

# [de]Territorialization, the Role of our Brain in a Technological World

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## ABSTRACT

Since the turn of the 20th century, the act of design has gone through an exercise of problem-solving. It happened in the field of the city, architecture, or objects. Much of this discourse is present in the modernist manifestos. These goals are primarily related to Russian constructivism, in which many modern personalities were engaged. This problem-solving process, oriented toward an economic practice that articulated the available means to the proposed ends, was so necessary to the revolutionary spirit of the time. However, they answered the questions that the post-Russia zeitgeist of the Revolution intended to answer. The articulation of their intended function, coupled with the emergence of their utility, entrusted them with a good and abstract character in the city. However, in its genesis, the project contains much more than that. It cannot be merely the functional resolution of a problem. It must have the instability of that problem in its course, which becomes changeable in the search for the solution. As a result, the merely utilitarian character thus loses its initial grip. As Roger Scruton argues, the definition of a project methodology is complex if a method is indeed the correct word to use in the process. The method, that is, a path composed of specific tools to achieve a purpose, seems to us little convergent with the themes that should flow. To start from this assumption is to invalidate what we previously described as a fundamental part of the process of memory, which should have a high place in the project process. The design process is, in essence, the transit between the identification of a problem until it resolves (one, among many possible ones). To which we allude, it does not refer only to the project in Architecture but to a whole system that involves not only objects but also cities, in what we can understand as relationships with the body. More than a mere technical process, it involves an empirical component based on experience, which we define as physical and intellectual. The act of design, or project, must contain in its origin the state of emptiness, without preconceptions, that gag it. This state, which we wish to bring into discussion, is nothing more than the full potential of the task we want to accomplish.

**Keywords:** Project design, Hand, Brain, Emotions, Feelings

## INTRODUCTION

As a counterpart to the theme we initiated last year at this conference, this paper, in which both parts are engaged, involves the project practice, primarily its theoretical component. At the end of the previous text, questions were kept in place to help us get closer and closer to some answers or a

more refined set of questions. They can be put together on emerging issues that focus on the value of drawing as a pioneer in project practice. The hand interprets the brain's imagistic power in a joint effort, and emptiness is tangibly clarified. From this silence, which must also be present in the act of design, drawing is the perfect tool to organize memory. Memory is composed of fragments of past experiences stored in our unconscious. Memory serves as a conductor, although not always reliable, of the passage of time. Through it, we can organize our sense between past and present, helping us to remember the past and imagine the future. However, drawing is an intrinsic act of a project and has not always been precise in its proposal. In the specific field of Architecture, to which we report, or of this as dependent on the activity of design, only in Leon Batista Alberti (1404–1472) and other Renaissance thinkers, we find data that show its relevance. The practice was allocated between construction as art and construction as a craft. Alberti then makes the convergence between aesthetics and construction when referring to the architect's role - the association between lines and angles. It becomes even more apparent if we understand the follow-up of his proposal. The grouping of design practice, to construction, as a universal art. It is the property of the project to indicate the parts that compose the building so that the form of the building is implicit in its conception (Scruton, 1979/2010, p. 31). Today, the idea of the project moves away from Alberti's original idea. The project is something that is solved, starting from a dialectical process of the parts between themselves and the whole. There is no original idea, or if we want a basic concept, that permeates the whole process. If we consider Scruton's argument, the idea of the beauty of the object as a final product, we realize, through his argument, that this is only a by-product of the process, not immersed in the process of creation. However, to make our argument, the idea of personal memory, as a design process, we can make use of this discourse so that in the end, it fits our goal.

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Starting from this point, it is a leverage of a fundamental part of the design process and how the memory should have a high place in this project process. The design process is, in essence, the transit between the identification of a problem until resolving (one, among many possible ones). What we allude to does not refer only to the architectural project but to a whole system that involves not only objects but also cities, in what we can understand as relationships of the body. More than a mere technical process, it involves an empirical component based on experience, which we define as physical and intellectual. The act of conception, or project, must contain at its origin the state of emptiness, without prejudices, that would gag it. This state is nothing more than the full potential of the task we are to accomplish. This potential is not only that of starting from scratch or the always challenging task of facing a blank sheet of paper (Ginja, 2021). In essence, the concept of defamiliarization, as Kenya Hara (b. 1958) puts it, or Gilles Deleuze's (1925–1995) deterritorialization that we are dealing with here. However, the

term defamiliarization, applied by Hara, will serve as a starting point for the characterization of the concept of deterritorialization, which we seek to explain in the present text. In essence, it derives from the avant-garde posture of Modernism.

The Russian Formalists had a technical phrase to name the process - the foregrounding of the device (Călinescu, 1977/1987, p. 303). An example of this is the 1929 film *Человек с кино-аппаратом* (The Man with the Movie Camera), directed by Denis Arkadievitsh Kaufman (1896-1954), known as Dziga Vertov. The other widely known example that connects directly to defamiliarization is that of Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), as the author puts it through the German concept of *Verfremdungseffekt*, which we can relate to today as the alienation or estrangement effect. This concept can migrate the historical and crystallized gaze on a paradigm and link this same gaze to another perspective, ending us from a perceptual numbing of the world. These derivations from Russian formalism from which the term originates as *остранение* (strangeness), or from montage cinema, as we mentioned before (Jameson, 1998/2011, pp. 37–39). This attempt to put the world under the scrutiny of a new look, essentially stripped of preconceived classifications, is the proposal to find in the banal, in everyday life, the novelty, the surprise of the world, which wanted to be modern. The project thus finds the space from which it must begin. Individuality is a subject of personal experience, where memory and imagination mingle, leading to a new perspective of the gaze and its perception by the senses, a defamiliarization.

