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Radman, Andrej; Kousoulas, Stavros

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What Does This Have to Do with Architecture? by Andrej Radman and Stavros Kousoulas

1 Introduction

It was Gregory Bateson who coined the term *metalogue*. Enacting an imaginary conversation between father and daughter, Bateson argued that the structure and form of a conversation are critical to the problem that is being addressed. This is precisely why a metalogue is *meta*: it expresses a shared problem as a point of convergence. As such, a metalogue is by default transdisciplinary or impure, in the sense that it requires the production of methodological, theoretical, and conceptual innovations, novel trajectories that emerge so as to address a problematic field that binds disciplines together. What is the problem that architecture, perception, action and an *epiphylogenetic* understanding of the world share? We will claim that it is the world itself that needs to respond to this, in all its complexity, all its filthy heterogeneous entanglements, all the aberrant nuptials that in their differential can produce *information* or, as Bateson would have it, a difference that makes a difference. The information that produces architecture as a world-making technicity, and the information that architecture produces as an actual world-making consequence, will be brought together in the form of a metalogue between the architect and the world, attempting to outline an *autonormative* understanding of the architectural asignifying mediality, no longer depending on anything transcendent to it, but rather being reconceptualised as the driving motor of a purposiveness without purpose, a consequence-organised dynamic that is its own consequence.[1] The strong conviction – that the conditions of sensations are, at the same time, conditions for the production of the *new* – calls for an aesthetic rather than merely epistemological approach to design. But this is easier said than done considering the traditional tendency to regard the singular – or the purely present – as fulfilled only in the thought of some representable whole. Claire Colebrook thus identifies an 'architectonic' impulse in metaphysics, "regarding as properly present only that which can be re-thought, brought to consciousness and rendered universal and transparent to thought in general."[2] Conversely, a particular metaphysical impulse in architecture makes it highly dependent on representation and as such prone to *misplacing concreteness.* The metalogue sets the convivial stage for the world to push back. The architect is yet to conceive that the opposite of the concrete is the discrete, not the abstract.

2 Metalogue

The Architect: I will not ask how it is possible to converse with the World. Perhaps this is a question that will come later, if at all. Now there is something more urgent: why do I even need to speak with you, why do I need to speak with the World? [3]

The World: Dear Architect, thank you for your question. I have adopted the good habit of responding by thanking the interlocutor first, simply to 'buy' some extra time. Inserting an interval between question and answer has become my main strategy against the bad habit of short-circuiting as the archenemy of thinking.[4] By short-circuiting I mean all the instances of excluding the middle, not only between questions and answers, but also between inputs and outputs, stimuli and responses, perceptions and actions and, most notably, between subjects and objects. What if you are not speaking at all, but get to be spoken instead?[5] What if you and I are not substantial, but only ever … derivative?

The Architect: I don't understand. You mean to say that it is all just an illusion? Derivative of what?

The World: We will return to the question of illusion; you will be quite surprised to find out that, yes, everything is an illusion and at the same time nothing is. Removing the short circuit between action and perception will prove instrumental here. First, however, let me continue with my good habit, gaining time while adding complexity to the all-too-easy binaries and oppositions. You wonder whether we are

derivative and if so, derivative of what. In other words, you pose a question on antecedence: what came first.[6] However, any discussion on antecedence is first and foremost a discussion on causality: what is the cause that can explain away all other causes? Not surprisingly, many have tried to go down that path. In the attempt, most have fallen victim of a crucial misunderstanding: trying to find an answer that accepts past, present and future as valid categories, and to make things even worse, as categories placed in a linear, chronological order: the past, the present, the future. However, if we examine the issue from the perspective of experience and its production (the only perspective that I am willing to acknowledge), then the question is no longer one of chronological time; it is a question of moving from the present to the actual. The crucial difference between the present and the actual is that between being and becoming. The present is always what we are, and, in this sense, it is always what we are already ceasing to be.[7] On the other hand, the actual does not chunk time into the past, present and future, but deals with a process of becoming. To speak of the actuality of becoming we need to refer to the potentials of the virtual, or, in other words, of the pre-individual.

The Architect: You need to help me here. Let me see if I get this right: to speak of any(thing) individual we must first consider the pre-individual? If so, where, when and how is this pre-individual?

