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Ecologies of migration. Metabolic borderscapes and relational architecture

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RETHINKING MIGRATION

Population thinking

There is something fascinating that is intrinsic to the phenomenon of migration. The cyclical mass movement of large mammals across vast continents, the seasonal trans-atlantic flights undertaken with astounding precision and agility by entire populations of small, fragile birds, or the imperceptible journeys of microscopic life forms within certain metabolisms, are in themselves incredibly strong accounts of the role of migration in the life histories of organisms. Without migration, understood as the spatiotemporal and/or metabolic movements and displacements of organisms and populations, usually from energy-poor to energetically rich milieus, life forms would not

achieve the necessary equilibrium to exist. There is undisputed consensus among the life sciences, ecology, evolutionary biology, population studies, and natural history that migration is an indispensable and fundamental factor that not only guarantees the immediate survival of a population, but that it also propels difference and change over time, thus ensuring genetic variation among populations, and ultimately, contributing to the evolution of life forms. Further, the phenomenon of migration allows us to understand the drivers and thresholds, behaviors, patterns and habits of migrant species, and the ecological, environmental and evolutionary effects upon entire populations and the habitats they help to shape. In this sense, migration is a relational phenomenon that constitutes not only populations but also their milieus. Migration is the precondition for the relative stability of life forms. As Colebrook (2017) argues, "life, as such, is displacement in the face of one's milieu becoming hostile" (p. 117). Because life is dependent on movement, migration is vital for its continuation. It is movement that affords the necessary relative stability for life forms to exist, not rest. For most species migration is the rule, not the exception.

There is, however, something utterly disturbing when what we stand witness to is not a swarm of migratory monarch butterflies, but the exodus of human beings escaping war, violence, environmental catastrophes, political repression, ethnical and religious persecution, poverty, or social marginalization. The recurrent images of human bodies lifelessly floating on the ocean or stranded on the beach, of small children caged in detention centers, of young men fighting their way in camps that have lost their temporal nature, or of hoards of people towing along human caravans, speak of a reality that is difficult to digest, and which should not be normalized under any circumstance. Other mechanisms are at work in these images; they trigger different aesthetic registers and affective sensibilities than the images of migrating whales in the Pacific Ocean. Beyond the cognitive discomfort caused by the reality of these imaginaries, the affective levels that are shaken in the face of such calamitous conditions for millions of humans alert us to human life in peril, not of the continuation of life. Migration, seen in this way, is not the evolutionary journey of the human taxon, the quest for relative stability of populations of humans, or the intentional, free-willed search for 'knowing, having and being more' of historical human agents. It reduces human migration to its negative value. It becomes an abnormal vector of exodus and displacement.

Quite counter-intuitively, at least from a biological or evolutionary point of view, human migration is regarded as something problematic, violent, and accidental. It is read as a symptom, and as sign of imminent or ongoing crisis. Arguably, this is partly because human migration acquires an ethico-political dimension that is not conventionally present in scientific studies on migration of other non-human organisms and life forms. Migration becomes the involuntary, violent and parasitic displacement of human beings in relation to what is considered as the *proper* state, namely that of a state of guarded rest. It is stasis and enclosure that affords stability, not movement. Human migrants and human populations in exodus, become the exception, not the rule.

When the relative stability and the boundedness of milieus face the stress of multidirectional and multidimensional migration flows, they enforce a state of stasis, tending to fall back on exclusionary models that in their attempt to protect this stability, slow-down, restrict and eventually impede, free movement and displacement. In this way the whole milieu comes under threat. And it is in this situation in the socio-political domains when fear, anxiety and nostalgia take hold of the social imaginary. Refugees and migrants, as discrete identities exert significant pressure on the boundaries, thus allegedly threating the integrity of a territory, and the assumed social identity of belonging to it.

