philosophers (from Taut to Klee, Heidegger, Bachelard); how we experience the city, necessity of a new theory of space. In this context: what is a theoretically useful interpretation? (1978) probably for another seminar: computerization and its influence on philosophy, 'meditation-machines', philosophers and avant-garde art as forerunners of artificial intelligence? Rise and fall of human beings as subjects. (1979) hallucination and the house, the city ... 'Raum und Stimmung-Halluzination als Basis der Postmoderne.' ... How much does architecture contribute to the reign of illusion? Parallels to the scenery of theatre, of film? Is illusion more important than function to the development of housing? (Kotányi notes that he should change his life, starting with small things such as watching less TV or not at all, making small drawings, taking time to look back on what he has done as an architect, as an artist, as a revolutionary ...) Mentions a contact with the Belgian architect Lucien Kroll who was also involved in 'communal living' projects. Kotányi keeps returning to the critique of architecture and urban planning as ideologies, a critique which the situationists developed in the context of 'urbanisme unitaire', a critique that was not aimed at 'aesthetics' or 'function' but wanted to denounce the fundamental falsehood of a way of life. Kotányi remarks: 'Die Umwelt, so wie es geworden ist, ist ein Teil der Nevrose der Menschen' but still hopes that architecture can create the conditions for healing this neurosis. To revolutionize the society of spectacle, does it suffice to change the spectator? And Freud's famous quote as to money not producing happiness since it never was an infantile wish.

2.3. Filing Cards

In all around 2400 filing cards, format din A6, dated 1981 to 1990. Autograph notes and drawings

Kotányi switched from notebooks to filing cards in 1981, mixing manuscript notes with drawings, sketches ... The themes often refer to the seminars and workshops he is

conducting in the late 1970s and 1980s at the Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts. The titles of his seminars of architectural theory in the academy's programme booklets show his continuing interest for the impact of architecture and city planning on the inhabitants, their eventual emancipating or 'therapeutic' function: 'I like complexity' - 'Die Ueberdachung ist die Milchstrasse (Traumzeit, Territorialarchitektur und Typologie beim Hoppi Yaqui Indianern und Australiern)' - 'mit deinem Eigensehen siehst du nur auf den Wollen' (Ziellose Wahrnehmung II)'. His approach is still influenced by his situationist past, with many traces of psychogeography and 'urbanisme unitaire' as radical critique. Kotányi is of his time, but doesn't fall into the traps of fashionable 'theoretical' discourses that made real dialogue and discussion difficult if not impossible from the 1970s on, also in European architecture circles. Kotányi was teaching at a time when these discourses were to meet with their practice, resulting in the postmodern formalist attitude, with critics announcing the 'death of the great stories', the futility of utopian thought, and finally the end of history itself.

(1981) research into tendencies of destruction, self-destruction, disappearance of greater parts of the population; on making the world turn, and stopping it; taking up again 'spiritualist' traditions, such as Eastern religions, but not concluding as to their usefulness. - 'Warum gibt's kein Antwort auf so grosse Fragen (Existenz Fragen) wie Sinn, Leben, Tod, Stadt, Gemeinschaft? Weil nicht nur die Frage sondern auch die Fragende (bzw. die Antwortende) falsch ist.' When reflecting on his role as teacher, confronting his life and thinking with younger people, a sense of isolation overtakes him. Due to his having been a member of a community such as the SI? Does this experience explain Kotányi's search towards a state beyond individual existence, as promised in religious meditation? 'La Société du spectacle': the discovery and critique of the construction of a system of illusions by the state and its owners. Sartre has a better knowledge of illusions than Baudrillard. The state-directed machine that produces illusions as subject of reflection - Malraux. What point does Castaneda make? Compared to Freud, Groddeck?