The World: Exactly. We must not (continue to) put the cart of individual before the horse of individuation. Under radical empiricism (again, the only viable perspective), the formation and form, the emerging and the emerged, pertain to different modes even if they both belong to the same reality. Thus, the 'form of content' and the 'form of expression' cannot have a common form.[8] There is no meta-form to bridge the gap. There cannot be one, as there is no such thing as molecular semantics any more than there is molar functionalism. Expressionism or actualising the virtual is therefore inherently asymmetrical.[9] Consequently, the logic of essence must be dismantled in favour of the logic of event, which in turn requires substance to be replaced by the non-totalisable multiplicity, and possibility by the non-totalisable virtuality. Put succinctly, *meaning is context-bound, but context is boundless*.[10]

The Architect: If I understand correctly, by 'playing with the virtual' (which is boundless), the architect may tap into an as-yet-untapped potential, which in turn will produce (the context-bound) meaning or value?

The World: Let me remind you that 'meaning' is just another word for 'direction' or 'sense'. As a matter of fact, 'sense' in French literally means 'direction' in English.

The Architect: Hence the entanglement of 'sense and sensibility'?

The World: Uh-huh (smiling).

The Architect: I see. That is why calculability (or possibilisation) cannot but remain the essentialists' wet dream.

The World: Granted, insofar as it counts (pun intended!) on the very possibility of totalising. By contrast, direction, sense, meaning and value in general…strike that, nothing is ever 'in general'… are all tied to the pre-individual.[11] .] We are talking about the eventful virtual which is real without being actual and ideal without being abstract. This is not to be taken lightly, given that value (be it illusory or not) motivates action and fuels individuation. Crucially, no value is ever eternal or universal (as in morality), but always produced ethologically (as in ethics). In other words, values are not transcendent, but immanent or auto-normative.[12]

The Architect: So, the idea is to ditch aetiology – the cause that can explain away all other causes – in favour of (the quasi-causality of) ethology? An example from architecture would be most welcome.

The World: It is crucial to fully grasp what auto-normativity stands for. Doing so will bring forth another important element: the architectural act itself, as the moment when the pre-individual value meets the form that is just about to come into being. I will use the example of a good friend of mine to explain

auto-normativity. Think of a hiker in a forest.[13] Each step taken in the forest is its own consequence: it is self-constitutive. The act of walking itself does not include any intrinsic directionality or any inherent compass that will orient the hiker. In other words, the act of walking does not have a sense that is given in advance: walking produces its sense in the act itself.[14] Likewise, if the hiker loses his way, he cannot depend on any familiar or recognisable exterior norm since…

The Architect: … nothing is given in advance. So, how does the hiker find his way out of the woods?

The World: From an infinity of directions, the first step – as the act of *hiking-in-the-woods* – becomes the norm itself: every step that follows builds upon the relation of the previous step, one after the other, taking the hiker to the edge of the forest. It is the act that produces the norm. Every act, including the architectural one, continuously produces value – including its own – by resting more and more on itself. [15]

The Architect: If I understand this correctly, you are saying that there is nothing natural about architecture?

The World: Precisely. Don't get me wrong, I am grateful for architecture. But it needs to be clear that it could have always been otherwise; and our duty is to find out why architecture exists, how it could have been and how it still can be different. In other words, it is a matter of thinking architecture not in terms of 'if…then', but in terms of 'what…if'. Doing so will reveal that architectural norms and values are not only co-determinable; they are also contingent. There is literally no ground for them, except for the ground that an architectural act territorialises; and in this process of grounding what matters most is the manner, the *style* of grounding.

The Architect: You know, we architects have a peculiar relationship with style…

The World: Then perhaps I need to clarify. You may be surprised to learn the origins of the word style. Style comes directly from the Latin *stilus*. *Stilus* is any writing utensil, any small-sized tool used to either mark or shape, from the digital pens used nowadays to assist software navigation and design to the pointed needle of a turntable. Therefore, sharing a style means sharing the tools and not any supposed meta-form, ideological or other.

The Architect: Well, apologies for being blunt, but what does this have to do with architecture?

The World: Believe me, it has everything to do with architecture. Think of it in these terms: a style refers to a shared technicity. Before you protest my introducing yet another term, let me say that technicity stands for something very simple: how humans relate to and transform their environment through technology, and how these relations transform all of them in turn – humans, technology and environment.[16] Therefore, it is never an architect that has a style; it is a style, a technicity, that has an architect to express it.[17]

The Architect: It is still unclear. How is architecture different when we understand it as a technicity?