At this juncture, several important issues become visible: the manner in which migration phenomena involving the human taxon are rendered different, or other, than those of non-human organisms, not only carries heavy undertones of typological thinking and species exceptionalism, but it also effectively objectifies the human taxon degrading it to deviant and uncertain categories such as the migrant, or the refugee. This produces the reduction of human subjectivities into diverse forms of subjectification as victimization, precariousness, and vulnerability into defining forms of a fixed, static identity (of *being* a victim, marginalized, vulnerable, poor), denying them any other ontological possibilities, including that of qualitative transformation (of *becoming* something 'else'). The questions on what constitutes 'a migrant', or 'a refugee' conventionally focus on what these constructs are, where they *originate*, how they can be measured, or even what they mean instead of focusing on their potentialities, of what they, in their becoming, are capable of *doing*. In other words, the crystalized identity of migrants or refugees as abnormal and threatening loses its sense of 'belonging', while contradictorily remaining intrinsically connected

in problematic ways to that from where it departs or originates: a state of fictitious stability and order. On the other hand, it anchors these (and other) subjectivities as key categories within artificial, sedentary models of state-formation.

From this perspective, the abnormal is precisely the sedentary and static state-model of distribution, inhabitation and classification and the problematic complicity of the construct of the 'migrant' within it. This points to the deeply rooted links of sedentarism to diverse dominant projects of state formation, the construction of society, and its cultural and territorial arrangements into bounded, legible and stable schemes and distributive models. Arguably, a narrowing vision, which claims to capture and organize an otherwise complex, threatening and messy reality, is a necessary frame to focus on -and control- particular forms of knowing, having and being. Nevertheless, such narrowing frames not only oversimplify, but also reduce reality, matter and space to their extensive, metric properties or political identities, offering static, fixed and schematic representations of it, removed as it were, from the actual phenomena to which they allude. Human migration is especially prone to the effects of such simplification, leading to a reduced understanding of the complexity of the migration phenomenon itself, the multiple, symbiotic agents that shape it, and which are shaped by it, as co-constitutive of a relational milieu, or metabolism. Understood as assemblages, as flows of desire or 'abstract machines', however, human migrations resist the neurotic drive of classification, control and subjugation. The persistence of these phenomena evidences the inability of regulatory models to ever fully capture them, and -under the logics of reduction- the futility of thinking about migration as a problem to be tackled, solved and eradicated once and for all. In the light of the alleged urgency and intensification of present day migration flows and refugee crises across the planet, it becomes evident that terms such as 'migration', 'migrant', or 'refugee', as well as those that refer to their 'stable other' ('citizen', 'nation-state', 'territory', etc.) deserve careful reconsideration and rethinking. A first step to this end is to challenge traditional sedentary logics, shifting our familiar sense of identity 'elsewhere'.

Nomadic subjectivities

In discussing the ongoing refugee crisis faced by the European Union, Rosi Bradotti

(2014) invites us to question our assumed identities from established, nation-bound points of reference. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical concept of nomadology[1], she proposes the figure of the 'nomadic subject' as a powerful concept to rethink identity, and to conceive a social imaginary that reflects the social realities already being experienced in emerging post-nationalist politico-economic environs, or 'regions'. In Braidotti's understanding a 'nomadic subject', which actively constructs itself "in a complex and internally contradictory set of social relations" (Braidotti, 2006, p. 86) may be better equipped to undertake the difficult challenge of changing "deeply embedded habits of our imagination" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 261). Forcefully, this task requires a complete revision of the dominant modes of thought and action within which not only our identities have become encroached, but also through which these have been tied to specific geographies and territories. Although such dislocations will surely not be easy, nor come along automatically without its own perils, Braidotti's invitation to think differently about identity is crucial in the production of new —and more adequate— socio-political and spatial imaginaries and conceptualizations that may help us to envision the 'migrant' and ourselves in different terms and under other logics, namely as the becoming and coexistence of a multiplicity of nomadic subjectivities. It is at this point where we may begin exercising different forms of nomadic thought in general, and especially when dealing with phenomena of human flows and movements. When liberated from these conventionally reductive frames, a 'nomadic subject' reveals its intricate participation in an intensive ecology that not only engenders the becoming of form, matter and subjectivity, but which also re-assigns specifically human relations and practices a new role across space-time. In short, understanding migration and the migrant through nomadology opens them up to intensive thinking and transformation, and this is to regard them as processes of becoming. Becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari (2004) remind us, "... is not a correspondence between relations. It is not resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification " (p. 87).

