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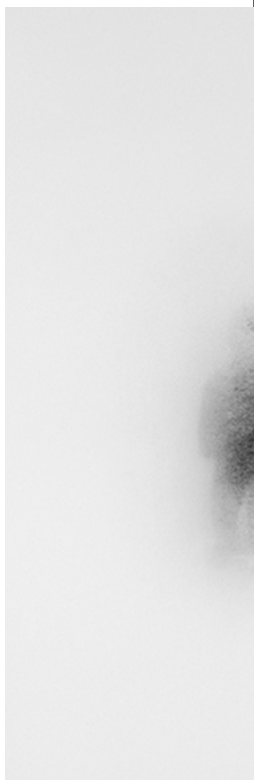
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Manual of the Anthropotekton

Tectonics of Subjectivity and the
Methodology of the Accident

The image in this spread, as well as the ones at the beginning of each section, are part of John Batho's *présents & absents* photographic series.



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Abstract



Locating many of the contemporary architect's flaws and shortcomings in its own process of becoming-subject, the *Manual of the Anthropotekton* aims at activating and situating the architectural student, practitioner, and educator in the position to launch an affirmative deconstruction of their own individuating Ego.

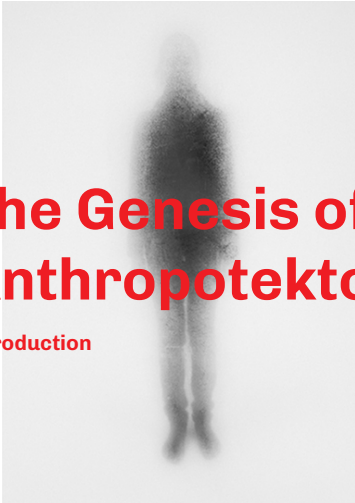
This is accomplished through an exercise of semi-biographical introspection carried out by the author in which the ego's structure along with its detrimental implications and inherent fragility is examined. A special emphasis is placed on the role that the ego plays in producing, via the consecration of authorship, the figure of the con-

temporary architect as a major obstacle for the productive and democratic proliferation of spatial knowledge, as well as one that perpetuates the extractivist and exploitative systems of economic and social production.

This will lead to the proposal of an alternative construction of human subjectivity and, by extent, of the architect, that rejects the omnipotence of the architectural hero and embraces the notions of serendipity and the accident as the most important methodological drivers of sensible, suitable, and successful architectural interventions. By virtue of placing the accident in the foreground of architectural praxis, both the architect and its knowledge are liberated from the authorial chains of the ego, maximizing the proliferation of spatial strategies and the activation of local agents and communities, allowing for a collaborative, collective, inclusive and structural approach to any spatial conflict, which is much harder to provoke through traditional praxis.

Lastly, a new partial axiomatic system based on a triple embodiment of presence is developed from within the subjectivity of the accident.

Key Terms: agency, architect, authorship, difference, ego, power, psychoanalysis, subject.



The Genesis of the Anthropotekton

Introduction

This paper emerges from my disenchantment with the contemporary architect's paradoxical obsession for the architectural-object's primacy and immutability in which the built environment seems to be a depreciating asset the more it is inhabited (as the people-less photos in every mainstream media publication and online portfolio will make anyone believe) while every render is as busy as the New York City Times Square during New Year's Eve.¹ It is, in fact, through the fictional scenarios populating the latter, that we can open up a window into the elitism and endogamy that plagues the profession and a large part of its clientele, with most of the 'actors' portrayed in the

images being white, able-bodied, professional, well-to-do men and women with enough time and disposable income to engage in a diverse set of leisure activities by themselves or together with their heteronormative and suburban family members.

Once the project is realized and the architect realizes that his or her nightmarish, affluent, and dystopian community is nothing but a fever-dream, a projection of their own (or their bosses) privileged lives; rather than finding beauty in the imperfection of the lived environment, they will choose to remove from architecture that which is human and leave only the husk, a vacuous enclosure too sacred, too important to be spoiled by the uneducated masses that will inhabit it without any care and concern for the heavenly spaces produced by the architectural hero. Empty rooms and empty buildings for no one else but other architects to drool over. Why did we remove life from architecture?

The Anthropotekton was originally conceived as a critique to this unconscious misanthropic architect: the Arkhitéktōn, the 'Chief' builder that is more concerned with the tectonics of a space rather than with the way in which such a space will constitute the inhabitant's subjective tectonics.^{2,3} The Anthropotekton underlines, by bringing the process of subjectivation to the forefront of architectural praxis, the impact that a spatial intervention can have in the constitution of subjects and subsequent identities,

rendering the architect partly responsible for the rise of the egotistic, consumerist, and wasteful western individual whose lifestyle lies at the core of the savage exploitation that the global south endures, the depletion of the earth's resources, the emergence of anthropogenic climate change, and the substantial spike of hateful, discriminatory, and violent behaviors that target women, ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, queer-individuals, and other collectives in state of precariousness.⁴



Humans as Furniture.

However, I believe that through a more nuanced and complex exploration of the Anthropotekton's potential, it is possible, as well as very productive, to extend this

original critique of the contemporary role of the architect and its purely formalist production into the irreducible depths of the processes of subjectivation that inhabit such a role in the first place. Through the following chapters, a new conception of the Anthropotekton will allow me to argue that it is the Freudian ego, the hegemonic modern iteration of subjectivity, the framework of individualized existence that must be problematized and deconstructed in order to tackle the shortcomings of architectural praxis and its role in perpetuating extractivist and exploitative systems of economic and social production. I will conclude by proposing an alternative construction of the human subject with the notion of the accident at its core, as well as a resultant reinterpretation of the architect's role.

Notes //

1 Ravenscroft, M. (2021, May 25). "By failing to represent diversity in CGIs, we are normalising whiteness and othering everything else." Dezeen. Retrieved January 16, 2022, from <https://www.dezeen.com/2018/08/30/diversity-architecture-cgis-opinion-margaret-ravenscroft/>

2 *The 'Anthropotekton' neologism is constructed through the pairing of *ánthrōpos*, referring to 'man', 'humanity', and 'subject'; and *téktōn*, alluding to 'carpenter' or 'builder'. For further reading on the Anthropotekton's etymological construction: Wikitionary. (n.d.). Wikitionary. Retrieved January 16, 2022, from <https://en.wiktionary.org>*

3 *For further reading on the conception of the Anthropotekton: Gallego Mauleon, M. (2021, April). Form, and the Genesis of the Anthropotekton (Thesis). TU Delft.*

4 European Commission. (2021, December 9). The Commission proposes to extend the list of 'EU crimes' to hate speech and hate crime [Press release]. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_6561



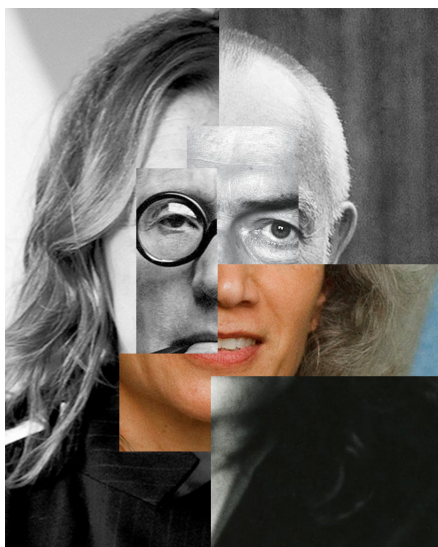
The Anthropotekton and Subjectivity

The Anthropotekton is, above all, an Abstract machine: onto-genetic, trans-stratic, differentiating, and consolidating of matter-assemblages.⁵ It provides the real with a particular type of self-organization modalities, a specific framework - that of subjectivity - to draw from the flows and breaks of the plane of consistency.⁶ The Anthropotekton does not represent. It does not signify. As a machine, it does not concern itself with the symbolic. It functions as a recorder of the flows and breaks that populate desiring-production, and it is through the cartographic and topological marking of all those fluxes that the lines of flight are temporarily and contingently reterritorialized into pre-

cariously stable modes of self-organization. The 'Anthropotekton' neologism is nothing but a name, an unavoidably obsolete reference to the process that it alludes to. Yet, how important to name it! So obviously present that it can hide from us in plain sight. A name to remove its camouflage! For it is not a novel construction of which I can claim intellectual ownership, but rather an ancestral Demiurge, the ancient titan from which we are all offsprings. It is the builder of selves, the abstract machine of subjectivity; not in the sense that it divinely produces eternal subjects, but instead as the irreducible machine that permeates every molecule with the self-organizing modality of subjectivation. The Anthropotekton is the process of becoming-subject that allows us to be us, to be you, me, her, through the assemblage of potential differentials that sets matter into motion. It is an empty Body without Organs, "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles" from which the taxonomic elements of subjectivity such as life, being, inhabiting, and becomings emanate.⁷

If it is so fundamental, so omnipresent, so obvious, why should we give it a name? Because naming is designating, and in doing so I can cartographyze those intensities that assemble the contemporary iteration of the subject, as well as mapping those potentialities hidden in an otherwise undivided, even, smooth space that is the plane

of immanence. The Anthropotekton will open our eyes to the orgiastic sublimation of subjective vectorialities that produce the real. It will allow me to tap into that stream of rich subjectivation - there are many ways of becoming an "I".⁸ The Anthropotekton is a concept, a scream, as Deleuze would put it.⁹ But acknowledging its existence and understanding its machinic workings makes it a whisper, an individual notion, a proper name. By virtue of bringing into consciousness the fact that the subject is constructed, the Anthropotekton allows for my own diffraction, that is, the problematization and regeneration of the tectonics that make me 'me'.



Constructing the Architect.

Why is this crucial for architecture and, specifically, the architect? For, if the task of an architect is that of designing, the design process is greatly contingent on the one who does the designing. A 'Design' is an act of designation, a verb-object, an action. Hence, it is not essential. An action is a mere envelope, an empty receptacle that needs to be inhabited to be actualized, and, it is the subject, the agent, the 'I', that must fill such a dynamic and unstable void. Design(ing), therefore, depends purely on the agent as the medium through which the richness of the context is crystallized.

The Anthropotekton offers the possibility of a crucial reorganization of the design process, in which the normative act of designing is subordinated to the interplay of the architect's tectonics of subjectivation. The Anthropotekton problematizes the 'who' that designs, liberating the architect from the shackles of perfection and immutability of the 'design-as-noun', while turning her or him into a schizophrenic, an explorer of her or his own depths rather than a dweller of inherited surfaces.¹⁰ What a waste of time to design without redesigning my own becoming first! The value of the 'designing' relies on the quality of the designer itself. Thus, whereas this research project may go beyond what is considered to be a normative architectural assignment – e.g., a study of precedence and reference in regard to the inhabitable real/virtual object – it is still very much tectonic: it assembles subjectivities, it assembles ar-

chitects, it assembles 'me-s': that place "where thinking or feeling is".¹¹ What kind of subjectivity sublimates from all of this is what is at stake in this project. And what stakes! my own 'architecting' depends on it! as Jean Oury would put it: "To treat the ill without treating the hospital is madness!"¹²

Notes //

5 *Abstract machines are understood as "the most important and widespread [...] modes of (matter's) self-organization, intertwined process of differentiation and consolidation – processes which can explain the development of the universe as well as the evolution of life."* For further reading: **Holland, E. W. (2013). Overview of Themes. In Deleuze and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus" (p. 22). Bloomsbury Academic.**

6 *The self-organization modalities refer to Deleuze & Guattari's view of the cosmos as an open system in which "order could increase over time" which lead to them replacing "Man with Life, and beyond Life, with a self-organizing "chaosmos" [cosmos + chaos] whose modes of organization emerge from matter immanently instead of being imposed from above as form or law."* for further reading: **Ibid., 21.**

7 **Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., & Massumi, B. (1987). November 28, 1947: The Geology of Morals. In A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (p. 40). University of Minnesota Press.**

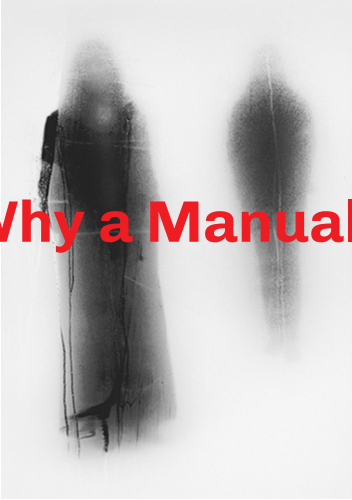
8 *The subjective vectorialities are derived from Bernard Cache's definition of spatial vectorialities, as the grouping of vectors, inflection points and frames that form a system. The subject, as well as space, is actualized through the vectorialization of the inflection points and the subsequent selection of those through framing. Those vectorializations entail the actions of torsion, distortion, inflection, reversing, selecting, fracturing, folding, framing, separating, superimposing, gravitational, abstracting, and transistance. For further reading: **Cache, B. (2021). Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories. The MIT Press.***

9 *"In some ways, the philosopher is not someone who sings, but someone who screams. Each time you need to scream, I think that you are not far from a kind of call of philosophy. [...] In my definition, the concept is the form of the scream."* for further reading: **G., Cours Vincennes - St Denis, & Stivale, C. J. (1980, April 15). Sur Leibniz. Webdeleuze. Retrieved October 28, 2021, from <https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/50>**

10 "As there is no surface, the inside and the outside, the container and the contained, no longer have a precise limit; they plunge into a universal depth or turn in the circle of a present which gets to be more contracted as it is filled." for further reading: **Deleuze, G. (1990). Thirteenth Series of the Schizophrenic.** In **C. Stivale (Ed.), & M. Lester (Trans.), The Logic of Sense (p. 87).** Columbia University Press.