The World: Only recently have biologists considered the (feed-back/feed-forward) effect of the 'niche construction' on the inheritance system.[18] The theory of niche-construction proposes that an organism does not passively submit to the pressures of a pre-existing environment, but that it actively constructs its niche (genetically, epigenetically, behaviourally, and symbolically). Implications for the discipline of architecture are obvious.

The Architect: Go on…

The World: Architecture ought to reclaim its role within the Epigenetic Turn that embraces technicity as constitutive of anthropogenesis, and not merely the other way around.[19] It is high time to complement the passive principle of natural selection with the active principle of self-organisation and auto-normativity.[20] The principle of *exosomatisation* – the city as an exo-skeleton is a good example – is

evolution continued by other means.[21] This is beautifully illustrated in the opening scene of *2001: A Space Odyssey* by Stanley Kubrick, compressing 4.4 million years of tool evolution from the bone to the spaceship.[22]

The Architect: I love that movie! I watched it many times but it never occurred to me that it was in fact an ode to technicity. As is its soundtrack, I suppose. Anyhow, the prefix 'epi', I presume, means going beyond the genetic? From 'nature' to nurture?

The World: Yes. The epigenetic structure of inheritance and transmission is, as the very term suggests, external and non-biological.[23]

F. Guattari, 2009, 'Balance-Sheet for "Desiring-Machines"', *Chaosophy: Texts and Interviews 1972– 1977*, trans. David L. Sweet, Jarred Becker, and Taylor Adkins, ed. Sylvere Lotringer, Los Angeles, Autonomedia/Semiotext(e), 90–115 (110).] As such it transcends our particular existence. It extends beyond our biological finitude.

The Architect: Oh, you seem to be praising architecture for its transgenerational reach.

The World: More than you think. Ask not what is inside your head but rather what your head is inside of.[24] The long-lasting legacy of privileging *episteme* over *tekhne* needs to be rethought.[25] It is the 'what' (technicity) that invents the 'who' (the human) at the same time that it is invented by it.[26]

The Architect: I get it. I am supposed to recast architecture as the vehicle of epigenesis…

The World: Well… strictly speaking, architecture is in fact a 'sedimented' epi-genetic memory. If epigenetics is the concept of non-genetic heritability such as language acquisition, then epi-*phylo*-genesis means that the rhetoric of "We Build our Cities and in Return They Build Us" is to be taken literally.[27] Humans are born into regimes of cities and cities outlast every one of them. In other words, architecture fosters an even higher order of mnemonic detachability from the 'body proper', which makes it epi-*phylo*-genetic.[28]

The Architect: Detachability seems to be key?

The World: Yes, as in exosomatisation… bone-tool, spaceship, remember? The main difference between physical beings and the most complex organisms does not derive from an absence of memory, but from a lack of its detachment. As long as it is inherent to the rhythm of activity – 'the form in time' – memory does not constitute a *transspatial* 'reserve' unhinged from the present.[29] It is here that we encounter the recursive causality which designates the cause coming into being with the effect. We are talking about a neofinalist conditioning of the present by the future… wait for it… by what has not existed up to now.[30]

The Architect: I sense that we're back to the pre-individual. Or is it forward? Hahaha. Which is it?

The World: Well, to be precise, the notions of back and forth, as well as those of past and future, interior and exterior, do not apply in such clear-cut ways in the context of the pre-individual. Things are much more…, well, filthy.

The Architect: Need I say that you must elaborate further?

The World: You need not. What is important is to approach the productive capacities of the pre-individual without having a principle of production determined in advance, or an already produced product whose function is to explain its production retroactively.[31] This is why technicity is so important: it places focus on the reciprocal and reticular relationality between all the terms involved; make, and by making, make yourself.[32] In the very process of world/self-making, technicities are effectively an act of folding. Anticipating your next question: what is being folded? The French term for the fold is one you will find quite revealing: *le pli*. As such, an act of folding consists of three

synchronous lines: im*pli*cate, com*pli*cate, ex*pli*cate. You implicate when you fold inwards, when you enfold; you complicate when you fold together, when you complexify; you explicate when you fold outwards, when you express, when you unfold.[33] Does this help you guess what is being folded after all?

The Architect: I am going to go with my experience in model making: the inside of a surface folds with its outside?