Braidotti's nomadic thought allows us to rethink concepts conventionally associated to migration in general, and to human migration more specifically, including migrant identity, extensive space and geography, and its regulatory structures and systems such borders and jurisprudence. When challenged and problematized, these

become fields of latent potentiality and rich, productive possibilities. As such, they beg for different philosophical, theoretical and methodological approaches to the urgent questions raised by the actually existing and fully real phenomena of contemporary human migrations from symbiotic, metabolic, relational and ecological perspectives. This implies that not only will the ethico-political horizon have to be expanded, opened up to new possibilities, and articulated, but also that new ethico-aesthetic paradigms will have to be explored if what we are after is to participate in the co-creation a social imaginary and an ecology of human praxis that reflects and enables nomadic thinking, without succumbing to the fear and anxiety of breaking away from sedentary modes of being (Aldea, 2014).

RETHINKING THE BORDER

Architectural border topologies

Until relatively recently, the relation of the discipline of architecture to the phenomenon of migration was not an obvious, straightforward affair, and as such, it remained largely unexplored, especially in the education of architects. Currently, however, the problematic of contemporary human migration has attracted interest in many schools of architecture around the globe, where issues relating to the phenomenon itself, its figures and types, as well as the diverse formal, structural, and programmatic architectural expressions associated to it have become popular and recurrent themes in the education of architects, informing parts of the research programs and academic curricula, and ranking high in the thematic for architectural, landscape and urban design studios. In these studios, the phenomenon of migration and its relation to the built environment are dealt with specifically as a contextual problem where architectural design in its capacity to intervene in the actualization of socio-material conditions, assumes an allegedly political agency.

The methodological approaches taken in many of these design studios do not diverge significantly from more conventional architectural project briefings, and as such, they are often driven by short analytical-empirical research periods where students study (and sometimes visit) predefined case studies embodied in emblem-

atic 'sites' within a given spatial problematic that is circumscribed within territorial, urban or social conflicts related to migration or the spatial displacement of social groups. Students then formulate a general 'position' to the topic or case at hand, and identify a project's 'object' (border typologies, i.e.) and/or its 'subject' (the migrant, the refugee, i.e.) The output is commonly presented as a 'site analysis' or 'research report' followed by much longer periods dedicated exclusively to the development of architectural *designs*, which in many cases develop only obliquely to the theoretical or analytical points of departure. In the worst of cases, these are absent, or simply abandoned during the design phase. This brings to the fore a number of prevalent problems that may be inherent to the discipline itself, but which also reveal a set of 'habits' that are perpetuated in architectural education and its design pedagogy. One the one hand, a majority of design studios is entirely *project-oriented*, emphasizing programmatic, typological and compositional models as the engines for the conceptualization of architectural designs. On the other hand, and as a consequence of architecture's own inner logics and workings, and its tendency to express reality in extensive (geometric) units and fixed 'types', it is not well equipped to grasp and represent complex, dynamic forces and intensive qualities such as those driving migration flows. It relies on mostly extensive conventions and formulas, which translate in old habits of fixing, reducing and simplifying socio-spatial-material and temporal phenomena. This ties it to sedentary logics and to its territorial centripetal pull, regardless of what the intentions of a given project might be. Often the complexity of program, composition and/or form, serves as a justification or answer to previously identified questions, and often masks the overall disconnection or lack of societal or political relevance of the design projects themselves. This design-driven *problem-solving* logic exemplifies the emphasis of design in the formalization of *solutions* for the improvement, eradication or prevention of problematic multilayered conditions from an exclusively architectural perspective. One of the main problems of this conventional approach is that it usually tends to be prescriptive, meaning that it is based on forms of inductive reasoning, which also tends to reduce social and spatial complexity to a problem/solution dialectic.