11 *The Poem in question is the following: Legion live in us; /I think or feel and don't know /Who is thinking, feeling. /I am merely the place /Where thinking or feeling is. //I have more souls than one. / There are more 'I's than myself. /And still I exist /Indifferent to all. /I silence them: I speak. //The crisscross thrusts /Of what I feel or don't feel /Dispute in the I I am. /Unknown. They dictate nothing /To the I I know. I write.* **Pessoa, F., & Reis, R. (2018). Legion Live in Us. In I Have More Souls Than One (Penguin Modern Classics ed., Vol. 19, p. 28).** Penguin Random House.

12 Caló, S., & Pereira, G. (2017). CERFI: From the Hospital to the City. *London Journal of Critical Thought*, 1(2), 83–100. <http://londoncritical.org/ljct/volume-1-issue-2>



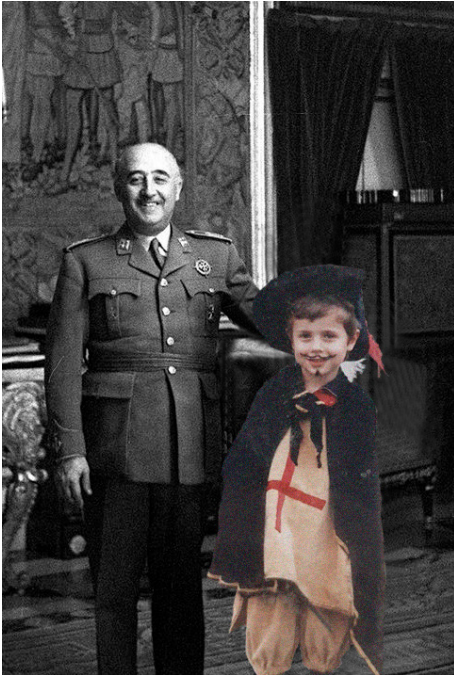
Why a Manual?

The manual, what an important artifice! The epitome of the simplification, reductionism, and standardization that sustains Capitalism's life-mining.¹³ It is a critical element in our process of becoming users and consumers; a crucial educational step of the ravenous and unbridled commodification and consumption that perpetuate and sustain our lifestyles. It teaches us how to engage with objects, how to use them 'optimally', whether it is a computer, a piece of furniture, or even ourselves, as, at the time of writing this, the self-help industry is worth \$11.3 Billion.^{14,}

Its language is that of the imperative. A manual is generally either an inductive or deductive operation. It is deductive when a general rule of use is defined in a way that is applicable in a multitude of specific instances. The 10 commandments are a great example: "Thou shalt not kill" is a general rule that is afterward applied to specific cases. It is inductive, however, when those specific examples provide the general rule. For instance, the scientific method, although encompassing simultaneously both operations at times, is mostly an inductive operation: a set of experiments provides us with a general rule.

The manual of the Anthropotekton departs from that dichotomy, as the process of subjectivation is not something that can be standardized, optimized, or universalized, and, even if it could be, the resulting subjectivity would be chained to the capitalist axiomatics of offer and demand. Thus, offering the reader a set of examples from which to derive a general rule (or vice versa) for their own becoming-subject will prove an ineffective and undesirable practice. I propose, however, to reappropriate the manual as an affirmative tool of self-problematization and diffraction, not by applying its dogmatic structure in a posthumanist fashion, but rather by restoring the primeval meaning of it. When I speak of the manual I refer to the tactile hand, the manus, that engages on the Anthropotektonic exercises of instruction – the action of assembling (in+struo+actio)-, and information – the action of forming

(In+forma+actio).¹⁶ In this way, the process of subjectivation is approached as a series of assemblage events that are situationally conditioned by the immediacy of tactility and the affective limit of the hand. In other words: the manual becomes a set of local, contingent, and immanent processes that lack an overarching goal. It is an endless endeavor of self-production that escapes the systematic, goal-obsessed, capitalist structure: the manual as a counter-manual.¹⁷

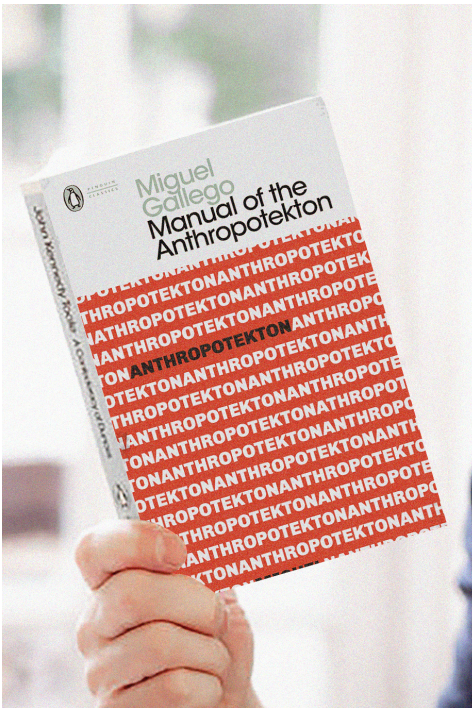


The Reach of my Tactility.

The limit set by the tactile hand is already present within instruction and information as the prefix in- denotes an interior that alludes to the space created by the edges of tactility. By making the Anthropotekton relative to the hand and, thus, dependent on the contingencies of the context, it is possible to escape the dogmatic trap of the 'universal-solution' (understanding 'solution' as an established instance of subjectivation, e.g., the Ego) approach put in place by both inductive as well as deductive modes of operation that, even if coexist in dialectical opposition, are founded on the premise that a general rule, as well as specific examples, are causally co-generative.

Making 'instruction' and 'information' subordinated to the locality of the subject, that is, rendering my own instruction and information central to the text, the 'universal-solution' operation gives way for the crystallization of a contingent (but much more effective) solution out of a virtually endless multitude (there are as many solutions as there are instances of subjectivation!). It is true that the singularity of this approach makes its direct reproduction very difficult for the reader. Yet, that is the point of this paper: to make the reader understand the importance of engaging consciously with his or her own particular tectonics of subjectivity, as well as to make them aware of the uncertainty, ephemerality, and fragility that must be embraced for such an exercise to be successful. For, any attempt to reduce the depth and richness of (post)human

subjectivity into a universal standard will not only fail miserably but will also pave the way for the destructive, totalizing, and self-consuming Foucauldian fascist to arise once more. My aim, then, is to inspire those who read this paper to look at that which makes them 'be', so that they can wonder and explore ways to inhabit the 'be' differently.



A possible cover.

Notes //

13 *Life-mining as derivative of Data-mining that entails "the opportunistic political economy of biogenetic capitalism (that) turns Life/zoe – that is to say human and non human intelligent matter – into a commodity for trade and profit."* For further reading: **Braidotti, R. (2013). Post-Anthropocentrism: Life beyond the Species. In The Posthuman (1st ed., pp. 62–63). Polity.**

14 *According to Salottobuono a Manual has the "aim of explaining the functioning – or the construction, the operation, the assemblage, the dismantling – of a particular device (and) of enabling the final user to have a complete and fulfilling experience of that device."* For further reading: **Salottobuono. (2010). Prologue. In Manual Of Decolonization (p. 25). A+M Bookstore.**

15 **LaRosa, J. (2021, August 2). \$10.4 Billion Self-Improvement Market Pivots to Virtual Delivery During the Pandemic. Market Research. Retrieved January 17, 2022, from <https://blog.marketresearch.com/10.4-billion-self-improvement-market-pivots-to-virtual-delivery-during-the-pandemic>**

16 *For further reading on the etymological construction of 'manual'; 'instruction' and 'information':* **Wiktionary. (n.d.). Wiktionary. Retrieved January 16, 2022, from <https://en.wiktionary.org>**

17 *A reference to Eyal Weizman's 'Counter Forensics': "Today, an evolving information and media environment enables authoritarian forces to obscure, blur, manipulate, and distort facts about their crimes. But it also offers new techniques with which civil society groups can invert the forensic gaze and monitor those forces; this is counter forensics."* **Weizman, E. (2019). An Impromptu Glossary: Open Verification. In M. Hlavajova & W. Maas (Eds.), Propositions for Non-Fascist Living: Tentative and Urgent (p. 148). The MIT Press.**



The Question of the Ego

Am I up to me? That is what the gaze¹⁸ of my own reflection seems to ask when we face each other every morning in my bathroom's mirror. Why is that? Perhaps it is nothing but the manifestation of the enormous weight that comes with the only sure given: death as the unavoidable fact of the fragility of our own existence, death as the future that has already been.¹⁹ I don't think I am alone in doing this introspection. When my gaze is freed from my reflection's and encounters that of another, don't we engage similarly in a polite exchange of such laden questions? Don't we, even if unconsciously, become aware of the fragility of 'being' through the ephemeral eyes of a

transient stranger? Aren't we, for them at least, equally transient and ephemeral?

To me, the way we inhabit this question is crucial. I believe that the temporarily stable subjectivities that arise from the ever-changing process of subjectivation have both the potential to become a way for us to, albeit rudimentarily, engage legitimately and, therefore, affirmatively, with our own contingency so that we can occupy our finite existence positively and productively; or to perpetuate a hysterical individuation that will only lead us to an implosive self-consumption. What I imply with this dialectical opposition between legitimate and illegitimate constructions of the subject is that the Anthropotekton must tackle the tectonics of the subject not only ontologically and epistemologically, but, perhaps most importantly, ethically.

I am not, however, interested in the question itself, although its paradoxical construction is already in the process of 'in-forming' us.²⁰ Nevertheless, it is the two existential limits that are implied in the 'yes' and 'no' that this closed-ended question is begging for that I find most interesting.

Giving 'no' as an answer, that is, to take away from the subject any resemblance of what is generally understood as 'free will', renders me, the self, nothing more than an embedded sedimentation of the totality of the past, subject to an inescapable secular, socio-historical destiny of sorts in which the notion of the future disappears.

By virtue of the absoluteness of the causal relation between past and future, the latter becomes the former, as now they are fully indistinguishable from each other. The 'no' transforms reality into a closed system that functions linearly without any room for surprises with death as its point of completion. I am History and nothing else!

The problematization of the 'yes' as a limit becomes, perhaps, more productive, not because I find its resulting mode of subjectivity more appropriate than others, but because of its unscrupulous monopolistic grip on the contemporary subject. It crystallizes the process of subjectivation into the instances of the Christian zealot and the Freudian ego. All of them crucial cogs that perpetuate the Capitalist machine of extinction, extraction, and exploitation. Who else can inhabit, otherwise, the fierce deterritorializations of Capital and its strangling reterritorializations? No one else other than those whose subjectivities have been constructed with the sole purpose of surviving such an unforgiving topology. Interior subjectivities that have turned a blind eye to their surroundings, becoming immune to any deterritorialization because their tectonics lacked any territory, to begin with. Vulnerable to them, as well, because, aware of what they lack, they will accept any territory that is offered, making them hybrids between transcendent gods and needy, zealous worshippers: the perfect populace for the subjugation enacted by the religion of Christ first, and then, by Oedipus himself.