The World: Precisely. Now, think of this surface as something that extends literally everywhere, in all directions. Or to make this even more straightforward, think of me as this surface: I, the world, as a membrane.[34] This would really please a Dutch lens grinder I once knew who addressed me in a similar manner.[35] Every torsion, every fold in my membrane is a moment of implication, complication and, eventually, explication. Every fold, therefore, is an individual, be it a living one, be it a flower that blossoms, or a building that you designed. As you can imagine, if every individual occurs from a process of folding, then what matters is which of the already existing individuals are brought together, how they are complicated and how intensely they eventually express their coming together. In other words, what matters is the manner, what we previously called style, of folding, of linking together.[36] To respond to your question then, you need to think of the individuals that are folding together as existing both in space *and* in time.

The Architect: You mean to say you have clarified the relation between the inside and the outside? Because I can assure you, you have not…

The World: Fair enough. I will attempt to put it differently then or, dare I say, fold it differently. When heterogeneous individuals are folded together through technicities, it is both their spatiality and their temporality that is being implicated, and it is also their spatiality and temporality that is being complicated and eventually explicated. In other words, to be more precise, one is not folding individuals per se; one is folding lines of individuation. Therefore, the act of folding the interior and the exterior is neither merely spatial nor merely temporal; it is both at once. In this sense, the fold is purely experiential, but as an experience that precedes, transcends and determines personal experience. At the level of the polarised membrane, the interior past and the exterior future face one another.[37] The interior can be understood temporally, as that which individuates in a slow, established and regulated rhythm. The exterior becomes the moment of the unexpected encounter, that which is by default collective and futural (since an encounter involves always more than one and is always about-to-come). As such, the interior is no longer separated spatially from an exterior, but rather a past that cannot exteriorise: a past that individuates in a rhythm so weak and slow in tempo that it is imperceptible. What matters is how we can expand the affectivity of the past, how we can become (on) the limit that would catalyse an encounter that can literally make the past burst open so that the potential of a differentiated future can emerge.

The Architect: I cannot but ask: how can the interiorised past meet the exteriorised future?

The World: In a nutshell: by proliferating information or, as another good friend of mine said, by capturing, redirecting and producing differences that can make a difference.[38]

The Architect: Hold on for a second. I am familiar with the term. I know of Information Theory, of cybernetics and the continuous discussion on data, algorithms and the digital. But you seem to be referring to a different understanding of information. Am I right?

The World: *Oui, mon ami*. Let me share an insight that may help. Ready?

The Architect: Ready as can be. (smiles in anticipation)

The World: Take the word.

The Architect: You mean 'information'?

The World: Yes. Put a hyphen in the middle.

The Architect: You mean 'in–formation'?

The World: Exactly!

The Architect: Oh, I can see what you are up to. You are turning a noun into a verb, no?

The World: As it should have been all along, a difference that *makes* a difference.

The Architect: That makes sense.

The World: Literally so... sense is never found. It needs to be made. In short, experience is not about copying an incoming stimulus.[39] Think about it in terms of steps in a trajectory by which brains grow, reorganise themselves and reach into their environment to change it to their own advantage.[40] The story of the hiker. Remember? A finite always consists of an infinity under a certain relation.

The Architect: Sure, to do with the concept of auto-normativity. Please go on.

The World: The hegemony of the signifier has an unfortunate side-effect – the tendency to reduce the meaning of art and architecture to information as a noun – thus forgetting that the theory of expression is not concerned with the communication of information but with the genesis of the definite.[41] The time has come to oppose the ideology of communication – in the contemporary guise of 'dataism' – with a philosophy of in-formation.[42]

The Architect: Hear, hear! Architecture can and must embody values of a different order than those rooted in fashion or marketing.

The World: Yes, you are obviously referring to the problem of echo chambers… where the like-minded keep reinforcing a shared narrative *ad nauseam.* I am certain that architecture can be cast in forms stripped of seductive gloss adorning the omnipresent mechanisms of cultural domination where the desire for the 'new' is reduced to docile and compulsive forms of consumerism.[43] Call it a strategic optimism, if you will.

The Architect: Let's make architecture great again!

The World: (facepalm) I see that it will take more than one conversation between us for a genuine change of heart and mind.