The effect of this is that, on the one hand, the empirical observations take center hold as ultimate truths or facts. On the other hand, the abuse of static represen-

tational techniques and idealizations of specific architectural logics tend to fix the image of the architectural object at the core, displacing the very practices that it is supposed to afford into a secondary plane. The formal, compositional, technological and aesthetic-representational components required in architectural design education often restrict and narrow the focus of the interventions to scales and concerns that are relevant for the architectural discipline and its objects, but which are removed from the initial *problématique* they address. This causes asymmetries and inconsistencies that create a gap between (good) intentions and a project's viability. The motivation behind many of these projects is obviously legitimate and commendable, and the architectural designs usually highly aestheticized or graphically pleasing, but the ambitions and expectations often surpass the actual possibility of their realization, or of their desired impact. One could argue that a common line that runs through many architectural design projects dealing with the complexity of contemporary phenomena such as human migration in the design studio today, beyond their utopian, reactionary or prescriptive/normative undertones, is the rather naive assumption that complex, multidimensional problems can be solved through the design of built form alone.

A recurrent subject of more critical or 'radical' design studios, however, is the *problématique* of the border condition and its geographical, territorial and spatial impact on human beings, their social relations, and their environments. These approaches focus on architecture's complicity with the *problématique* of contemporary human migration specifically through the figure of the border. The argument is that in its capacity to actively delimit, subdivide, separate, partition and control the environment and space through built form, architecture in its mainstream practice actually supports and perpetuates many of the questionable infrastructures of status quo border politics. From the design and construction of infamous border walls and crossing points, detention centers, prisons, immigration facilities, refugee camps, to the more nuanced and cosmopolitan, but equally questionable global mobility 'transferiums', architecture has played a strategic role in the logics and models that sustain, reproduce and propagate many of the structures and systems of contemporary border politics. In this regard, it is often through the figure of the border — quite literally — that architecture engages with the phenomenon of human (and non-human) migration; the figure of the border acts as a means to articulate both these apparently incommensurable

fields. This highlights the intimate relationship between architecture and the many typological variants of the border as a physical entity or territorial marker, as well as a technology of *separation*. Hence, the function of the border in its capacity to partition, segment, delimit, and ultimately exclude, as a material expression of separation, is highlighted in many inquiries of the relation of architectural design and the phenomenon of human migration.

Missing in many of these readings is a more nuanced interpretation of architecture as a *framing* operation or process, whose primary function is that of tracing and establishing *boundaries* (Cache, 1995). In this sense, Elizabeth Grosz (2008) writes that cutting space through the construction of a frame "is the very gesture that composes both house and territory, inside and outside, interior and landscape..." (p. 37). Yet, the architectural boundary is more than a separation alone: while it is indeed a framing technique that cuts into the surface of the earth and through space, hence creating the necessary spatial conditions for the establishment of an 'inside', (or interiority), and an 'outside' (or exteriority), these cuts also define a plane of composition that is able to regulate and order space and the forces that shape it. But it is the cut, and not the physical border as such, what is defining here. The cut necessarily implies that the border not only has two sides that separate two states, but a third element as well: a space in-between the two sides that touch the states, but which they can never occupy. Thomas Nail (2016) refers to this as the "fuzzy zone-like phenomenon of inclusive disjunction ... of neither/nor, or both/and" (p. 3). In this regard, Nail observes that the 'in-betweenness' of the border is a continuous process of "multiplication by division" (p. 3) and qualifies this division as either extensive or intensive. An *extensive* division generates an absolute break between two *quantitatively* separate and *discontinuous* entities (or states). An *intensive* division on the other hand adds new paths (forks or bifurcations) that generate *qualitative* changes to a *continuous* system (p.4). Whether the bifurcation is experienced as a continuous path by some bodies, or a discontinuity by others, the understanding of the border as an intensive phenomenon and as a continuous process (and not as a "thing") is also what lends it the capacity to arrest or slow down not only bodies, but especially the flows, movement and forces that transverse space. Yet, this also implies that, far from being an operation that results in the simple separation of binary oppositions (of inside/outside, landscape/terri-

tory, exclusion/inclusion, and so on), or of extensive quantities /intensive qualities of movement, architectural framing simultaneously selects, connects, and redirects these flows and domains into other configurations.