Can anyone blame them for their embrace of an artificial individuality and completeness, as well as the short-sightedness and selfishness that this implies, when all relation to the outside has been severed from them and the only thing left is to fear the wrath of their creator? Who could endure being removed from the immanent flows of the cosmos and turned into the image (and only an image) of a divine entity without falling into a totalizing, transcendence-seeking madness? What else is left for them other than becoming the sole agonists of their own voided tale? This is what true alienation stands for, an estrangedness to even our own physical body that leaves us with the sole purpose of finding 'our true-self' or the 'best version of ourselves'. Without a doubt, this has been the structural methodology that has in-formed me into the "individual" that I am. My life has been an endless act of protecting, reinforcing, buttressing, and restoring the ephemeral and fragile 'yes' that I have given, in all my desperation to extend and reaffirm my 'I', as an answer. William Ernest Henley would put it best in his poem "Invictus", "I am the master of my fate / I am the captain of my soul".²¹

In this exercise of permanent proto-deterritorialization necessary for the deterritorialization imposed by Capital flows, the 'I' is constructed as a "Ghost in the Machine", a hylomorphic construction of Mind and Body.²² A transcendental hermaphrodite entity capable of self-fecundation, self-organization, and onto-genesis that con-

structs the inaccessible realm that it inhabits. Unaffected by its context, it is not embedded in a body but rather it is reified in it. The body is nothing but a contingent and temporal representation of the soul that it poorly signifies while the soul itself dwells unaffected by the materiality produced in the high-speed collision between body and context. The soul does not inhabit the material world, it is only signified in it. An eternal and absolute entity. Eternal by virtue of its disconnection from the body, and therefore, free from its conception and perishing. Absolute because it is self-contained and self-limited. An Idea. Doesn't this imply an immanent divinity? A certain god-like identity? Omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient? Am I divine? Am I a god?

But the divine entity of the 'I' doesn't gain its transcendence in exchange for anything. As soon as the subject becomes individual, it is made powerless and profusely aware of its own subjugation and subordination to its true master, God, Capital, or both, through the manifestation of the unpayable debt that the 'I' has taken upon itself already in its subjective conception, as all its powers are gifts from the master's themselves, in exchange of infinite and total servitude. Whether typified as a Christian sin, or as economic poverty, the infinite debt is miraculated into the body of the subject, who now sees it not as an imposition but rather as its own fault, one that can only be 'solved' through its own doing.²³

It is incredible the number of people that deeply believe, myself included, on this specific contraption of the subject. Capitalism has turned out to be the religion that needs as many gods and goddesses as it does worshipers. 7.8 billion divine entities. 7.8 billion followers. I have so little time to pray so better pray to myself! It is not a surprise that everyone wants to be the main character of their own Epic, the Greek hero in today's Iliad, fighting against all odds to be promoted into the Olympus of Capital. It might sound appealing to fall into the trap of the individual, the lonely God, alone in its own idiosyncrasy. Every day that goes away a step closer to becoming "one", unaware of the life of debt, servitude, and fear that this implies. A debt that can only be paid off through total self-implosion, the moment of combustion in suicidal rage in which Foucault's fascist finally reaches the state of full and seemingly unobstructed control: Death.²⁴

As crazy as this sounds, isn't it this what the Freudian ego manifests? Doesn't Freud define the ego as "something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else"?²⁵ A construction of the subject that, even after being nuanced through its trifurcation into the Id as the instinctual animal, the Super-Ego as the Oedipalized external world that starts and ends with the father, and the Ego in between, as the mediator of the two, still reifies the infinite debt owed to Christianity and Capital into the body, producing an inherently deterritorialized and purely

interior subject in which its only connection with the external world takes place through the Oedipal father.²⁶ The Freudian subject is, therefore, simultaneously dependent on itself (at least in its transcendental instincts), as well as a debtor of its own existence. This Freudian understanding of the Anthropotekton cannot be made clearer than in Freud's own analysis of the man-as-criminal which he defines not as a consequence of socio-economic conditions, but rather as the result of an "obscure sense of guilt derived from the Oedipus complex and [...] a reaction to the two great criminal intentions of killing the father and having sexual relations with the mother."²⁷ In other words, whether a man is a criminal or not is purely dependent on the extent that he can control and process the infinite debt contracted at conception with Father/Christ and Mother/Capital. It is his doing, and no one else's.

Even if these notions were developed at the beginning of the 20th century, this specific instance of subjectivity lays at the core of contemporary capitalist beliefs such as Meritocracy, Destiny, or Morality, as well as the westernized conceptions of ideas such as Karma. The Industry of Self-Help, the media genre that has taken as its responsibility to continue spreading the teachings of the Oedipal doctrine through works such as "Rich Father, Poor Father", and "How to make friends and influence people", keeps pushing the ego as the only possible iteration of the tectonics of subjectivity.²⁸ The cruelty and psychopathy of

this become obvious through the obsessive underlining done by the ego in regard to the idea that only oneself is to be blamed (or congratulated) for their own existence, which perpetuates an internalized faith on the superiority of the rich white man that makes those who meet Vitruvian standards see themselves as righteous exploiter governors of the world as well as those who belong in otherness believe in their supposed inferior nature and proudly take the role of the exploited governed. However, I would argue that those are mere symptoms of the Freudian 'I' as it is in the micro-scale of the interpersonal that the ego reaches its sociopathic peak. As an exercise for myself, I shortly explored the ruthlessness that arises from taking the logic of the 'I' to their fullest extent:

I, Embryo. An "I". An unawakened, perhaps catatonic, or perhaps even an amnesic miraculated essence that inhabits an ever-growing assemblage of cells, an ever-growing multiplicity of molecules. Full, complete, total, already since the spermatozoid. My own "I". Self-generative of my own body. Physically constrained by the walls of my progenitor's uterus but nevertheless omnipotent. A demiurge of identities: "You are now a Father! You are now a Mother! An Uncle! A cousin! You don't feel different, you

say? *It doesn't matter how you feel! My ex-i(n) stance is judge, jury, and executioner!*" Some may say that this is not the way it works, that it is my progenitors who place the title of "son" or "daughter" on me. As if that title wouldn't be inevitable. Even an orphan is a son or a daughter. It is them, however, who change. And they change just because of I. Of all of them, it is my mother that will change the most. As it is only I who can give meaning to such a receptacle, a reproductive machine. Her "being-woman" depends on it. She is not until I am. She would have failed until I "I". And is this the way she thanks me? By fitting me into such a flimsy, fragile, and dependent composition? How dares she make herself the sole provider of my sustenance! How dare she chain me, make me dependent on her closeness. Father as reterritorialization of the ego and fecundation as the Big Bang! A sudden surge of plasmogenerative energy into a receptacle. First the former, and then the latter. First Adam and then Eve. And within that energy, within that flow, I was the first. The king. Defeater of the rubber, champion of the contraceptive, sole winner of the spermatic race. I, an individual since leaving my

father's testicles. Seducer of the ovule. Conqueror of the uterus. I worked so hard... Unlike all those too lazy to go through the cervix! What an embarrassment. I deserve where I am. I have accomplished it through my own merits. Libidinal meritocracy, that is what I like to call it!

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18 This is a reference to Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of the gaze (*le regard*), as the act of becoming-subject through the awareness and perception of others. In other words, "if the Other-as-object is defined in connection with the world, as the object which sees what I see, then my fundamental connection with the Other-as-subject must be able to be referred back to my permanent possibility of being seen by the Other. It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. For further reading: Sartre, J. (1956). *Being-For-Others: The Existence of Others (The Look)*. In H. Barnes E. (Trans.), *Being And Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (pp. 252–302). Routledge.

19 Braidotti, R. (2013). Death of a Subject. In *The Posthuman* (1st ed., pp. 134–136). Polity.

20 The question shapes us already through its paradoxical structure: in order to be 'up to me', in other words, to be responsible for the construction of my own self, such a self has to exist avant la lettre of putting itself into question: I cannot doubt my "I" without that "I" doing the doubting. By rendering it impossible to question the existence of an "I" without making the question self-referential, the existence of the subject, or at least a kind of subject, becomes irreducible.

21 The Poem goes as follows: Out of the night that covers me / Black as the pit from pole to pole, / I thank whatever gods may be / For my unconquerable soul. // In the fell clutch of circumstance, / I have not winced nor cried aloud. / Under the bludgeonings of chance / My head is bloody, but unbowed. // Beyond this place of wrath and tears / Looms but the Horror of the shade, / And yet the menace of the years / Finds, and shall find, me unafraid. // It matters not how strait the gate, / How charged with punishments the scroll, / I am the master of my fate / I am the captain of my soul. For further reading on the poem as well as on William Ernest Henley's work: Henley, W. E. (2020). *Invictus*. In W. E. Henley: *Complete Poetical Works* (p. 127). Delphi Classics.

22 For more information on the "Dogma of the Ghost in the Machine" check: Ryle, G. (2009). *Descartes' Myth*. In *The Concept of Mind (60th Anniversary ed., pp. 1–12)*. Routledge.

23 Referring to the 'Miraculating-machine'. It is a product that instead acts as a cause (defined by Deleuze and Guattari as a quasi-cause) of the object(s) produced by other processes. The Body without Organs (in this case, cancerous) miraculates because the product (the quasi-cause) does not seem to have a genesis, and it derives its position from appropriation rather than production. For further reading: Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., Hurley, R., Seem, M., Lane, H. R., & Foucault, M. (2009b). *The Body without Organs*. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (p. 11). Penguin Classics.

24 Michel Foucault provides a definition of Fascism independent from any event and therefore productive outside the historiographical lens. This approach allows us to tackle contemporary fascism with contemporary weapons. The definition in question is the following: "The major enemy is fascism. And not historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini – which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively – but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us." For further reading: *Ibid.*, xiii

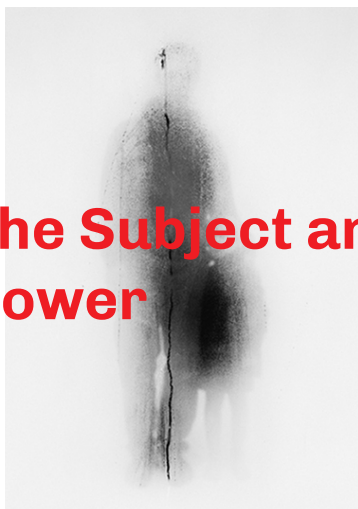
25 Freud, S. (1961). Chapter I. In J. Strachey (Trans.), *Civilization and Its Discontents* (p. 13). Norton & Company.

26 "It is easy to show that the ego ideal answers to everything that is expected of the higher nature of man. As a substitute for a longing for the father, it contains the germ from which all religions have evolved." For further reading: Freud, S. (1990). *The Ego and the Super-Ego (Ego Ideal)*. In J. Strachey (Ed.), & J. Riviere (Trans.), *The Ego and the Id* (The Standard Edition, p. 33). Norton & Company.

27 Freud, S. (1975). *Some Character-Types Met with in Psycho-Analytic Work*. In J. Strachey (Ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (1914–1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works: Vol. XIV* (pp. 309–333). Hogarth Press.

28 *In case you feel like wasting your time:* 1. Kiyosaki, R. T. (2017). *Rich Dad Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!* Plata Publishing. 2. Kiyosaki, R. T. (2017). *Rich Dad Poor Dad: What the Rich Teach Their Kids About Money That the Poor and Middle Class Do Not!* Plata Publishing.

The Subject and Power



If it is clear that the Freudian ego is nothing but an illegitimate artifice that slashes our connection to the cosmos and enslaves us into a system of production that perpetuates the equally illegitimate construct of the white man's superiority along with its terrible implications, what are the reasons for its continued production? Why does it seem that we have stagnated into such a subjective construction? Does this mean that there is a genuine need for an Ego? I would argue that for such an instance of subjectivity to crystallize with the success and everlasting effect it has had, there must be a craving, a demand for it that overwhelms and makes negligible all the cruelty and sav-

agery it commands, drawing its energy from the depths of our most profound fears, for us to accept it so blindly. For what does the Freudian 'I' offer us that cannot be found in the heterogeneous flows of the Earth? What specific flows does the Ego tap, and which ones does it conceal, for us to willingly become its unquestioning maidens and zealous fanatics? What makes us, both oppressors and oppressed, engage in an exclusivist, interior, patriarchal, and imperialist construct of the 'I' that has perpetuated systems of power in which a majority perishes only for a few to take advantage, with the only hope of one day leaving our kin and ascending into the Olympus of the 1%?

What the Freudian 'I' can offer is a cure to the Kierkegaardian angst, a Xanax against the existential vertigo of being-human, an anchor for us to hold on to, to avoid dissolving into the overwhelming tides of life and the chaotic multiplicities of the universe.^{29, 30} Through concealment it gives us certainty, it gives us a purpose: I am me, and I am here for a reason. The Ego offers us to be little-despots when the real despot has taken our sustenance as tribute, it allows us to die as heroes when we are nothing else than cannon-fodder, it gives us hope of a better future while we are 'worked-out' of our present. How else could we worship that which subjugates us? How else could we desire our own oppression?³¹

We become strong, docile, and obedient bodies.³² Economically optimized, the surplus of individuation is

maximized and appropriated by Christ and the State, leaving the subject just with enough vital Capital to enact their own brutal self-domination. Michel Foucault dates the crystallization of such a subjectivation process back to the 18th century as a result of what he calls 'Disciplinary Power' or 'Pastoral Power', "a form of power which [simultaneously] subjugates and makes subject to."³³ The first instance of the God-worshiper hybrid; the Proto-Ego. Yet, even if it is through a certain crystallization of power that the Ego arises, the association is reciprocal. In other words, both subjugation and subjectivation are not subordinate to power but co-generative of each other. Power is simultaneously a "history of different modes [of objectification] by which, in our culture, human beings are made into subjects", as well as "emergent from constituents (...) they form with them".^{34, 35} Therefore, it is not only that the process of subjectivation is conditioned and therefore a direct consequence of institutionalized power, but also that the self willingly exercises its own subjectivation in a way that perpetuates Oedipal dynamics.