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Notes

1. A. Radman and D. Hauptmann, 2014 'Asignifying Semiotics as Proto-Theory of Singularity: Drawing is Not Writing and Architecture does Not Speak' in *Footprint* Vol. 8/1 No. 14, eds. D. Hauptmann and A. Radman, Delft: Architecture Theory Chair in partnership with Stichting Footprint and Techne Press, pp. 1–12. ↩

2. C. Colebrook, 2004 'The Sense of Space: On the Specificity of Affect in Deleuze and Guattari', *Postmodern Culture,* n. 15.1. ↩

3. The interlocutors appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, dead or alive, or other real-life entities, past or present, is purely coincidental. ↩

4. See Deleuze's (second) commentary on Bergson: The brain is nothing but … an interval, a gap between action and a reaction. The brain is certainly not a centre of images from which one could begin, but itself constitutes one special image among others. It constitutes a centre of indetermination'.G. Deleuze, 1986, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, pp. 62–63. ↩

5. According to Deleuze and Guattari, a new semiotic regime recasts the form of subjectivity, from the traditional paranoid hermeneutical system to a dynamic 'subject of enunciation': There is no longer a signifier-signified relation, but a subject of enunciation issuing from the point of subjectification and a subject of the statement in a determinable relation to the first subject … there is no subject, only collective assemblages of enunciation. Subjectification is simply one such assemblage and designates a formalization of expression or a regime of signs rather than a condition internal to language.G. Deleuze and F. Guattari,

2004, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, London and New York, Continuum, pp. 127, 130. ↵

6.   The concept of antecedence was developed by philosopher Ian Hamilton Grant in order to conceptualise a nature which is never exhausted in its appearances. Continuing a discussion with a long philosophical trajectory, Grant asks whether there is a relation of anteriority between substance and potency in the nature of matter. As such, Grant's concern is essentially Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR). With the risk of oversimplifying, the PSR claims that everything must have a reason or a cause. Antecedence makes material grounds non-recoverable by reason, while at the same moment it is required in order for there to be thought. Grant concludes by claiming that 'the causes of thinking are the same as those of that object antecedent to thinking which thinking thinks'. See: I. H. Grant, 2011, 'Does Nature Stay What-it-is?: Dynamics and the Antecendence Criterion', *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, eds. Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman, Melbourne, re.Press, pp. 66–83 (82). ↵

7.   As Deleuze and Guattari write:We must distinguish not only the share that belongs to the past and the one that belongs to the present, but, more profoundly, the share that belongs to the present and that belonging to the actual. It is not that the actual is the utopian prefiguration of a future that is still part of our history. Rather, it is the now of our becoming.G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, 1996, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, London and New York, Continuum, p. 112. ↵

8.   Deleuze and Guattari mobilise Hjelmslev's linguistics, rereading it in a highly original fashion, to develop a metaphysics of matter undergoing morphogenesis. The relationship between expression and content is not one of correspondence; such as we find in the relationship of the signifier and the signified, but of two heterogeneous yet reciprocally presupposing forms of organisation. *Expression differs in each instance*. See: Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 39–74. ↵

9.   Deleuze *qua* Spinoza opposes expression to the sign. The sign is always equivocal, that is, it signifies in several senses. In contrast, expression is uniquely and completely univocal: there is only one single sense of expression and that is the sense following which the relations combine. Deleuze considers Worringer to be the first theoretician of expressionism. See: Deleuze, 1986, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 51. For an excellent account of Deleuze's expressionism see: B. Massumi, 2002, 'Like a Thought', *A Shock to Thought: Expressionism After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi, London, Routledge, pp. xiii–xxxix. ↵

10. Paraphrasing Jonathan Culler. See: J. Culler, 2009, *Literary Theory*, New York, Sterling Publishing, p. 92. ↵

11. In the words of Simondon, cited in P. Virno, 2009, 'Angels and the General Intellect; Individuation in Duns Scotus and Gilbert Simondon', *Parrhesia* 7, pp. 58–67:In order to think individuation, it is necessary to consider being neither as substance, nor as matter, nor as form, but as tight, supersaturated system, above the level of unity, inconsistent solely in itself and not adequately thinkable by means of the excluded middle; the concrete and complete being – that is, the preindividual being – is a being that is more than a unity. Unity, characteristic of the individuated being, and identity, which authorises the use of the principle of the excluded middle, do not apply to preindividual being … *unity and identity apply only to one of the phases of the being, posterior to the operation of individuation*. [emphasis added ↵