(1982) on the role of patience, in personal life, in history; on reading Marguerite Duras' *Le camion*; visions of the city, from Colin Rowe to Venturi, and Kotányi himself; participation models in urban planning; nostalgia in architectural and urban planning reveals lack of direction; reflections on eastern religions, but also on films of Fassbinder, and his being part of a group including Debord, Vaneigem, and their reactions to a fundamentally unfree society; critical of Venturi and Haus-Rucker-Co - 'es gibt nicht ein einzige stadt-objekt woran die entfr(emption) der stadtebewohner, sein ekel (hass) sich nicht entzünden würde'.

(1983) recurrent reflections on the use and abuse of alcohol (not clear if the subject is Kotányi himself or somebody else, or both - in 1985 notes on alcohol nirwana, paradise); art is by definition part of social reality, tension between public and private domains; the part intellectuals can play; patience as an element in strategic behaviour; on ecology-driven critique of the environment (city); his goal in life 'saving his skin'; Kotányi sees links between neo-religion and authentic city building, 'entheiligtes boden der städtebau = gangland'; (15 May 1983) on real autonomy, 'Ist AK (=Kotányi) unfähig an so etwas nur zu denken? Braucht unbedingt ein Vater-Garant? (...) Aber eine richtige, komplette Revolte à la Guy Debord und andere Franzosen ...?'; on Gesamtkunstwerk, and its paradoxical nature

(liberating and authoritarian); Kotányi is among the many intellectuals who in the 1980s were reflecting on loss of community, the 'crushed' individual, its effects in behaviour and architecture as well (the fashionable 'cocooning'); unsolved questions about identity which haunt European intellectuals since Sartre, Heidegger, also Cioran ...; linked to problems of perception, forms that could lead to/be useful for 'human' building; comments on the then much publicized IBA projects in Berlin; besides 'gangland' (the concept Kotányi developed during his situationist years) Kotányi also frequently uses 'Nineve-Dialektik' (megalomania ending in catastrophe).

(1984) typescript of a speech introducing the concert of Kevin Volans (a South African musician living in Europe at the time), occasion for Kotányi to discuss architecture in its 'soulful' and dehumanized variants; reflections on perception and the role of art in forming perception (in the context of his teaching); mentions Debord from time to time, as a 'true phenomenologist', as a thinker who negated eventual emancipation through authentic religious experience; a reference to Beuys could point to common interests, and a shared belief in emancipating powers of (para)religious attitude.

(1985) 'dream-house' as an important stage of the design process; for his seminar: on 'abstraction' - approached from different points of view: philosophy, psychology, perception, art - on 'medicine for architects'; rereading Bataille on religious experience, also Bloch. A sort of maxim summarizing much of AK's ambitions and frustrations; maybe alluding to the great ambition of the situationists, the realization of poetry, of all that was promised by modern art: "Immer wenn ihr das Wort "Dichtung" hört, sagt: Da redet jemand über mich. Und wenn Ihr das Wort „Planung“ hört, fragt: „So? Planung? Hmm." Theses on abstraction and 'indifferent' perception'. Reading Achille Bonito Oliva, contemporary art as labyrinthine; chaos and construction of 'catastrophes' as central to art; but art also mainly is a 'language'; asks himself more than once if the Tangiers experience (1975) was crucial, and to what extent.

(1986) on utopian thought, its relationship to religion (similarity, difference) - refers to Colin Rowe, Libeskind, Eisenmann; 'Notgemeinschaft' characterizing society as people meeting each other in an 'open' way, realizing they are part of a community of addicts; asks himself if his 'greatness' lies in fact in his failures.

(1987) related to one of his seminars: the essence of a place, a home, a landscape, what being at home really means (Heidegger never seems to leave the background): 'Erwerb und Verlust der spontane aber ortsgebundene Verwurzelung in der Offenheit. Wahrnehmungslehre. Vertrieben sein aus Kindheit und Kunst.'

(1988) comments triggered by films (Blade Runner) or TV serials (Miami Vice); doubts on developing a critical theory; in a passage on the 'esprit' of the French since Pascal, mentions Debord among 'les moralistes'; on the upcoming 'new age' movement/fashion.