It is precisely the dynamics that make me 'me' and make you 'you' that the egomaniac frantically tries to freeze in place for eternity. The 'I' as 'white', as 'cis-gender', as 'middle-class', as 'heterosexual', as 'Spanish', as 'man'. This taxonomic amalgamation is what allows me to face my own existential angst, my sense of transience and ephemerality, my fear of becoming a stranger to the world,

one that passes by idly and without consequence. Moreover, it removes me from the undifferentiated assemblage of the humanity-as-denominator and places me, as it does with everyone else, into a defined position within the newly formed spectrum of humanity-as-numerator, where our hierarchical position is conditional to the number of categories we can embody from those that Christ and Capital have deemed of special value.³⁶

How is it possible, then, that the women who are not men, the women who are deemed as lesser women just because they cannot be mothers, the homosexuals who cannot stop themselves from being attracted to those of their own sex, the immigrants that do not belong, the children that haven't reached adulthood, still adhere to an instance of tectonic subjectivity that puts them in a position of inferiority? Because 'I' as white, 'I' as man, etc. is only the beginning of an endless struggle of keeping the artificial certainty of the Ego away from its inherent and constant risk of self-destruction. It is not enough to paralyze or freeze those categories as even those who are closest to complete humanity at the outset of their lives are not clean of the original sin, they are not free from the infinite debt. Life becomes a feverish search for new categories to inhabit, hoping that the next one will be the one to cement the 'I' into eternal permanence. It is not enough with being: the 'I' crumbles without scaffolding. By making it dependent on Oedipus, to Capital, to Christ, the 'I' loses its terri-

tory. From its absolute interiority, it craves for an exterior. Any territory will do, as its masters already know. A territory into which to pour all its anxieties and despair, a territory to rule despotically, to terraform it to the 'I's image, and to populate it with an infinite number of object-identifications, so that it can look back and say: I am the one who did this and, therefore, I am more sure now that I am an 'I'. Obedience comes from desperation and being an 'I' is more about doing than about being.

To ease the uncertainty of the 'I' we engage in obsessive compulsions of externalization, doing anything as long as there is a tangible object at the end of the production line that can be traced back to us, its author.³⁷ The Ego hopes to appropriate those objects and turn them into receptacles of the 'I's' precariousness, freeing the body from the paralyzing guilt imposed by the Super-Ego. That is why it is not enough to say that I am 'I' - which if the Ego was truly essential it should be enough. The Ego needs to manifest and embody those exterior contingent categories that have produced the Ego-defining objects so that a glimpse of an essential self can materialize. That is why when we identify as a friend, a father, a king, an architect; those are not inherent characteristics of a certain 'I' but rather representations of the categories under which the object-identification production that makes our 'I's stable takes place. The act of friending produces the relationship-object, allowing me to say that 'I am a friend' and ex-

ternally reassuring my 'I'. I am a father because fathering produces the son-object. I am king because governing produces the governed-object. I am an architect because 'architecting' produces the architectural-object. All those objects are what reify and sustain the 'I' and those categories are ways to appropriate them and state my authority. Here, the architectural-object arises as a paradigm. Schizoid in its authorship, it is capable of simultaneously encompassing several processes of Freudian subjectivation: the politician who looks at the architectural-object as another piece he composes into his domain, the public or private client who owns the finalized object, the architect who designs it, the constructor who makes it, the inhabitant that lives it, the magazine editor that gives it fame and prestige, the student that idolizes it, and the historian that protects it. A practice of appropriation that started with despotic rulers making ample use of architectural-objects to reify and reproduce their omnipotence and omnipresence as well as the righteousness of their position as masters through the monumentality, permanence, and solidity of their constructions, and continues, to this day, through the little-despots that use architecture to manifest their position in society. The difference between the pyramids of the Pharaohs and the McMansions of suburban America turns out to be purely a matter of scale.

Notes //

29 "In the excerpts from the *Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard argues that anxiety is essential to human selfhood because it is our awareness of our own radical freedom and our intimation of eternity." For further reading: Solomon, R. C. (2005). Søren Kierkegaard. In *Existentialism (Second Edition)*, p. 2). Oxford University Press.

30 Anchoring is a concept developed by the Norwegian metaphysician Peter Wessel Zapffe in his 'The Last Messiah' essay. He defines it as "a fixation of points within, or construction of walls around, the liquid fray of consciousness. [...] Thus one establishes a necessity in one's life, exposing oneself to an obvious evil from one's point of view, but a soothing of the nerves, a high-walled container for a sensibility to life that has been growing increasingly crude. [...] Any culture is a great, rounded system of anchorings, built on foundational firmaments, the basic cultural ideas. The average person makes do with the collective firmaments, the personality is building for himself, the person of character has finished his construction, more or less grounded on the inherited, collective main firmaments (God, the Church, the State, morality, fate, the law of life, the people, the future). The closer to main firmaments a certain carrying element is, the more perilous it is to touch. Here a direct protection is normally established by means of penal codes and threats of prosecution (inquisition, censorship, the Conservative approach to life)." For further reading: Zapffe, P. W. (2004). *The Last Messiah* (G. R. Tangenes, Trans.). *Philosophy Now*, 45.

31 Although the question about desiring one's own oppression is generally merited to Wilhelm Reich and its subsequent paraphrasing done by Deleuze and Guattari in 'A Thousand Plateaus', it is Baruch Spinoza who put it first into writing: "if religion be there made the pretext for inducing citizens to fight for slavery as though it were salvation, and it is not held base but highly becoming to venture limb and life for the vain-glory of one man, I can think of nothing more disastrous for a free State than the imposition of such a system upon it." For further reading: Spinoza, B. (2020). *Scope and Purpose of this Work (Author Preface)*. In *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (p. 22). Alpha Editions.

32 The complete quote is the following: "Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labor, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination." For further reading: Foucault, M. (1995). *Docile Bodies*. In A. Sheridan (Trans.), *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (p. 138). Vintage Books.

33 Foucault expands on this point by stating that "This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge." For further reading: Foucault, M. (1982). *The Subject and Power*. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 781. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448181>

34 *Ibid.*, 777

35 What is important is to understand that it is not only the power system that shapes our modes of subjectivity but also that us as subjects shape and perpetuate the power systems we inhabit. John Protevi puts it beautifully: "In imbricating the social and the somatic, a bodies-politic framework allows us to see that the reproduction of social systems requires producing (somatic) bodies whose affective-cognitive patterns and triggers fit the functional needs of the system. In turn, such patterning enables social systems that direct material flows. I think this allows both an emergence perspective such that social systems are emergent from constituents but are immanent to the system they form with them, and a concretion perspective such that individuals are crystallizations of systems—or more prosaically, we grow up in systems that form us." For further reading: Protevi, J. (2019). *Introduction: Statifications*. In *Edges of the State* (p. xiii). University Of Minnesota Press.

36 Denominator is common to everyone, numerator denotes incompleteness and partiality.

37 Existentialism tackles the need for action as a reification of existence quite clearly: "Our consciousness is never perfectly identified with our facticities; we are more than our body, our past, or our environment. [...] We can thus interpret our relation to these 'facts,' and in this sense, we transcend them. [...] Our transcendencies are our possibilities in two senses: (1) what we might be doing or what might be happening to us; and (2) what we are actually doing, insofar as it is not necessary for us to have chosen this action." For further reading: Catalano, J. S. (1985). *Bad Faith*. In *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness* (Midway Reprint Edition, pp. 82–83). The University of Chicago Press.



Yes is More: The Architectural Hero

Busy with its own reification is where we find the contemporary architect: stripped of all his praxis' potential by the promise of a 'heroic' subjectivity that conceals subjugation and leaves only enough agential surplus to barely externalize the Ego's uncertainties into an 'authorial style'. He (because of course he is a he) is oblivious of his own vacuousness and inhabits a feverishly self-referential and solipsistic architecture which he has corrupted into an alloplastic machine believed by him to be so powerful, so transcendent, that it will single-handedly save the world from itself. It will be none other than our architect, the Randian individual, a Howard Roark,³⁸ enshrined into the

cosmos as a shining, anthropomorphic astronomical object, that will carry his orthogonal flag to lead us all into the promised garden of Eden. What a Joke! Full of himself, but still with a ravenous appetite. So individual and self-sufficient (The off-grid architect, what a concept!), but blind to the chains that tie him to money, prestige, and fame. He, the genius artist that only exhibits at Christie's, the revolutionary scientist of Royal Dutch Shell, the innovative engineer of Lockheed Martin, the wise historian at the British National Museum, and, above all, the philosopher-king turned thought-leader, one that never asks questions.³⁹ We've already given him the night-sky so why not give him a place in the Olympus among the gods? An interdisciplinary god with laden feet and a headache, that's what he is. God of the obvious, the only thing he can miraculate is that which is already there, but with a 'neo' attached in front of it.

Truth is, many of those involved in spatial praxis, desperate to embody the certainty that the Ego provides, have positioned themselves together with the architectural hero, satisfied as long as a quantum of completeness and totality permeates. They know, deep inside, that they are condemned to the same anonymity and mediocrity they so much despise, their 'I's less valuable than their idols'. However, they look at those of us who understand the shortcomings of the Ego and denounce its inherent insolvency at the time of repaying the infinite debt, with a

contempt that conceals anger, which hides fear. Fear of us being right, of what that righteousness might unravel: the collapse of their hopes for eternity, which they have placed in the narrow, fragile, claustrophobic, and slippery line of thought of the absolute individual, an epistemic body full of sharp edges ready to give its all to protect the Capital and the Democracy of a few, perishing in the process if needed. One that manically focuses on easing somatic pain while running away from the rot of the visceral. What a beautiful race that is! Alas, no one has ever managed to run from themselves.



The new Architectural Hero!

I do not blame them. I cannot deny the attractiveness, magnetism, and peace of such corporal totality. Its inherent superficiality allows for an addictive simplicity, an intoxicating hint of completeness, an exhilarating smell of purpose, one that does not lend itself to problematization. Why? not because it is not problematic but rather because it is so comfortable. Spending my life playing with light and atmospheres: What else could I wish for?

Caged within those self-imposed boxes and unable to escape them, even those Vitruvians and Modulorians that intuit the trap in which they have fallen become nothing else than victims to be pitied, begging to recover a lost agency that they had rejected in the first place; tossed aside in exchange of a fleeting bit of transcendence. Still, they refuse to ask the important questions. They lack the courage to challenge the conceptual status quo. The mystery of what may lie on the other side riddles them with anxiety and fear. 'Much easier to stay within the 4 walls we know best!', they say. Yet, how much time have we wasted on beauty and order? How much time will we waste for sustainability and democracy?

In the best case, this rejection of the visceral will do nothing more than dull their praxis. Banal architecture without edges, derivative, empty, inoffensive. Too busy with poetry and symbolism to have time to care. In the worst case, however, it will make even the best intentions negatively dangerous. When faced with the current enormous

societal challenges that will define our collective future, ranging from the impending climatic doom to the substantial spike of hateful, discriminatory, and violent behaviors fueled by authoritarian individuals, groups, and institutions that target women, ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, queer-individuals and collectives; those that care enough will try to provide solutions based upon the same systems and structures that have led to these problems in the first place.⁴⁰



The Vitruvian Man and the Modulorian.

Through numb, irresponsible and unconscious typecasting, they will produce the same spaces that have played an important role in constructing the same subjectivities and collectivities that are to blame. In the name of integration and sustainability, they will become the oblivious champions of gentrification and the accidental advocates of community displacement. If we continue rejecting the visceral, if we only focus on surfaces rather than on depths, if we keep having an un-consequential attitude towards our impact on the production of subjectivities and collectivities and continue to ignore the dire limitations of the rusty spatial tools we currently have in hand, such productions will inevitably lead to the aforementioned sublimation of destructive, individualizing, and power-loving behaviors, creating the materiality of a considerably direr future.