12. The virtuality of value was developed most explicitly by Brian Massumi. See: B. Massumi, 2017, 'Virtual Ecology and the Question of Value', *General Ecology: The New Ecological Paradigm*, ed. Erick Hörl, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 345–73. ↵

13. It is Gilbert Simondon that develops the concept of auto-normativity using the example of a hiker lost in a forest. See: G. Simondon, 2014, *Sur la Technique: 1953-1983*, Paris, Presse Universitaires de France. For a thorough analysis of Simondon's approach see: D. Scott, 2017, 'How Do we Recognise Deleuze and Simondon are Spinozists', *Deleuze Studies*, vol. 11, n. 4, ed. A. Iliadis, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 555–79. ↵

14. As Scott underlines, for a hiker in the woods there are 'no norms, no set rule of direction, every step, in every direction, is equiprobable and equivalent at once'. Scott, 2017, 'How Do we Recognise Deleuze and Simondon are Spinozists', p. 571. ↵

15. This is what Simondon has in mind when he claims that: The norm is derived from the act … every act, anomic from its absolute origin, valorises itself in an autogenous fashion because it continues and rests, consequently, more and more on itself.Simondon, 2014, p. 103, cited in Scott, 2017, p. 571. ↵

16. Simondon develops the concept of technicity as fully relational, abductive, and dealing with a constant becoming. As he suggests, if one aims to avoid reductionism, then, one should study beyond the technical objects to the technicity of these objects as a mode of relation between human and world. The autonomy of each technical individual lies in its relational technicity, since 'technical objects result from an objectivation of technicity; they are produced by it, but technicity does not exhaust itself in the objects and is not entirely contained within them'. See: G. Simondon, 2017, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. Cécile Malaspina and John Rogove, Minneapolis, Univocal Publishing, p. 162. ↵

17. It is Deleuze who emphasizes on the impersonality of style. As philosopher Jean Jacques Lecercle summarises, for Deleuze:There is a subject of style, but this subject is the end-product of a process of subjectivation (thus, the subject is not the origin, but the effect of her style: the author does not have style, it is style that has an author, that is inscribed, and in a way embodied, in an author's name), and this subject, both individual (an 'inimitable' style) and collective (an assemblage is speaking) is in no way reducible to a person.J-J. Lecercle, 2002, *Deleuze and Language*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 223-24.. ↵

18. The 'epigenetic turn' calls for a re-examination of the status of Lamarckism. In contrast to Darwinism, Lamarckian inheritance is the idea that an organism can pass onto its offspring characteristics that it acquired during its lifetime. See: J. Odling-Smee, 2007, 'Niche Inheritance: A Possible Basis for Classifying Multiple Inheritance Systems in Evolution' *Biological Theory*, vol. 2, n. 3, pp. 276–289. ↵

19. 'Epigenesis' is the term used to describe the relatively mysterious process of how form emerges gradually but dynamically out of a formless or homogeneous environment or substrate. See: S. Kwinter, 1993, 'Soft Systems' *Culture Lab*, ed. Brian Boigon, New York, Princeton Architecture Press, 1993), pp. 207–228. ↵

20. Against the second law of thermodynamics: *negentropy* (negative- or counter-entropy). ↵

21. A. Radman and S. Kousoulas, eds., 2021, *Architectures of Life and Death: The Eco-Aesthetics of the Built Environment*, London, Rowman & Littlefield International. ↵

22. It is a difference in degree before it is a difference in kind. See: S. Kubrick, 1968, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Stanley Kubrick Productions/Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. ↵

23. As Guattari claims: Man and the tool *are already* components of a machine constituted by a full body acting as an engineering agency, and by men and tools that are engineered (*machinés*) insofar as they are distributed on this body'. [emphasis in the original ↵

24. Adopted from the title of an article by William M Mace. See: W. M. Mace, 1977, 'James J. Gibson's Strategy for Perceiving: Ask Not What's Inside Your Head, but What Your Head's Inside of', *Perceiving, Acting and Knowing: Toward an Ecological Psychology*, ed. Robert Shaw and John Bransford, Hillsdale, NJ, L. Erlbaum Associates, pp. 43–65. ↵

25. This is the main thesis of Stiegler's first volume of *Technics and Time*. See: B. Stiegler, 1998, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press. ↵