(1989) re reading German idealist philosophers; discussing Habermas, Lyotard, Baudrillard; and again Heidegger; returning to Hungary (Sopron) he realizes what Düsseldorf means or

doesn't mean to him; November 1989: reflections on the 'collapse' of the DDR and the other Stalinist powers in Eastern Europe;

(1990) on the meanings of society, community, masses, majority; the state as organized lack of solidarity. Are 'the American way of life' and its variants the inevitable conclusion of revolutionary tendencies after 1789 including all totalitarian variants? Is there a way out through 'unhistorical' thought and practice? Related to the fall of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the 'new' coalitions who take over, on the 'badness of the world'; on Heine's 'Deutschland ein Wintermärchen', on Dada – Heartfield and Grosz, art as a weapon, picturing the city as a mix of army barracks, brothels, factories, chaos. Looking back on how he has tried to realize a real 'break', through drugs, meditation ... Longer text starting with the introduction of the set theory in mathematics teaching after the second World War (as well in USSR as in USA), why this was done, to which social effects – illustrating the real links between theory and practice (parenthesis on the Oberdada Johannes Baader) and how this constitutes a preview of social structures of the near future. In countries with a large 'poetical and speculative' stock (Russia, Hungary ...) there will be more opportunities, unless repression of avant-garde artists and scientists takes place as in Russia not long after the October revolution. History can only be read and understood through 'readable' images (here Kotányi quotes Huizinga) – and set theory is one of those. Kotányi seems to have projected a book on Karl Korsch.

3. Drawings

3.1. Sketches for architectural and urban projects, some annotated, some triggered by projects of Le Corbusier, Sant'Elia ...and form studies. The earliest drawings date from 1956 after his arrival in Belgium, majority probably from the Düsseldorf years, after 1962. Drawings related to 'real' projects are mixed with images of utopian projects. *** In all ca. 150 sheets, mostly 4to, and 3 sketchbooks 8vo, with 70 sheets, ink and pencil on paper (and tracing paper)

3.2. 'Artistic' drawings – stylized or 'impressionist' portraits and self-portraits, landscapes, abstract 'automatic' drawings (reminiscent of Christian Dotremont's *logogrammes*); pencil, pen and ink, watercolour on paper, collages; drawings signed and dated from 1956 to 1968, and some undated. *** In all: 110 sheets mostly 4to and 30 sheets of larger format (circa 35 x 25 cm to 60 x 50 cm) Note: arriving in Belgium, Kotányi was involved with other Hungarian artists who had fled their country. His work was included in a group exhibition of contemporary Hungarian painters in the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, January 1957.

3.3 Kotányi/Herbosch – drawings and blueprints for urban project, 1957 or later when Kotányi had taken up urban planning studies in Brussels, or when he was working at the Herbosch architectural office in Brussels

3. 4. Blueprints of a project designed by Kotányi of artists' studios and apartments (1965)

4. Photographs

Circa 35 b/w photographs of architectural models; of a 'dripping' painting

5. Miscellaneous

5.1 folder with biographical information; documents related to his teaching at the Düsseldorf Academy

5.2. Texts by other authors

Roneotyped texts (1940s? related to university courses?) 'Scientia sacra' - 'the spiritual tradition of mankind', on cult and culture, anthropology of antiquity (160pp.) - On Nietzsche and Eckhardt (circa 20pp.)

Paul Wiener. Une manifestation du malaise dans la civilisation: le salopart. 11pp., 4to, n.d. (early 1960s) Violent critique of pop art and nouveau réalisme, with Daniel Spoerri (misspelled 'Spörrli') as example. The author considers these contemporary tendencies as adequate expressions of humans who are reduced to 'dust', incapable of sublimation. - Paul Wiener was a psychiatrist, friend of Kotányi and of Richard Dabrowski, member of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, psychiatrist and author of a book on Groddeck

5.3. Printed material

Anschlag. I, Nos. 1 and 2 (August-November 1964). Sequel to 'unverbindliche richtlinien', contributions by Kunzelmann (former member of SI) and others. Annotated by Kotányi.

Books from Kotányi's library annotated by him.