Here, the architectural border acquires the specific function of an interception and filtering devise — or apparatus — capable of controlling and mediating movement through semi-fixed means. Walls, fences, screens, ditches, trenches and many other formal or typological figures of the border are understood not only as territorial markers of the limits of nation-states, i.e., but as instruments capable of articulating highly diverse and dynamic material and immaterial flows, thus securing the continuous processes that maintain the border and activate it as a filter that decides which paths continue, and which are redirected elsewhere (Nail, 2016, p. 4). The border as an active process of bifurcation continuously redirects flows of people and things across or away from itself, and as such it is never static or singular. It is always mobile and always multiple. The common idea that people have of the border as a fixed division wall is inaccurate, as Nail and others have convincingly shown. Etienne Balibar (2012) for instance, argues that walls are not passive structures capable of stopping movement by themselves, but rather that they become a point or "line of crystallization" where specific border technologies and other phenomena such as violence play out (p. 10).

The border hence acquires a machinic dimension, or as Nail (2016) refers to it, as a motor: "the mobile cutting blades of society" (p. 7). Understandings of border technologies as kinetic phenomena however surpass the extensive and spatial interpretation of the border as a static, but permeable screen through which bodies and flows move. As Nail writes, "the movement of the border is not a metaphor; the border is literally and actually in motion in several ways" (p. 6). From geomorphology to territorial conflicts, whether 'artificial' (socially constructed) or 'natural', borders are engaged in material processes of deep (planetary) time that transcend the scale and time of nation-states and society, but which nonetheless continue to interact with human practices. These border topologies operate horizontally and vertically in much more complex temporal registers and scales from the ones from where borders are conventionally apprehended (Biemann, 2016). Further, these border topologies question the linear focus and two-dimensional approach to cartography and mapping. (Blake, 2005; quoted in Awan, 2016, p. 280). This is especially relevant for architec-

ture and other material-discursive practices that rely on cartographic and representational techniques.

Following Bernard Cache's (1995) thoughts, Thomas Nail (2016) argues that, "architecture should not be primarily conceived of in terms of space (simultaneity) or time (succession), but as the outcome of mobile processes of ... bordering" (p. 48). This brings architecture closer to a reinterpretation of the border not as separation per se, but as a *topological* entity constituted by the techniques and apparatuses of bordering (Awan, 2016, p. 279). Here the border is understood not as fixed form moving across space and time, but instead in relation to bordering processes (Adkins & Lury, 2012); as a dynamic entity that is constructed through an ecology of diverse flows, forces, agents and bordering practices. From a topological point, the border becomes a fluid and relational phenomenon, constantly in motion, which surpasses its function as a geopolitical entity. Topological thinking regards the border as intensive and ecological.

Hence, it is important to develop methodological approaches that generate 'units of measure' and value relationally, and not as external, extensive metrics (Adkins and Lury, 2012). A topological methodology allows us to lift the border from its static position into more dynamic, relational understandings of the *borderscape*, "where the experiential and representational character of borders and the practices that produce them is highlighted across varied spaces and times" (Awar, 2016, p. 280). This is especially relevant for architecture and its pedagogies, where thinking and acting differently are crucial to overcome the inertia of architectural habits.

