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TITLE: **Space and spatiality: Re-conceptualising the Creative Urban**

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TITLE: **Spatial Instruments in an Age of Transforming Spatial Logics**

## **Introduction**

The following essay questions the use of spatial instruments in an age of transforming spatial logics. The transformation of cities are paired with the transformations of our societies, the spaces in which we reside, and our understanding of these corollary process. While Space Syntax departs from the supposition of a rational set of logics concerning space and connectivity as utilised through an instrument, it is embedded with assumptions based on 'hard' scientific truths. Apparently undisputable, new understandings on more abstract notions of space and spatiality, as well as new understandings on information-based knowledge have inspired scholars to rethink their disciplines in a more relational manner. A trans-disciplinary approach, as opposed to an inter-disciplinary one, presents itself more and more as perhaps the single most truly sensible manner through which life-related truths and understandings can emerge.

## **Transforming Logics**

Space, as a notion that simultaneously effects and affects our everyday lives, has perhaps never been so apparent in both academic and professional practises as in the last few years. In addition, all evidence shows, that this new multi-dimensional spatial discipline will only increase its presence in our daily discourse.

Knowledge, or what we process as knowledge information, has, and always will be in constant evolution. Space has been at the forefront of almost every major discovery starting from Isaac Newton's witnessing the force of gravity through the falling of an apple, till Alexander Graham Bells path to the telephone. But throughout this historical development, space remained within a Cartesian paradigm. A physical, geographical and gravitational force field *in* which we, and all our daily activities, operated *in*. The scientific discoveries effected even the arts, where perspective and the play on representation was, and still is constantly challenged. This relationship between mind, body and the world has constantly developed under tri-polar rigorous scrutiny, may it be through religious beliefs, or contested by the hard sciences, or re-evaluated by the philosophical, phenomenological (as taken up in spatial discourses), or social disciplines. It seems that the 20<sup>th</sup> century intensely facilitated the 'realities' that these three realms propagated, slowly interweaving a 'trialogue' (as opposed to dialogue) through which an advanced and inter-related understanding can be generated.

New and innovative notions of space started arising. The spatial realm, or spatial dimension reached new levels that allowed both critical and creative perspectives to position themselves *within* the spatial discourses, almost regardless of their conventional disciplines. A list of new notions of space as presented in Edward Soja's Thirdspace follows:

absolute, abstract, appropriated, architectonic, architectural, behavioural, body, capitalist, conceived, concrete, contradictory, cultural, differentiated, dominated, dramatized, epistemological, familial, fragmented, fresh, geometrical, global, hierarchal, historical, homogeneous, ideological, imagined, impossible, institutional, instrumental, leisure, lived, masculine, mental, natural, neutral, new, opaque, organic, original, perceived,

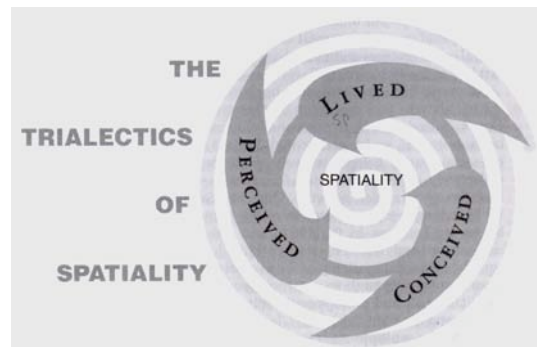
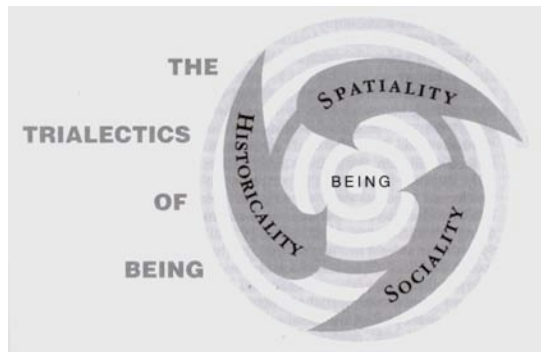
physical, plural, political, possible, pure, real, "real," representational, repressive, sensory, social, socialist, socialized, state, traditional, transparent, true, urban utopian and women's space. [Soja 1996, pg. 59]

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Henri Lefebvre introduced in his most prominent book, The Production of Space, an inter-related three-sided view on space, by introducing the notions of a 'perceived', 'conceived' and 'lived' space. While his earlier publication, Urban Revolutions, was a response (and in part a plea) to the cities political agenda to transform Paris to the first European metropolis, The Production of Space carefully investigates the socio-spatial paradigm. Also referred to as "The 'Social' Production of 'Social' Space" the book seeks to correlate our perception of space in a conceived reality and how our everyday engagement affects the layered life-worlds we appropriate. The almost naïve belief that politicians, planners, urban designers and architects had while structuring the world in which we operate was based primarily on an absolute belief in our understanding and the human cognition. The cognitive sciences, formulating their knowledge around perception, recognition, conception and reasoning all but include the actual *engagement* of the societies of subjects and objects it attempts to govern. The problematic of governing a meshwork of dynamic processes that take place in everyday urbanism fails to encapsulate the growing residues that 'seep' through this totalising reality. The leaks in the system are then only dealt with by overlaying yet another layer of governing regulations. This highly ordered and reactionary approach to 'urbanism' – as opposed to searching for an 'urban morphology' that facilitates the urban dynamics – was the underpinning that spawned the emergence of multiple instruments that could translate empirical data sets and further shield the information field of the regulatory system.