26. The reciprocal determination between the 'who' and 'what' is developed in the chapter 'Who? What? The Invention of the Human'. See: Stiegler, 1998, *Technics and Time*, pp. 134–179. ↵

27. A socialist-realist slogan also attributed to Churchill. Ontogeny: development (developmental and organismic scales). Phylogeny: descent and branching (reproductive and evolutionary scales). ↵

28. Biologist Conrad Waddington (1905–1975) is often credited with coining the term epigenetics in 1942 as the branch of biology which studies the causal interactions between genes and their products, which bring the phenotype into being. The extent to which we are pre-programmed versus environmentally shaped awaits universal consensus. The field of epigenetics has emerged to bridge the gap between nature and nurture. ↵

29. The concept of the *transspatial* was developed Raymond Ruyer. See: R. Ruyer, 2016, *Neofinalism*, trans. Alyosha Edlebi, Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press, p. 149. ↵

30. Simondon develops a theory of circular causality as it pertains to 'the associated milieu' in his *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*. See: Simondon, 2017, p. 60. Cf. B. Stiegler, 2021, *Technics and Time 4: Faculties and Functions of Noesis in the Post-Truth Age*, trans. Daniel Ross, www.academia.edu/58785373/Stiegler_Technics_and_Time_4_Faculties_and_Functions_of_Noesis_in_the_Post_Truth_Age ↵

31. It is the hylomorphic schema that implies a binary between matter and form, in which matter it is just a passive receptor of forms that are imposed to it from the outside. Throughout his work, Simondon develops a thorough and comprehensive account that opposes to hylomorphism. Moreover, he claims that any binary between matter and form is a binary that has its own historical origins in the very technicities of material production. As he writes:The hylomorphic schema corresponds to the knowledge of someone who remains outside the workshop and considers nothing but what enters and exits it; in order to know the true hylomorphic relation, it is not even enough to enter the workshop and work with the craftsman: we would have to penetrate into the mould itself in order to follow the operation of form-taking on the different scales of magnitude of physical reality.G. Simondon, 2020, *Individuation in Light of Notion of Forms and Information*, trans. T. Adkins, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 30.Contrary to this, Simondon will propose that:The individuated being is neither the whole being nor the first being; instead of grasping individuation on the basis of the individuated being, the individuated being must be grasped on the basis of individuation and individuation on the basis of pre-individual being, which is distributed according to several orders of magnitude.Simondon, 2020, p. 12. ↵

32. Raymond Ruyer attributes this phrase to philosopher Jules Lequier:There is something ungraspable about the Ideals; to grasp them is to automatically work according to them and therefore to incarnate them in one's particular line of existence and activity. The same holds for the agents. 'I' only grasp myself in my act, or because this act enriches the 'I', I only grasp myself as enriched 'self', with habits and talents I speak of as a foreign person. The 'I' of the 'I think' is ungraspable. As soon as the thinker speaks of it, he transforms himself into an object for a more distant 'thinker', and so forth. But this is no less true of all activities and all works. Lequier's paradox, 'make and, by making, make yourself', expresses this fact very accurately. To make oneself is to work before being.Ruyer, *Neofinalism*, 2016, p. 241. ↩

33. Gökhan Kodalak uses the *pli* in order to outline the affective aesthetics of art and architecture. See: G. Kodalak, 2018, 'Affective Aesthetics beneath Art and Architecture: Deleuze, Francis Bacon and Vogelkop Bowerbirds', *Deleuze and Guattari Studies,* vol. 12, n. 3, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 402–27. ↩

34. Simondon insisted on the importance of a membranic understanding of any world-making process. Anne Sauvanargues summarises Simondon's understanding of the membrane:Life does not depend on specific chemical constituents, but only on the differential disposition of matters which are not perceptible on the physico-chemical plane. Vital subjectivity is never anything more than a topological arrangement: a spatial enfolding translated by a chronogenesis. It does not emerge in the form of a sudden rupture, in the form of special structural or energetic conditions, but due to a simple torsion of materiality. It proceeds on the basis of an entirely spatial individuation, the apparition of a specific tissue equipped with the chemical property of functioning as a limit endowed by a selective permeability: a membrane.A. Sauvanargues, 2012, 'Crystals and Membranes: Individuation and Temporality', *Gilbert Simondon: Being and Technology*, trans. J. Roffe, eds. Arne de Boever, Alex Murray, Jon Roffe and Ashley Woodward, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 57–72 (66). ↩