As much as the contemporary architect is both the perpetrator and victim of the limitations of praxis, it was not an architect but a lawyer who created, in the 1400s, the methodological framework needed for the architect to externalize his or her own subjective uncertainties and the architectural hero to be actualized as a palliative to the “personalized anxieties about the termination of time” that flourished at the time with the advent of the mechanical clock.⁴¹ Leon Battista Alberti was, through his *De Re Aedificatoria*, the first one to set the standards of today's mainstream architectural practice by separating designing and building into two different processes in which the latter

was subjugated to the former, in opposition to the traditional building process of the time in which “a comprehensive design did not exist at the beginning of construction any more than did the building itself. [...] From beginning to end the design-build process remained fluid.”⁴² Alberti did not engage in this exercise of singularization as a way to offer more efficient tools to tackle the urban and architectural issues of the time, but rather with the motivation of making the architect’s work determinable, able to be separated from the conjunction of intentions and contingencies that is the building process, and therefore, able to be appropriated by a single individual, transforming the collective architectural work into an individually authored literary piece from which a specular architectural agency arose as “the building would mirror its author, [...] (cementing) the status of (the) architect in the world, as well as his place in time and history [...]. With the perfect building executed faithfully according to his design, Alberti’s architect [...] would gain something valuable: glory and fame.”⁴³

If the segregation of the design process from everything else was crucial to allow the architect to appropriate the architectural-object as an external representation of his fragile individuality, the utmost protection of the architectural work as the sacred, finalized, immutable, perfect design-object was as important of a task since to “alter the original text of an ancient author would have been an unthinkable transgression, for [...] what was dam-

aged by such transgression and loss was not only the text, but its author as 'author.'" For Alberti, then, originality, creativity, and agency were only reserved to those who can righteously claim the intellectual property of the work, while those who might come afterward and take the design into fruition (not unusual in those days due to the long process of building) are "prohibited from redesigning, and are not dignified even as "architect" but are simply commonplace, nondescript 'followers'."⁴⁴

Of course, such a proposition can be easily objected by questioning the fragile originality of the primeval design, and the fact that virtually every instance of architecture can be traced back to a number of precedents. Yet, fanatical protection of the primordial architectural-object and its intellectual ownership is at the basis of authorship and its subsequent reification of the subject into the author/architect. The aim of authorship is, therefore, not one of providing clarification to the work through the definition of the bodily milieu from which the work has sprouted as a result of a collision between several ideas, concepts, and contexts. Rather, authorship "impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, and recomposition of fiction" to the only benefit of the author's brittle ego. In other words, the author is an "ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning."⁴⁵

The Architectural Hero, only interested in engaging in those projects that have the potential to reify his ego and transform him into an author, becomes simultaneously a tool of intellectual commodification that delimits the 'what', the 'how', and most cruelly, the 'who' of architectural knowledge production. By declaring ownership over concepts, propositions, and design strategies, he is obstructing their use, to the point that their potential to affect is nullified. And, even without the risk of being accused of plagiarism, who would be brave enough, humble enough, to accept the validity of existing concepts and design strategies without a modification that would suddenly make them 'original' or 'unique'; rejecting their chance to acquire authorship and declining the opportunity to make their individuality stronger? Authorship imprisons knowledge-flows into the logic of property and ownership, it turns them into objects to be owned. The architectural-object, the design-object, the theory-object. The architect-as-author becomes an ego-corporation, self-serving to himself: the only responsibility he has is towards his stakeholders.

What a foul tool that of authorship! As it is through its employment, that Capital can engulf into its machinic workings any knowledge production, even when such knowledge goes against its own axiomatics. It does so in three ways. First, capital claims ownership of ideas, notions, and concepts by, as we have seen, bestowing an

inflated value upon authorship. Simply put, the system is built in such a way that it is easier to inhabit it as an object-creator than through an instance of subjectivity that is non-unitary. As individualized subjects, we are all pushed towards object-production and, even if some of that creation produces lines that escape the brutal reterritorializing machine of capital, it is virtually a fact that some other individual, in its own exercise of 'I-ification', will appropriate those ideas and modify them ever so slightly so that they can be subject to commodification. For instance, 'Monopoly', the famous multi-player, economics-themed board game created by Lizzie Maggie in 1903 was produced as an educational tool to illustrate the negative impact that uncontrolled concentration of wealth in private monopolies has on society. Its socio-political foundations would disappear as soon as a man by the name of Charles Darwin started his own distribution of the game without Lizzie Maggie's consent. Nowadays devoid of any of its original social or economic commentary, the game has become a paradigm of unchecked capitalist greed in which winning can only happen through accumulation.⁴⁶

Second, capital reappropriates revolutionary movements and ideas by transforming its authors and main representatives into consumerist brands that replace their original intended meaning and purpose into vacuous and edge-less representations that, by becoming inoffensive for the capitalist and corporatist societies of

the Global North, can be commodified and consumed. Who knows how much the Che Guevara merchandising industry is worth!

Third, capital controls what ideas are being produced and reproduced by conditioning authorial creation to the individual's capacity to economically survive through such production. In other words, the viability of an idea is not based on its argumentation, but rather on the public's demand for it. Hence, as only mainstream ideas generate enough wealth for their authors to survive, the status and power of authorship is generally reserved to those whose intellectual production is friendly to the system. Are 'Instagram influencers' Gramsci's new 'organic' intellectuals?⁴⁷

Even if one is aware of this, the trap of authorship is a difficult one to avoid. How many revolutionaries have pushed their architectural praxis over the limits of capitalist axiomatics just to see their work reappropriated by the same antagonistic machinery; their ideas oversimplified into, out-of-context citations and vacuous images devoid of their original meanings that become part of someone's Pinterest board as inspiration for their design of a gentrified neighborhood, their commodified aesthetic (with a lower-case 'a'), or consumerist life-style of choice. Cedric Price, Superstudio, Constant Nieuwenhuys, and many more, all of them insurgents in their own merit, have become, by subordinating their content to the reification of their Ego, to their attachment to authorship, bland and ed-

geless; commodified into coffee-table books, monographic exhibitions, magazines, posters, and mugs. Finally acceptable for the system, they are now nothing but a friendly and apolitical brand, a name, an image, one that can be bought and sold with little concern for the ideas they once pioneered.

This is why most conversations on agency, creativity, and originality, as well as freedom and free-will, leave a sour taste in my mouth. What is we really want? Is it really a freedom to do what we think is right? The originality to open up the conversation? The creativity to come up with efficient and productive solutions? the agency to have a positive impact in the world? Or is it the freedom to strengthen my individuality? The originality to be differentiable? The creativity to copyright knowledge and obstruct its future use? The agency to obtain fame and glory? To reify our ego above all else? By the manner in which we idolize authors and inflate the value of authorship, I would argue that the latter questions are much more consistent with reality. A reality that is to blame for the emergence of the Christian Zealot, Foucault's fascist, and their self-destructive force: the Freudian 'being' has become such a crucial construction that when the working class see that Capital has alienated them from their labor-based path to a reified, authorial, ego, they desperately attach themselves to those ideologies that can offer them an outlet to pour, into the nation-object, race-object, and class-object, the fragili-

ty and brittleness of their own egos. As long as authorship, whether it is architectural or of any other kind, does not problematize, critique, and eventually reject the egomania of authorship, any conversation in regards to subjectivity and agency will not only fail to escape the trap of its own shortcomings but most importantly, will be perpetuating a form of existence and vital praxis that actively produces the same cruelty and savagery that we tend to strap tightly and stubbornly to a certain European country and a certain period as if it had been an abnormal and unrepeatable instance that will always stay in the past.⁴⁸

To liberate spatial praxis from the shackles imposed by Capital and the architectural hero, we need, first to open it up, to make it inclusive to other actors by rejecting the elitism and constraints of the architectural authorship. Architects must regain their own process of subjectivity by disengaging it from the production of an architectural-object (theoretical, unbuilt, or built) that reifies their identity as authorial beings. The first step is to negate the possibility of authorship by reuniting designing and building into the same co-generative process, thus, rejecting Architecture as the result of a genius individual tapping into the transcendental stream of euclidean geometry. For, what is architecture? An enclosure? A space for living? Is architecture space? A place? A non-place? A drawing, a building, an arrangement? If architecture is the enclosure of space, is then a valley between mountains ar-

chitecture? Is a stomach architecture? Any definitive answer that is given will come from someone who resides in its interior, who believes that architecture is universal. These questions have been asked and answered by countless theoreticians, architects, and scholars, and the validity of their answers cannot be measured in any other way than by the authority they themselves might command. The ridiculousness of the question manifests itself when I, an architecture student, try to give it an answer. What stops me from saying that, for example, architecture is a potato omelet? Of course, everyone would say that it is a stupid answer. But not because it is a bad answer per se, but because I command no authority. Everyone knows that if my name would be Goethe, a potato omelet wouldn't sound too bad, as neither does frozen music!

When Architecture and Construction come back together, the heterogeneity and spontaneity of their process overwhelm any intention of authorial appropriation. Experience does not sublimate into normative expertise or professionalization, as the artificial causality deployed in the design-build schism disappears. I would like to emphasize, however, that this is not about rejecting architectural knowledge but rather about releasing the architect from its lonely nuclear individuality into a busy collective periphery shared with a myriad of other agents. What in the past was a relation of antagonism⁴⁹ becomes one of collaboration in which architecture arises as a contingent

and ever-changing residuum of horizontal and affirmative conflicts that, if it must be frozen music at all, it surely resembles improvisational jazz more than it does classical music.⁵⁰

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38 Rand, A. (1996). *The Fountainhead* (Anniversary ed.). Signet.

39 Sessions, D. (2017). The Rise of the Thought Leader: How the superrich have funded a new class of intellectual. *New Republic*, 48–52.

40 Lorde, A. (2007). The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House. In C. Clarke (Ed.), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Reprint ed., pp. 110–114). Crossing Press.

41 *The connection between existential angst, reification of the subject, and the advent of merchant time is continued through the following quote: "A new ultimately chronophobic, existential orientation came into being, in which the individual human life and all the potential pleasure and satisfactions that it might bring were now endowed with a potentially high value. [...] A transformational force in the emergence of self-reflective time-consciousness of the individual who now was in the very process of defining him or herself as an individual, striving to live fully within newly appreciated mortal limits: a development at the very heart of the emergence of modernity."* For further reading: Trachtenberg, M. (2011). Ayn Rand, Alberti and the Authorial Figure of the Architect. *California Italian Studies*, 2(1), 6–8. <https://doi.org/10.5070/c321008972>

42 *Ibid.*, 3.

43 *Ibid.*, 5.

44 *Ibid.*, 15.

45 *For an in-depth analysis of authorship:* Foucault, M. (1984). What is an Author? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (First Edition, p. 119). Pantheon Books.


46 Chokshi, N. (2019, September 13). A New Monopoly Game Celebrates Women, but What About the One Behind the Original? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/12/us/ms-monopoly-lizzie-magie.html>

47 Although not addressing the, for the most part, unconscious production of thought going on in social media nowadays, Antonio Gramsci's text on the issue titled 'The Intellectuals' clearly illustrates the functioning of such cultural production. "The thinking and organising element of a particular fundamental social class. These organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong. [...] The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, [...] but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator." For further reading: Gramsci, A. (1992). *The Intellectuals*. In Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith (Trans.), *Selection From The Prison Notebooks* (11th Printing ed., pp. 1–10). International Publishers.

48 "We understand fascism only retrospectively, making us blind to the fascism to come." For further reading: Buden, B. (2016, October). *With the Blow of a Paintbrush: Contemporary Fascism and the Limits of Historical Analogy*. *E-Flux Journal*. Retrieved September 13, 2021, from <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/76/73534/with-the-blow-of-a-paintbrush-contemporary-fascism-and-the-limits-of-historical-analogy/>

49 Let's not forget the classic speech given by Howard Roark in 'The Fountainhead', portrayed by Gary Cooper, in his courtroom defense: "I designed Cortlandt. I gave it to you. I destroyed it. The form was mutilated by two second-handers who assumed the right to improve upon that which they had not made." For the full speech: *The Fountainhead Courtroom Speech by Howard Roark*. (2017, February 22). [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AX4MKIDvXLM>

50 Throughout both of Eugene W. Holland reader's guides for 'Anti-Oedipus' and 'A Thousand Plateaus' he makes use of improvisational or 'free' jazz as an analogy of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of deterritorialization, destratification, and the rhizome. The first instance of its use happens here: Holland, E. W. (1999). Preface. In *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (1st ed.) (p. ix) Routledge.