Nevertheless, another critical factor in the project is upstream of the problematic, or deconstruction, that we have been arguing. More than organizing concepts that try to reconnect the project to what we understand to be its genesis, it is also essential to understand it as an institution. Today, we will have difficulty finding examples of any activity without identifying it upstream in planning. Today, the project is not only a synonym of rigorous planning and a series of operations, hidden behind the capacity for rhetoric or eloquence in the discourse, erudite in the production of the city the building of the object. The project is thus a guarantee of quality for a program that sets out to achieve a result.

## **DETERRITORIALIZATION**

As in the centuries preceding Modernity, man sees himself as responsible for searching for a path that concentrates on himself the totalizing knowledge of the world. Whether this transformation is affected through writing, thought, or objects, the brain plays a unique role in this quest. We feel a change in everything, without anything becoming stable, and no doubt we continue to fear Modernity or what it may still represent for us today. The brain, the intellect, is, for its part, the component that makes this difference, deterritorialization.

The fundamental issue thus lies in the process of making visible and palpable the changes occurring in today's world to stabilize a world that is increasingly volatile through these new languages that technology enables.

Hence our note on the need to make the hand again an integral part of the change process. Everything constantly changes in today's world, but not everything can change simultaneously, which is the fundamental problem of human culture today. Something must remain stable for real change to occur. Nevertheless, change can only occur if we are aware of the visibility of these changes. Technology cannot be understood as a reducing medium but as a catalyst of possibilities for the future. As we have said, what assails us today is not new; it is something that has been with us for quite some time. The most prominent mutation we are experiencing is that this change is more intense today than before. According to Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992), the intensity with which sound moves from its sense becomes a force. The machine is not just a tool of the modern world but its protagonist. Deleuze and Guattari invoke Edgard Varèse (1883–1965) and his obsession with building a machine to produce sounds. It was not just a machine to reproduce them - something that would be as unholy for the music of the time as computer-aided drawing was for painting until recently. However, this machine that today we call a synthesizer was what made it possible to make the world real imagined by Varèse through the pre-set notes on the piano. A machine that could create sounds, empowering music to the emergence of a new set of control of all aspects of sound. Not only would the harmonic notes be able to be reproduced, but also the whole spectrum imagined between them, the variation of their intensity or their frequency. What the synthesizer potentiates is not only the music but what until then was only silence in music.

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The becoming of the creation process in music, which, along with Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) ready-made, opens and enables the potential and its decline. This process seems easy to appropriate and possible to reproduce due to its simplicity. They pass from the sublime act of production, from the origin of the cosmic force to the reproduction ad infinitum, the vulgarity, and noise (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/2007, pp. 436–437). It is necessary to understand territorialization and deterritorialization as concepts, which implies reconnecting with experiences we already know. We cannot start from absolute zero to create anything, so there is in the text a strong character of connection to the physical world of ideas or wherever one wants to start. For Varèse, the plane of departure is the music contained in its harmonic apparatus, in its octaves, territorialized, existing in the physical component of the piano. The deterritorialization process only happens because it starts from a fixed point, conditioned as a rule.

Its potency, it is becoming, resides in what, as a concept, can be liberated in music. The exact process takes place in Duchamp's work. What was territorialized as a status, not as a function? Deterritorialization happens when an object's status is subverted, or inverted, in the urinal's function into a fountain. The common, or communicating, a plane of existence between them is their value as an object, not their function, as we already mentioned in the previous chapter. The process of deterritorialization of the object is thus

somewhat similar to the technical essence of the object. Its structure is modified without necessarily departing from it or improving upon it. They can derive from the same family and constitute themselves as evolution without being forced to happen. What is at the origin of the technical object is its invention. As Gilbert Simondon (1924–1989) puts it - the gas engine follows the steam engine, as the diode follows the vacuum tube, but what has constituted itself as a genuine transition is the discovery of a new paradigm that provokes a new epistemology. This scheme does not exist in either the steam engine or the vacuum tube (Simondon, 1958/2016, p. 44). The synthesizer that Varèse imagined is the same one that would come to be made real at the end of his life; it is the perfect example of the technical object par excellence. We can understand the deterritorialization process through the synthesizer, starting from a common point that unites them - music and a territorialized object, such as the piano.

As a summary of the contribution that we can extract from the present investigation, we point out the structures that guide the problematics of the Project processes. We were able to point out the low condition as a product of the current time. This condition, which seemed to have been mitigated with the technological boom, reappears today as central. Although wrapped in a new theme that, as we have shown, involves the removal of the physical body from the human performance space, melancholy remains pertinent and current. In order to minimize the impact, as far as the conditions of human performance in the project domain are concerned, we proposed the themes that involve this questioning in the field of performance, mainly of the project agent and his physical relationship with the world. To this end, it is of utmost importance that the project activity became crossed by the amazement of (re)discovery, or the term we summoned - defamiliarization. We believe that this concept contains a new perspective that is fundamental for us to rethink a world exhausted with solutions and paths that appear to us as consolidated. Some may even be consolidated and proven as indicators of top solutions; however, especially in the overwhelming flow of information, it becomes increasingly pertinent to question these exact solutions. Getting rid of preconceived solutions is a fundamental attitude for the consolidation of Project processes.

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