35. No other than Spinoza who claims that the simplest bodies are actually infinite multiplicities that cannot be divided further without changing their nature. Daniel Smith has provided an excellent overview of Spinoza's influence on Ruyer's neofinalism. See: D. Smith, 2017, 'Raymond Ruyer and the Metaphysics of Absolute Forms', *Parrhesia*, n. 27, pp. 116–28. ↩

36. Simondon insists that only if we acknowledge the primacy of relations we can develop a non-reductionist account of individuation. As he writes:Relation is a modality of being; it is simultaneous with respect to the terms whose existence it guarantees. A relation must be grasped as a relation in being, a relation of being, a manner of being, and not a simple rapport between two terms that could be adequately known via concepts because they would have an effectively prior, separate existenceSimondon, 2020, *Individuation in Light of Notion of Forms and Information*, p. 12. ↩

37. As Deleuze, following Simondon, writes:Any organisation (differentiation and integration) presupposes the primary topological structure of an absolute outside and inside that encourages relative intermediary exteriorities and interiorities: every inside-space is topologically in contact with the outside-space, independent of distance and on the limits of a 'living'; and this carnal or vital topology, far from showing up in space, frees a sense of time that fits the past into the inside, brings about the future in the outside, and brings the two into confrontation at the limit of the living present.G. Deleuze, 1988, *Foucault*, trans. S. Hand, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 118. ↩

38. This is Gregory Bateson's definition of information. See: G. Bateson, G 1972, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York, Random House, p. 453. ↩

39. Such an approach to perception – as the conscious experience of sensory input – remains Aristotelian in its essence. The philosopher of mind Susan Hurley named the implicit model of the mind behind such an approach as the 'classical sandwich', with perception as input, action as output, and cognition as in-between. See: S. L. Hurley, 1998, *Consciousness in Action*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press. ↵

40. There is no such thing as sense data. This is a deep philosophical question, according to the neuroscientist Walter Freeman, of whether it is possible to discretise or atomise the manifold, which affects the definition of meaning. The usual approach, as he explains, is to postulate some kind of atom, or indivisible element of meaning, or cognitive function (cognon or lexicon), or a word, and to then think in terms of the relationship between a collection of these elements (crypto-structuralism). Essentially, the element thus postulated calls for further subdivision, which inevitably leads to infinite regression. It is the path that is taken with *symbolic* dynamics. According to Freeman, it is not even a dead-end, but a swamp. See: W. Freeman, 1991, 'The Physiology of Perception', *Scientific American*, vol. 264, n. 2, pp. 78–85. Cf. W. Freeman, 2005, 'A Field-theoretic Approach to Understanding Neocortex', *Biological Cybernetics*, vol. 92, n. 6, pp. 350–359. ↵

41. Michael Speaks offers a delightful synopsis of how would a short history of architecture since May '68 look:It would begin by recounting the passing of phenomenology and its belief in authentic experience; depending on its author, it would also lament, celebrate, or simply observe the rise of semiotics and an image-driven world that severed all ties to anything that purported to exist outside the image. An entire chapter or more would be required to document and explain the decreasing relevance of first-hand experience in architectural education and the increasing importance of glossy magazine profiles and weighty, overstuffed monographs consumed not only by the architectural devotee but also by masses whom he happily joined. Architecture, after '68 ... became a medium of mass communication, and meaning, whether post-modern, deconstructive, or critical-regional, became the coin of its realm. However different from each other, almost all of the major movements in architecture after '68 were unified in the belief that signs, images and the messages they communicated had become more important than space itself. This, it seems, is what everyone 'learned from Las Vegas'.M. Speaks M 2003, 'After '68: Nouvel, Piano, Rogers and the Tall Building', *A+U*, n. 396. ↵

42. A prominent advocate of the philosophy of incarnation as an antidote to 'dataism' is Deleuze's disciple Bernard Cache. See: B. Cache, 1999, 'Objectile: The Pursuit of Philosophy by Other Means?', *Architectural Design*, vol. 69, n. 9–10, pp. 67–71 (69). ↵

43. On the 'politics of life' see: R. Braidotti, 2010, 'The Politics of Life "Itself"', *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics,* eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, Durham and London, Duke University Press, pp. 201–218. ↵