The Accident: New Tectonics of Subjectivity

These authorial obsessions that the architectural hero has decided to inhabit, imprisoning himself in a windowless psychiatric ward and squeezed into a self-imposed straitjacket of self-reference and solipsism are rather extensive and universal. Consequently, it would be a methodological mistake, as well as an exercise on arrogance, to think uniquely through architectural conceptualization and praxis at the time of producing an alternative subjectivity. This position of rejecting architecture as the primeval and omnipotent force of change and transformation does not only derive from the obvious need to 'think outside the box' but most importantly, it works as a critical effort (shared

by many other people) to problematize the sacrosanctity of its miraculated powers to make a better world, as well as to decenter it in order to map more productive peripheral networks in which the middle is not an inaccessible mountain-top inhabited by an omniscient and omnipotent divine discipline to which the others are subordinate, but rather a valley, where the peripheries naturally fall down together into relations of commonality and inter-fertility.⁵¹

Unfortunately, the large majority of contemporary iterations of architecture as praxis and the instances of actualization of architectural objects, even when taken in their full extent (from built objects to theoretical conceptualization) fall prey to the charms of the architectural hero of old and quickly try to claim a position of superordination which generally leads to either uncontrolled ego-mania when the architect is successful or the sublimation of the 'client-as-pimp' when it is not. The rotting is so profound that it is crucial to venture outside of the symptomatic architectural object and delve into the spatial agent, the architectural subject of production itself, in order to avoid being trapped into the former (the object), which has become nothing else than the manifestation of the micro-fascist and egomaniac ills that plague the latter (the agent).

Therefore, as stated in the previous parts of the text, the issue lays neither on architecture nor on design, but on the subjectivity that makes that architecture and that design happen. I have made clear in earlier chap-

ters the shortcomings and toxicity inherent in the current fragile iteration of the complete 'I', and, it is precisely from the rubble and ruins left standing that I will engage in the Anthropotektonic process of producing an alternative iteration of subjectivity, one that is contingent, situational, non-unitary and anti-humanist: a dive into the Posthuman ocean.⁵²

If 'Pastoral Power' drove the crystallization of the forces that produce (and are reproduced by) the Ego, what sort of power system has to be discovered to engage in a posthuman interplay of subjective tectonics? It is in Foucault's most abstract notion of power as the "multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization", where we can envision the primordial quanta that fundamentally constitute power relations, not just as unequal interactions between social bodies (individual or collective) but, most importantly, as the primeval force that drives matter's productive self-organization.⁵³ Power systems need of motion, of speed, to crystallize as an assembling force. The first instance of Power originates in the 'becoming' of matter, as it is then that the first inequality, the first difference in a sea of repetition, the atomic differential (dx) of potential, arises from the opposition between the 'everythingness' of matter and the 'nothingness' of the void. This potential that emerges from difference, imbues of motion every thought, every particle of the universe, every flow of

energy. It is the vitality of existence, the unstoppable force of sentience.⁵⁴ It is neither good nor bad, it just is. It is the 'potentia' of Spinoza's spontaneous popular movement and the 'puissance' of Deleuze's typhoon.^{55, 56} As Foucault said, "Power is everywhere."⁵⁷

These potential differentials, dynamic and contingent, are the building blocks of the universe. Their inherent fluxes of latent energy are assembled together forming molecules, organisms, societies, cultures, and planets. They also assemble subjectivities. The Anthropotekton, a surface in which all those flows, old, new, and ever-changing, are recorded, becomes a virtually infinite library of potentials, all of them engaging in ephemeral, dialectical, and dialogical interactions from which a myriad of subjective assemblages arise, most of them disappearing instantaneously and others, such as the ego, rising above all as a self-appointed despotic master that, in an effort to avoid its factual impermanence, has immobilized the Anthropotekton and arrested Power, corrupting puissance into its lowest form: pouvoir.⁵⁸

In the following lines, I will start to sketch the outlines of a subjectivity that frees Power, as well as the flows of potentiality that form it, from its Oedipal prison by embracing the natural ephemerality of subjectivation. A subjectivity that doesn't crumble when faced with the uncertainty of living, one that thrives on inclusion, collaboration, and generosity instead of flourishing on 'othering'. An

'I' that acknowledges the collectivity of its own milieu, one that happily accepts its role as a node in the universal rhizome instead of manically trying to become the primordial trunk of an arborescent construction.⁵⁹

But, how is such a subjectivity constructed? What differentials of potential have to be assembled and exploited and which ones have to be discarded? What are the necessary tectonic interplays between those potentialities for those subjectivities to arise? I have to admit that it is difficult to answer those questions when the subjective modality of the ego is thoroughly ingrained in us and our epistemological workings. I propose, perhaps due to my architectural background, that in order to find out about the processes of subjectivation (plural, because those processes are situational and therefore unique), it is necessary to subordinate their tectonics to their topological loci, that is, to their macro/micro-site. If we go back to the start of this text, we can understand the question of 'am I up to me?' as a site, a geography, in which the two possible answers we gave are the two topological extremes, the maximum of the 'yes' and the minimum of the 'no'. Heaven and hell. Both of these intensities are not only inhospitable extremities, but, by virtue of being the highest and lowest points, are also cosmogonically stale and lethargic: Since they are complete and absolute, nothing happens. Those who place the process of subjectivation at either limit (the 'no' of the Homo Historicus and the 'yes' of the Capitalist) are, therefore, setting

themselves up for disappointment: if there is no speed, no movement, no potential differential, how can there be the connections and disruptions that constitute the process of subjectivity? They are looking for it in the wrong place!

The Anthropotekton, the process of subjectivation, is the libidinal speed of the connections, the anti-productive differentials of the breaks; either going-up or going-down, but it must never stay still. To release it from its prison, we must depart from those absolute limits and search for the point of maximum instability, where the control of the ego and the control of history cannot reach: the inflection point. The subject I propose is founded in that differential gap, inhabiting liminality, existing in-between the cosmic death (what is given to us) and the divine Ego (what we search for), always moving closer to one and then closer to the other, like a pendulum, nomadic and humbly stable, in other words, adaptable and ever-changing according to its situational intensities.

What form does the micro-site of this subject, the inflection point, take in its actualization? I would argue that it is the pure accident, both in its affirmative construction as 'serendipity', as well as in its negative construction as 'catastrophe' what this instance of subjectivity inhabits, always on the outside of the methodology of history and death as well as ungraspable by the totalizing construction of the divine self and the totalizing fascist. This is indeed a very small space to inhabit, and it is counter-in-

tuitive to assign freedom, autonomy, agency, and even creativity to that which can be controlled the least. But it is exactly there, in the realm of the uncontrollable, that we can escape the chains of our own self-discipline and the need to be divine, as well as face the overwhelming and nihilistic conception of the cosmos. For, the free subject, understood as an instance of pure miraculated agency, autonomy, and freedom, can only arise unrestrained; this lack of a tight leash does not occur through 'freedom-of-choice', 'free-will', or 'self-sufficiency', but rather through the raw chance and luck that permeates the flows of life. How important to embrace the contingency and uncertainty of it. To comprehend that living should make you shiver, like a chill. That life is, as Clarice Lispector would put it, "as violent as an agony, [...] dirty, perishable, hers. [...] And for an instant the wholesome life she had led up until now seemed like a morally insane way to live. [...] Because life was in peril. She loved the world, loved what had been created – she loved with nausea. [...] her heart had filled with the worst desire to live."⁶⁰ There is no purer freedom than when the breakfast's toast lands butter-side down!

Although this proposition might, at face-value, be deemed as purely rhetoric, it could not be further from the truth. Surprise, by virtue of its irreversible nature, becomes the metaphysics of non-linearity and complexity systems. The notion of the accident as the micro-site of the proposed subjectivity has strong pragmatic bearings,

ranging from its fundamental presence in the microscopic genetic, and epigenetic biological evolution, to its crucially generative role in the macroscopic alloplastic production of culture and concepts. Foucault delves into the latter while discussing Nietzsche's view on history, describing it as a "profusion of entangled events" that "do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention and their attraction is not that of a conclusion, for they always appear through the singular randomness of events."⁶¹

These instances of trans-stratic accidental praxes let a glimpse on their inherently collective and non-unitary structures in which serendipity or disaster takes place through the interaction of different bodies in their most general understanding. Going back to the example of the buttered toast: there are many bodies to blame for it! Jokes aside, It is at those moments of collective surprise that we are truly us, that we can inhabit agency, creativity, and originality collectively as the result of collaborative serendipity in which many bodies, by their willingness to affect and be affected by each other, are coauthors of subjectivities, thus, recovering them from the tight grasp of the totalizing ego that appropriates them as objects of the idiosyncratic divine genius.

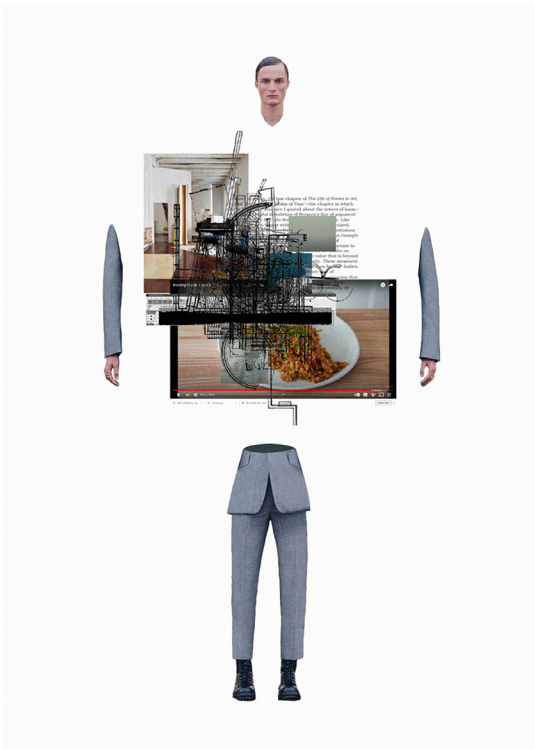
Freed from the shackles of individual existence, our task becomes to put the accident in its righteous place and to embrace it, above the cosmological order and the religion of the self. We must dedicate our lives and deaths

to it, become its ambassadors and flow within its winding creek. How freeing to realize that we are nothing but a cumulation of serendipities! That there is not an evolution nor a progression but rather an assemblage. An assemblage of surprises! A sedimentation of disasters! How beautiful and pure would be to create a history of serendipity.

An accident is, in fact, nothing but a productive break. A moment in which an 'unexpected' event slashes one or many connections in order to allow for new ones to be created. It is from those breaks, which slowly but surely form a library of connections and disjunctions, where the new subject arises. The disruptions become the building blocks of the tectonics of subjectivity. Yet, it would be a mistake to make the resulting subject a passive entity of such randomness. Even if the accident is an unexpected and uncontrollable productive and destructive force, it is our choice not only to embrace its affect on us, whatever it might be, but also to search for it at every turn, to precipitate it through our actions, not with the intention of mastering it, but hoping that through the proliferation of accidents, of breaks, we will arrive at serendipity: "chance is not simply the drawing of lots, but raising the stakes [...], and giving rise to the risk of an even greater chance."⁶²

Don't we already function similarly? Isn't education, at its core, an attempt to catalyze accidental learning through the physical and intellectual positioning of our bodies in institutions and schools of thought? When read-

ing a book, or attending a lecture, isn't a matter of luck, of chance, how much information we are going to get out of it? Isn't, as well, completely unexpected how that accidentally absorbed information will not only affect our own processes of subjectivity but also catalyze another set of unforeseen surprises?



'I' as an Assamblage of Accidents.

This is how the accident becomes productive for the architect. Not by randomizing the act of design through a formalist drawing of lots, but rather by acknowledging that the potential of architecture lays on its capacity to catalyze, like a butterfly's single flap, a chain reaction of unexpected events and unpredicted consequences. The architectural-object, due to the sheer amount of subjectivities it affects through the terraforming of our intellectual and physical contexts, has the potential to maximize the probability of a serendipitous event. Praxis, then, becomes a teleological gamble in which the goal is not to give a brief-based, one-sided solution to a spatial problematic but rather to find those macro and micro-sites and spatial intensities that once activated have the capacity to maximize accidental production, as well as the number of agents that can inhabit those instances, leading to much more powerful, collaborative and inclusive interventions, approaching the same issue structurally rather than tangentially.

By putting the force of the accident in the foreground of the process of subjectivity as well as at the core of architectural praxis, I can address the two main contingencies that paralyze and haunt the contemporary architect. First, the severe dependency on the authorial narcotic gets automatically ruptured. Serendipity and catastrophe become the only possible authors of the architectural object, rendering its appropriation by the Ego

impossible. The figure of the genius author, "so different from all other men" disappears once the accident takes its rightful place as the creator and sole authority.⁶³ Secondly, the misplaced transformational force that the architectural hero and his 'white-savior' complex have tried to imbue architecture with, is withdrawn and handed over to chance, embracing the fact that it is virtually impossible to anticipate the impact that an architectural intervention might have in an intellectual or spatial context. The ripples of this paradigm shift are quickly felt through the feeble axiomatic structure that supports the so-called autonomy of the architectural profession, as well as the hitherto assumed supremacy of the experts that inhabit and defend it uncompromisingly. The authorial force of the accident gains primacy as the overarching ecology of contingencies that guides existence, overwhelming and paralyzing the misanthropic architect with the stink, discharge, and secretion that comes with living, something that uncannily resembles the much more comfortable scatological exercise in which he currently finds himself, that of introducing his head up and into his own anus in search for the eternal essence of geometry, order, and proportion, which once found, will (somehow, for this is never explained) surely ensure the enforcement of a morality worth of the modern man's divinity.⁶⁴

This exercise of resurfacing the immanent futility that surrounds us with the sole aim of providing the

profession with an abstract hallucination of autonomy is nothing but the dark and deep shadow that an unchecked and untreated fear of uncertainty casts over the real. I must confess that as much as I yearned to reach this point in my arguments, I cannot stop myself from being overcome by sorrow and pity when seeing the ever-confident, all-encompassing architectural hero lose his footing in that treacherous climb towards the heavens and fall into the abyss to which he truly belongs. And what a fall that is! By the time he comes crashing down, the floor sticky with the blood and entrails of a demigod, those with the stomach to look will only see a broken man, unable to deal with the cloying agony of the earthly, the enthralling torments of the mundane, and the painful delight of mortality. A shadow in a moonless night, he can only wither but never perish, for he who has given himself to a false god has already committed suicide. And since the architectural hero is nothing but a man, he can only die once.