Metabolic borderscapes and relational architectures: other methodological approaches

Thinking topologically and transversally with other domains and disciplines is necessary in order to propose new methodological approaches for architecture to engage with the phenomenon of human migration, border conditions, and the ecologies that emerge from them. Exploring ideas and concepts from population thinking, intensive and topological thought, nomadology, ecosophy, among many others, aid us in the development of different cartographic practices that include human and non-human

agents and subjectivities (nomadic subjects) and consider other logics of movement (the nomadic, the pedetic, i.e.) than the extensive and reductive ones conventionally used in architecture. This is a first step in avoiding the perpetuation of existing, status quo models and schemes, and the reproduction of questionable border politics. Considering the prior existence and relationality of every single thing, phenomenon and agent (including migrant populations and nomadic subjectivities) participating in a border milieu or ecology echoes Didier Debaise's (2012) inquiry on ways of knowing how individuals constitute themselves from their relations, and which are interwoven before their very existence. In other words, it is first necessary to understand how symbiotic relations among human and non-human, organic and non-organic agents shape subjects within specific milieus, and how their movements may be understood as the confluence of flows and intensive forces, rather than simple conjunctions in space-time coordinates. Whether these can be reduced to territorial, spatio-material or architectural expressions is not the central concern; instead a new approach focuses on anti-reductionist perspectives that reject generalizations in favor of pluralizations. In this way, migration flows are always multiple, always differentiated, always intensive, always non-unitary, non-linear, and always capable of producing oscillatory vibrations, waves and pressure. In short, they actively participate and problematize the 'kinopolitics' of society (Nail, 2015).

Pluralizing migration flows and returning to them their uncertain, yet consistent qualities, opens up important ethical dimensions. If morals preconceive and predetermine what 'ought' to be, ethics works with the specificity of a given situation: it deals with *what is already there*. Hence, any ecological approach will need to acknowledge the futility of impositions, especially architectural ones, and instead engage in working closely through and with the existing and potential relationships among things, people, and other phenomena, teasing out their inner agency. In this way, the capacities to compose and shape new material, social and spatial arrangements are furthered. In this sense, the task of the architect, engineer, designer, planner, or strategist — as 'expert' — is fully rethought. In Guattari's (2013) words, the role of the architect is no longer that of being "the artist of built forms anymore" but instead that of "revealing the virtual desires of spaces, places, trajectories and territories" (p. 232). Thus, the architect's main role becomes that of the cartographer. Pluralizing nonetheless poses the

challenge of selecting only a manageable amount of specific agents, relations, spatial territories and phenomena within the proliferation of quasi-infinite possibilities given within border conditions, or borderscapes. The point here is to fully acknowledge this explicit reduction and qualify it within a methodology that nonetheless allows us to uncover, observe and also describe the less evident relations that exist among them in an effort to expose their morphogenetic capacities in a coherent way.

Ultimately, however, architectural intervention projects dealing with border-scapes, regardless of their methodology, need to lead to their architectural, spatial and material expression in the presentation of *designs*. This ties them to a 'ground' and to a 'logic', but the challenge is to identify sufficiently representative conditions where these might evidence how the confluence of migration flows conform entire open, metabolic systems with other types of flows.

One such approach would be to focus on different 'points', 'junctions' and con-ditions within a broader borderscape or topology, and not exclusively on the bor-der itself. These 'markers' do not necessarily have to be immediate to each other, follow a particular 'path' or sequence, or hold any other relation of (spatial, scalar, social or physical) proximity. Together they nonetheless hold a certain kind of con-sistency. Formal and informal border-crossing points are perhaps the most obvious and intense points of confluence of multidimensional and multidirectional flows (of migrants, politics, information, goods, water, soil, and so on). Further inland, in the urban periphery other junctions, such as landfills, industrial areas, agricultural land or slaughterhouses, where migrant flows are perhaps much less obvious, but where the pooling of other flows (of waste, labor, money, matter, etc.) are equally intensive. Other, apparently much more static points are urban centers, such as squares, parks and markets. Here, the very conditions of sedentary, urban logics prefix the flows and movements of people and society to an imposed, gridded order. Yet, on much less tangible and visible levels, in these points flows and movements take on a quasi-mo-lecular scale, leading to the confluence and re-articulation of their speeds and intensi-ties. All these points may be then subjected to a series of analytical and diagrammatic operations, including the development of relational maps capable of expressing the capacities of flows and agents within and among these points. These diagrammatic maps take into consideration the logics of population, intensive, and topological think-

ing that work as a theoretical point of departure for an architectural design intervention, and which subsequently encounter and inform each other in the analytical aspect. In their encounter, these three logics reveal aspects of each point that would otherwise not be immediately evident. In such an approach, the logics of population, intensive and topological thinking unlock the fixed and static 'readings' of specific conditions.