The question then becomes the following: will the architect, in his swift plummet, drag the innocent passerby that is architectural praxis into the depths of ignominy? The answer is, of course, no. Removing him from the authorial position and stripping him out of his fallacious primacy does nothing but ironically swaddle praxis with the much desired but hitherto never achieved autonomy and freedom. Not attained to brace and underpin the frail ego of the architect but to reinhabit the ecological continuum

of the real in all of its dependency, vulnerability, earthliness, and situatedness. Those that are willing to liberate architecture from the shackles of the eternal, the mathematical, and the geometrical, as well as those that are brave enough to take their praxis into the realm of the 'every day', will imbue the discipline with a renewed vitality, taking it into the much more grounded, much richer, fertile grounds of the valley of rhizomatic multiples. To do that it is crucial to exchange absolute order for accidental chaos, the eternal object for continuous process, the administrative and measurable site for the epigenetic territory, a transcendental atemporality for idiorhythmic rhizomatic networks, the egotistic 'I' for a subjectivation of difference, exclusionary expertise for inclusive skill, and a fragmentative profession for holistic ecology.⁶⁵

However, a question – and a cardinal one for that matter – still lingers behind this more earthly architecture, for even if a rough methodology has been described, an examination on why such grounding is superior has not been carried through yet. This glaring hole in the argumentation becomes all the more poignant through the embrace of the accident as the main creative force as it becomes very difficult to make a judgment of value in a reality constructed by the absurd. It is, therefore, very important to be aware that within this complete acceptance of the accident, chance, and the contingent as the only gods worth our time, there is a considerable risk. The risk does not

lie in going so far that we might arrive at the same place we started from, as much as in the impossibility to answer the 'Why' of anything without seemingly making a leap of faith. It is extremely easy to conclude that if everything is subject to chance not only architecture but existence as a whole becomes a pointless endeavor. Why an earthly architecture instead of an eternal one? Why put a considerable effort into architecture if the outcome is dependent on a myriad of variables that I cannot control? Why not lose ourselves in total debauchery if existence is a game of chance? Why keep on living if nothing matters? Chance does not only destroy the eternal but also destroys hope, and when the absurd is the only possible outcome when someone undergoes self-deconstruction without being aware of this nihilist danger from the outset, the resulting crumbling of purpose, hope, and fate will surely lead towards absolute and total despair.

It is through Albert Camus's work that it is possible to find a way to not only cope with this destruction but to even embrace affirmatively the total acceptance of our absurd and accidental existence. For him, the contingent and temporal journey gains primacy over the transcendental and eternal destination to the point that the latter is ignored, the act of existing in itself obtaining value as a revolt against the eternal and as an instance of osmosis into the accidental material continuum. Rather than the producer of the work of art, it is the individual that be-

comes the work of art, not as an object, but rather as an experience of the absurd existence, only finalized in death, when the conflict of the "human need (for the eternal) and the unreasonable silence of the world" is no more.⁶⁶ Being impossible for me to paraphrase him satisfactorily, I will humbly quote him extensively to support my position:

"To work and create 'for nothing', to sculpture in clay, to know that one's creation has no future, to see one's work destroyed in a day while being aware that, fundamentally, this has no more importance than building for centuries - this is the difficult wisdom that absurd thought sanctions. Performing these two tasks simultaneously, negating on the one hand and magnifying on the other, is the way open to the absurd creator. [...] It is also the staggering evidence of man's sole dignity: the dogged revolt against his condition, perseverance in an effort considered sterile. It calls for a daily effort, self-mastery, a precise estimate of the limits of truth, measure and strength. It constitutes an asceticism. All that 'for nothing', in order to repeat and mark time. But perhaps the great work of art has less importance in itself than in the ordeal it demands

of a man and the opportunity with which it provides him of overcoming his phantoms and approaching a little closer to his naked reality."⁶⁷

What hitherto was a free fall towards relativism, despair, and suicide (in that order), Camus transforms it into an empowering path, albeit treacherous and painful, through which the architect regains a dignifying and brave consciousness and lucidity of the real that allows them to intuit an existence and an architectural praxis which has exchanged the intellectual suicide that comes with 'hope' and 'purpose' (which hide the will for the totalizing eternal), as well as physical suicide (which equally hide the will for the totalizing eternal, as death becomes the only path towards the absolute, atemporal divine) for an uncompromising earthly existence. This train of thought provides us with an answer to the 'why' regarding the dichotomy of the abstract and the eternal on the one hand, the contingent and the dependant on the other, and our preference for the latter. If living is understood as the conscious struggle of inhabiting the gap between intellectual and physical suicide through perseverance and a sense of dignity despite the futility of it, our creation, that is, our praxis as architects, must therefore follow our thought and join it in its rejection of divine unity, and embrace diversity and revolt. Creation becomes a method for living, with uncompromis-

ing resolve, unwavering passion, and determined love, for ourselves and the others, our existence becoming, resembling Sisyphus, an act of insurrection against god's fate:

"At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks towards the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock. If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? [...] The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.."⁶⁸

This hopeless sense of dignity and responsibility to think, live, and create without appeal is what allows the architect to engage positively with the absurdity of the real. The suicidal tension present in the tectonic play of subjectivation that arises from the encounter between the deconstructed and conscious self, and the accidental and absurd reality is successfully resolved without it resulting in an instance of intellectual or physical disembodiment, finally unlocking the tremendous potential that the continuous revolutionary inhabitation of the accidental gap provides. Embodying this subjective construction becomes the foundation

of a Sisyphean architecture, one that arises from within rather than being imposed from without, an architecture of the profane that mercilessly shatters the sacred, placing the intensity of life over the 'extensity' of the gods and flattening the canonical landscape of architecture that is currently densely populated by feebly constructed eternal truths, making space for the terraforming of a much more suitable axiomatic topos.

Notes //

51 *"Spatial agency ruptures this professional closure, first in its inclusion of others, amateurs, in the processes and secondly in its rejection of the building as the sole source and representation of expertise."* For further reading: **Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture (1st ed.).** Routledge.

52 Braidotti, R. (2013). *The Posthuman* (1st ed.). Polity.

53 Foucault, M. (1990). *The Deployment of Sexuality*. In R. Hurley (Trans.), *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (Vol. 1, pp. 92–93). Vintage Books.

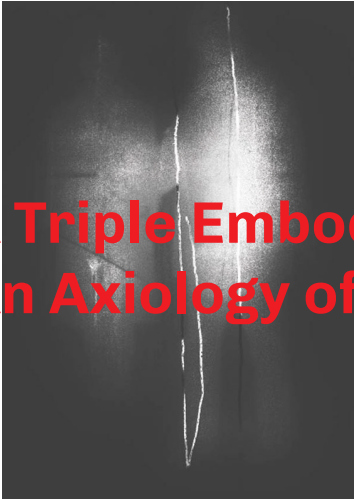
54 *This refers to Braidotti's notion of Zoe as "the dynamic, selforganizing structure of life itself (that) stands for generative vitality. It is the transversal force that cuts across and reconnects previously segregated species, categories and domains."* For further reading: **Braidotti, R. (2013). Post-Anthropocentrism: Life beyond the Species.** In *The Posthuman* (1st ed., pp. 60). Polity.

55 Field, S. L. (2020). Introduction. In *Potentia: Hobbes and Spinoza on Power and Popular Politics* (pp. 1–5). Oxford University Press.

56 SUB-TIL productions. (2020, August 22). *L' Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze: J comme Joie* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyXMmx-2Ofgs>

57 Foucault, M. (1990). *The Deployment of Sexuality*. In R. Hurley (Trans.), *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (Vol. 1, pp. 63). Vintage Books.

- 58 *The Library is a reference to Jorge Luis Borges' Library of Babel, as it would have a similar meta-physical construction. I really recommend this read:* Borges, J. L. (2022). *The Library of Babel*. Antares.
- 59 Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2020). Introduction: Rhizome. In B. Massumi (Trans.), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Bloomsbury Revelations ed., pp. 1–27). Bloomsbury Academic.
- 60 Lispector, C. (2018). Love ('Amor'). In *Daydream and Drunkenness of a Young Lady* (Penguin Modern Classics ed., Vol. 15, pp. 28–29). Penguin Random House.
- 61 Foucault, M. (1984). Nietzsche, Genealogy, History. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (First Edition, p. 88-89). Pantheon Books.
- 62 Ibid., 89
- 63 Ibid., 118
- 64 Corbusier, L. (1985, February 1). *Towards a New Architecture* (Dover Architecture) (Reprint). Dover Publications
- 65 Sheppard, L. (2012, December). From Site to Territory. *Bracket*, 2, 179–184. <https://brkt.org/>
- 66 Camus, A. (2005, August 25). XXX. In J. O'Brien (Trans.), *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Great Ideas, pp. 26). Penguin Books.
- 67 Ibid., 110-111
- 68 Ibid., 117



A Triple Embodiment: An Axiology of Presence

Unwilling to fall into the mirage of the architectural hero's absolute axiomatics, partial ones must do for the Sisyphean architect. It is in partiality that we can find the strength to inhabit the accidental and absurd nature of existence without craving the soothing palliative of eternal abstraction. Whereas the total is at odds with the accidental, the partial thrives within it, for it is open-ended and therefore is subject to and in search of constant change. An absolute axiomatic is a stale system, simplifying the complexities of life into an inherently obsolete model. It is the plan everyone has before the punch lands.⁶⁹ The partial, on the other hand, cannot be stale, cannot be obsolete,

for it is a journey without destination, an existence without the crutches of hope, an act of revolt against the divine and the eternal, the violence of the spontaneous and visceral counterpunch.

If absolute axiomatics requires transcendence, partial axioms require presence. Bodies -stinking, leaking, and rotting-, mocking the gods with their imperfections. They are accidental compositions of a myriad of points of view and each of them is an unexpected journey, a saturation of chance.⁷⁰ They possess the gift of existing partially, and through their presence, are capable to affect and be affected. Embracing the intensity of the body's partiality instead of trying to mask it through the production of eternal truths becomes empowering for it is this scorn towards the need for the divine that dignifies and produces agents.

The primacy of embodied presence over disembodied transcendence takes the attention away from the architectural object and gives it back to the subject, for it is in the constant struggle of the latter to exist without appeal in an absurd world that becomes the basis for its subjective foundation instead of relying on object production for the 'I's' definition. As a result of this operation, the hegemony of architecture-as-object (together with architectural authorship) becomes obsolete and is replaced by architecture-as-action, a conceptual device that is only actualized when inhabited by partial subjectivities. A partial axiomatic system of presence must, therefore, ad-

dress the tectonics of the subject rather than those of the architectural object.

Presence is axiomatized and actualized through three different partial embodiments: the situated body, the conscious body, and the revolutionary body.

The situated body, derived from Donna Haraway's situated knowledges, must be the first step in this axiological production, for the rot of the eternal and the universal relies on the disembodied subject that, through a make-believe transcendence of its corporeality into a mist of omnipresence, claims objectivity for itself, gazing downwards towards the earth and its dwellers, marking them as mere objects to be consumed and exploited in a savage mass production of knowledge and meaning. The normative role of the architect mandates a diluted existence, becoming almost like a traveling circus, populating vast geographical expanses with their comical performances and grotesque creations where the soil that supports them and those who inhabit them are nothing but passive observers that, by the time they realized they've overpaid and that the show is neither good nor unique, there is no one to boo anymore, for the circus has already folded its tent, the animals have been put back in their rolling cages, the magician has packed their tricks, and the clowns are nowhere to be seen, most probably busy trying to con the major of the adjacent town into hiring their services. In other words, the architect, as a transient, passing figure,

with no roots and no emotional connection to the sites and the people that will suffer them, is freed from any sense of responsibility, for the existing distance between them and the territory creates an unbreachable wall, a mirage, immune to the consequences of their own actions and un-touchable by praise or condemnation.

It is critical, then, to stay. To create emotional bonds with the territory, with its people, to become involved in its daily becomings and to affect it as much as to let ourselves be affected by it. Being present, breaking that wall, makes us vulnerable to our own actions for it allows for their consequences to unravel. It grounds us. A site is not anymore another dimensioned blank slate in which to project our lazy, stylized lines but the street you walk through every morning to get to work, the old bookshop where you spent many afternoons when you were a small kid, the park where you had your first kiss, or the field where your friends' grandmother has olive trees. Similarly, people are not anymore an amalgamation of statistics to which certain needs and habits are presupposed. They are Juan, a retired factory worker that spends his time carving wood, taking care of his grandkids, and complaining about a disc herniation; Marisol, a journalist that studied business and struggles to disconnect from her work; Ahmed, an immigrant that misses his country but wakes up every day proud of what he has accomplished.

The construction of this emotional network acts as

a wrecking ball, leveling once and for all the fortress of the authorial architect, from its battlements to its throne, the flattened ruins becoming a fertile ground in which spatial praxis is done horizontally, allowing for a collectivization of agency that makes design into a collaborative, partial, imperfect and open-ended process while at the same time imbues each agent with a sense of responsibility, not to the law, but to the territory.⁷¹ Consequently, every decision, no matter its importance, becomes saturated with the emotional weight of its repercussions, for the architect will also suffer them. Designing, then, loses its autonomy and embraces dependency, contingency, and the humus of the earth, realizing that the clash of forces between Sisyphus and gravity, of men against the divine, is subordinated to the mountain in which it happens, to its sharp ridges and deep crevices, to the steepness of its slopes and the drama of its relief, to those that roam through it, those that shelter in it, and those that grow from it. For when Sisyphus picks his rock again after it has rolled back down, looks up towards the unreachable summit, and gets ready to start his perpetual hike, he does not see the eternal destination, but rather the myriad of journeys he has already done, each different to the next, the paths changed forever by the carrier of the stone and he himself changed by what he encountered then and there. Now on the way up he makes sure to pick up the scents of the beautiful Witch Hazels and Winter Jazmines growing on the northern slope, as well

as visit the fox who might accompany him for a while in exchange for some of the wild berries he picked up in his previous descent. Similarly, the architect will, in their futile but rebellious acts of designation, knock on Juan's door to ask for advice on woodworking, call Marisol about the economic viability of a certain construction method, and meet Ahmed to chat about how he could feel more at home. Transforming what was an individual production into a mutual exploration.

The conscious body addresses a different but equally important instance of situatedness. Presence is actualized through the affirmative inhabitation of the landscapes of imagination and the integration of the mind into the ecologies of accidental subjectivity. Analogous to the situated body, the conscious body thrives within its own endless processual formation that enables an indomitable absurd existence immune to the woes of the divine. A truly conscious embodiment ruthlessly attacks those chimeras that coagulate thought by means of artificial and cheap simplification and frees the flow of the unconscious allowing it to escape the dogmatic categorization it has been subjected to, emerging from within the complexities and exuberant richness of life instead. When a conscious body inhabits architecture-as-action, the normative objectification of praxis that leads to its atrophy in the form of dull typological and morphological categorization is nullified, for a conscious agent has developed the necessary tools to

engage with the intensity of life without this homogenizing palliatives.

To inhabit the conscious body, then, one must be willing to engage first in a never-ending self-reflective process of deconstruction that allows us to map and understand our own inherent biases, partialities, and desires as well as the collective, emotional, and rhizomatic network to which they belong to. Every critical exploration into one's psyche becomes an epigenetic revolution of constant disassembly and reassembly. This text is, in fact, an expression of such an exploration. A literary device through which I have tried to process my inner existential conflict in an effort to find or produce a modus of existence that is grounded in the immanence of the real.

While the embodiments of situatedness and consciousness are crucial axioms needed to materialize the necessary vulnerability and grounding of partial existence, it is only through a revolutionary embodiment that it is possible for us to proliferate Anthropotektonic bowel movements and defecate completely the object-dependent processes of subjectivation and the resulting architectural praxis that stems from them. The revolutionary body provides partial existence with a new tectonics of subjectivity that is made independent of the object by first acknowledging its own construction's absurdity and futility, a nihilist realization that can only lead to intellectual or physical suicide without reframing our unbounded earthly presence

as a revolutionary Sisyphean act. Conscious revolt against the eternal gods for appropriating the unchangeable absurdity of our fate as a tool to make us their subjects is what reframes and fuels the act of uncompromised and intense living, to the point that it liberates existence completely from the need to construct our own selves through the myth of divine purpose. In fact, existence becomes the purpose in itself, a way to gain vital sovereignty from self-imposed dogmas and blur the limits of the egocentric subject, destroying the podium of singularity we erected for ourselves and letting the dynamic process of subjectivation filter back into the immanent ecological continuum of the real. The autonomy of existence-in-itself becomes the key building block of our new and unchained subjectivities. It provides us with a path forward that arises from within, a clear immutable journey embedded into the imperfect and partial ground we inhabit, one that does not desperately look for a guiding light elsewhere because the trail is simultaneously the guide, the passage, and the destination.

For the architect and architectural praxis the consequence of this partial axiomatic system and the three bodies that contrive it is groundbreaking. Firstly, by grounding and embedding oneself into the territory and becoming vulnerable to it we let the site itself become the project.⁷² The territory as a whole and, therefore, every aspect of its multiplicity regains agency, and since the

architect exists as just another entity within it, designing becomes less of an imposition and projection of a foreign ego and more of a collective exploration, in which each entity engages into a neverending process of shaping this shared landscape. The role and competence of the architect are those of finding their place within the territory, both as an entity that affects others through its actions, as well as one that is affected by those of others.

Secondly, by being conscious of the biases and habituations we inhabit, we are able to escape formulaic and stylized ways to engage in architectural production. This frees the architect to explore different ways to approach their praxis as well as the tools they use, perforating the self-imposed professional limits and touching upon infinitely diverse trans- and adisciplinary rhizomatic networks of knowledge production. In addition, it makes impossible the creation and propagation of dogmatic understandings of what architecture should be, expanding exponentially the affective potential of the architect's expertise and, due to making impossible the creation of a metaphysical framework that defines the architectural object, it allows not only for divergent explorations but most importantly for an endless territorial engagement that ensures a firm sense of responsibility towards their own production that only comes to an end with death.

Lastly, by understanding existence as a revolutionary exercise and the unraveling of it as the vital pur-

pose within itself, the architect is able to encounter the accidental nature of the real in a productive and affirmative manner, forgoing globalized and commodified iterations of progress and betterment as legitimate impulses of architectural production and replacing them with localized ethics of affirmation. In this way, the architect is able to reintroduce and collaborate with the same local entities that would have been displaced, disenfranchised, or even destroyed in the name of a gentrifying iteration of progress. The revolutionary body, and, thus the revolutionary architect see the fall of the rock not as the torture of the gods imposed on those who are conscious of the absurdity and futility of life but as a way to prolong the journey. It is in the punishment, in the eternal pitfalls that coat the destination with elusiveness, where victory can be found and the intensity of life is at its purest. For it is this debilitating partiality, this sense of constant failure that is so human and which impedes us to reach perfection, the realm that the architect and their praxis must inhabit. The realm of uncompromised and revolutionary living. I am happy to keep pushing the rock.

Notes //

69 Nag, A. (2021, January 5). "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." - How did the famous Mike Tyson quote originate? Sportskeeda. Retrieved September 22, 2022, from <https://www.sportskeeda.com/mma/news-everybody-plan-get-punched-mouth-how-famous-mike-tyson-quote-originate>.

70 Deleuze, G. (n.d.). Sur Leibniz. In Webdeleuze [Lecture]. <https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/50>.

71 *"We need to learn in our bodies, endowed with primate color and stereoscopic vision, how to attach the objective to our theoretical and political scanners in order to name where we are and are not, in dimensions of mental and physical space we hardly know how to name. So, not so perversely, objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. [...] Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see."* For further information: Haraway, D. (1988). *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 582–583. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>

72 *"The investigation of a specific site is a matter of extracting concepts out of existing sense-data through direct perceptions. Perception is prior to conception, when it comes to site selection or definition. One does not impose, but rather exposes the site-be it interior or exterior. Interiors may be treated as exteriors or vice versa. The unknown areas of sites can best be explored by artists."* For further information: Smithson, R. (1996). *Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site*. In J. Flam (Ed.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (p. 60). University of California Press.

Reflection: A Snapshot of a Never-ending Process

My intention by choosing the Explore Lab graduation studio was to challenge myself to not only be able to develop a satisfactory architectural exercise that would meet the requirements of a graduation project but most importantly to work on the necessary skills, discipline, and autonomy to do so successfully. It is, in fact, the difficulty inherent in working independently that I have ended up cherishing the most out of this experience. I believe, as well, that undergoing the process of producing the methodological structure and academic guidelines needed to take what originally was an undeveloped fascination and transform it

into a tangible architectural project has provided me with a great number of valuable lessons that will be incredibly helpful to kickstart my professional career.

Aside from the novelty that entails such an experience, this graduation project has led me to a substantial deepening of my architectural knowledge as well as delving into many other disciplines that have enriched enormously my praxis. What started as a somewhat superficial exploration of the responsibility of the architect toward fascist architectural production, rapidly evolved to a much more thorough and profound analysis of my own subjective construction and the ramifications that my own biases, habits, and beliefs might have in the 'designing' that I engage in. I must admit that the change in scope seemed daunting at first but the feedback and support I received from my mentors proved to be essential in developing the tools needed for me to engage in my own explorative deconstruction of the self.

Once the scope and the goals of the research were set, and the main methodology defined, the research process went smoothly, making sure that every decision I made could be justifiable through existing literature and architectural precedent. Unfortunately, after a successful P2, I found myself struggling to bridge the research phase with the design phase. The theoretical focus of the former made the transition very difficult and I became stuck, unable to propose a design exercise that would emerge from

within the conclusions drawn from the research instead of making a superficial reference to them or engaging with them only tangentially. The next months after the P2 I worked on and proposed several ideas and paths that I could take going forward and, although many of those ideas have found its way into the project I have developed for the P4, none of them were strong enough to stand on their own merit, mostly due to the already mentioned lack of coherence in regard to the research material I had presented previously.

It was not until a month after doing the P3 presentation that I realized I needed to stop and reflect on my own progress. The decision that resulted from this introspection was that of withdrawing from the P4 presentation and extending my graduation project, so that I could, on the one hand, give myself time to regain some of the confidence and motivation I had lost, as well as, working through some personal issues, and, on the other, study the work I had carried out to date in order to find a crack that could lead me to break through those conceptual walls that I had built around myself. To do that I was helped by my mentors who directed me towards different avenues and managed beautifully to be critical with what I was showing to them while always being supportive. In the months after my withdrawal, I used their help to explore these different avenues and by the end of the academic year, the results from those explorations came together productively into

a clear path forward. This allowed me to reframe my approach to the project, rework the research I had done, and find and complete the missing link that was impeding me from affirmatively engaging in the design phase. The main difference from the 1st semester was that I approached this reworking of the research and the exploration of the design phase simultaneously, allowing me to build not one but many bridges that have enriched my architectural and academic outputs tremendously. Afterward, it became quite straightforward to define the constraints of the project, from its territorial grounding in my hometown to the existing conditions that defined the intention and approach of the intervention.

The process I have carried out until the P4 has been, firstly, one of an accumulation of information with the goal of creating a rich enough sediment and humus from which the architectural intervention could arise. Once that was achieved, I focused on technically developing the project in order to have a strong basis from which to complete my exploration into the subjectivity of the architect. My plans after the P5 are to use the technical developments of the project done until the P4 to introduce the contingencies, dependencies, and accidents that construct life into my architecture, challenging the misanthropic nature of the much of the discipline, through the production of working models based upon the printed drawings produced beforehand.

The project itself from the research to the design has been a pleasure to work on. It has challenged me to rethink the relationship between the architect and the users, displaying some of the biases that impeded me to collectivize the agencies of design and see the people within my projects and the territory that supports it as more than receivers of my work. It has also made me very aware of the existing fear of the architectural profession to let life into their buildings, and this is something that I would like to explore further in my professional career. I believe that my thesis, as well as my project, are part of a wider push toward a society with different priorities, one that does not concern itself so much with the ordering and hierarchization of its surroundings but rather a society that embraces the chaos in which it exists, a society in which its members have inherent value rather than it being conditional to the conscious marking of a certain individual and exploitative idea of territoriality.

All in all, as much as it has been an incredibly taxing process, I am very happy to have done this project and even if I feel now that I have already learned a lot, I am sure that the next few years are going to be full of discoveries that had, as their inception, this project.