While population thinking aids in the identification of (human and non-human) flows and their interactions and relations within a territory, and intensive thinking helps in revealing the drivers ('desires') that fuel the movement of these flows, topological thinking allows us to find the structures of the possible movements within a territory (DeLanda, 2002, pp. 9-12). Said differently, these three logics come together in the production of intensive cartographies of existing flows and their drivers (population and intensive thinking), while simultaneously pointing towards a multiplicity of practices, which then may be envisioned as spatial materializations (topological thinking). A significant trait of these materializations is that they are not predetermined and imposed on a given condition or 'site' but which instead emerge from it. In this sense, any intervention devised in this way renounces at the outset to the illusory pretension to solve and uproot something, which in principle is not a *problem*, but instead a *condition*; a consequence. It also advances the parameters that are desirable to redirect and loop (not only the flows but also their oscillatory capacities) into their own trajectories of becoming. This arguably assists in the formation of nomadic subjectivities, while also stimulating a 'system', which functions within the realms of the existing and the contingent in more ethical ways. Without predetermining what precisely these subjectivities *are* (we can at best speculate) the effect is that of an assemblage, of a 'machinic' devise that affords chance encounters, intersections, confluences, and vibrations.

This ecosophical approach applies to the formal and compositional development architectural design as well, which is considered as a consequence of the process of design thinking itself. Following a nomadic ethics, the design process cannot be predetermined, nor can the outcome be fixed in advance. It follows a nonlinear trajectory. Its refusal to submit to gravitas, or to surrender to static models and extensive thinking opens the design process up to the unexpected: to all that which *might* be encountered along the way. Rather than paralyzing the process, the encounter with new problems and questions allows the design process to run its own paths. One such

encounter is of course the one with the architectural domain itself and its habitual reliance on finding solutions to each presented problem. The specifically architectural questions are difficult to foresee in advance of the process itself, as these are produced by the system within which they operate. Only once the system begins revealing relations, confluences and exchanges of the specific points, will the architectural potential begin its process of actualization. Up to that point, there is no such thing as architectural specificity; it is revealed through and within the process.

After all, and if the whole process is to be understood as an open system, which more than solving or fixing, attempts to direct flows towards moments of possibility, architectural thinking needs to follow par. These moments are when the architectural interventions become *parameters* in the system. Beyond mere 'solutions', architectural parameters become powerful tools that further contribute to the speculation of how a system works. Aided by the techniques of architecture (notations, diagrams, drawings, details and models) these parameters nevertheless embrace the unavoidability of contingency and complexity, and offer coherent modes of re/presentation to work within them. As an open system to which new parameters can be added (other flows, territories, agents and dynamics) it has the potential to reach and connect with other systems. After all, no project as a whole can be reduced to the heterogeneity of its components.

NOTES

1. Throughout their entire body of work Deleuze & Guattari make recourse of schizoanalysis and nomadology in different ways in order to engage in a variety of topics and domains. It appears in multiple guises to refer to different, but intimately entangled phenomena that drive dominant models, usually the determined, ordered, categorized and clearly differentiated (interchangeably referred to as the 'molar', the 'major', the 'royal', the 'macro', the 'striated', the 'sedentary', the 'territorialized', etc.), and the ones assumed to be less-so: that what is free, unlimited, chaotic, rhizomatic and unspecified (interchangeably referred to as the 'molecular', the 'minor', the 'ambulant', the 'micro', the 'smooth', the 'nomadic', or the 'deterritorialized').

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