In Practice of Everyday Life Michel de Certeau comically states how our "ministers of knowledge have always assumed that the whole universe was threatened by the very changes that affected their ideologies and their positions. They (then) transmute the misfortune of their theories, into theories of misfortune." (de Certeau, 1988 pg 95-96). Instead of trying to understand the (new) issues at hand, they opt to update their original ideologies with new interpretations aided by the available technical instruments. De Certeau questions, "When they transform their bewilderment into 'catastrophes', when they seek to enclose the people in the 'panic' of *their* discourses, are they once more necessarily right?"

The transformations in urban disciplines was perhaps best illustrated in the faculty of Geography. Originally focused at understanding the hard spaces of the world, this discipline came to an end as new technologies made possible the complete analysis of the Cartesian spatial realities. Trained as one such geographer, Edward Soja re-defined his discipline by looking at new spatial realities based on the writing of Henri Lefebvre. In his book Thirdspace, he proposes that the two previously recognised knowledge sources utilised to define that what comprised our beings – historicity and sociality – must incorporate a new *spatial* source of information which could then truly encapsulate a *relational* understanding. This is best illustrated in his "Dialectic of Being".

Continuing on the Lefebvrian discourse, he further illustrates how the "Dialectics of Spatiality" too need to be rethought since the *perceived* and *conceived* reality did not entail both the effects and affects of *lived* realities.



[source: *Thirdspace*]

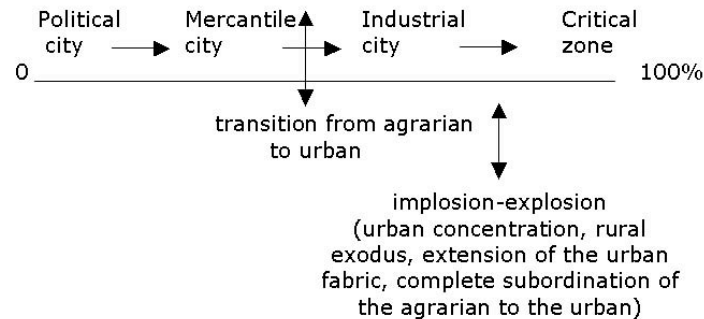
There was, as Soja presented, a need for "the deconstruction and strategic reconstitution of conventional modernist epistemologies - in other words, the radical restructuring of long-established modes of knowledge formation, of how we assure that the knowledge we obtain of the world can be confidently presumed to be accurate and useful." (Soja 1996, pg. 3) Cognitive knowledge, substituted by 'relational' or 'experienced' knowledge seemed to be a pertinent path that scholars would need to take in order to propose an understanding that could accommodate the design of an open-ended structure that simultaneously creates an *every day* order (essential for global political and economical processes), as well as *everyday* opportunities (as desired through emergent local processes). A path which Henri Lefebvre attempted in his final publications by introducing 'rhythmanalysis' as a way to understand both the permanent and temporal constructs in the urban field.

This opening up, of the spatial discourses, went parallel with other groundbreaking publications that, through a philosophical perspective, stretched the borders of spatial thinking. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception carefully analysed the 'body', the 'world' and the 'being' and synthesized an understanding that reassess perception breaking away from traditional prejudices formulated through 'sensation', 'association and memory', and 'attention and judgement'. Likewise, Gilles Deleuze had been rethinking 'meaning, form and relations' through a series of publications throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These (and many more) perspectives, came at a time that the urbanised world seemed to be witnessing an urban problematic that could not be dealt with the fashionable or modern solutions. Urban evolution, entailing social, economical, technological and political developments, perhaps for the first time in history, had really been threatened by a possible global crises in understanding concerning our shifting urban life-worlds.

### **Transforming Cities**

The birth of cities and urban life can be traced back more than 6000 years ago to the city of Hamoukar in Syria. At this point, the fundamental ideas regarding city and citification—including an economic system, a legislative system and political system, as well as a creative and artistic development had been developing, spawning urban life as we know it. However, its truly global impact did not start having an effect, till perhaps after the Industrial Revolution. Preceding this era from 1750 to 1815 only 7% of the population in Europe lived in cities. This condition rapidly transformed due to the technological advancements facilitated by the industries. From 1815 till the First World War the Industrial Revolution initiated a demographic revolution where the first phase of true global migration took place. Industries became the economical driving force behind urban development. One can say, that as a result of the industrial revolution, urbanisation in fact started in the 19th century. In his book Urban Revolutions, Henri Lefebvre illustrates the socio-spatial development of cities through an "Axis of Urbanisation". Starting with the 'Political City' of the Middle Ages, to the

'Mercantile City' of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, going through the 'Industrial City' till the contemporary city, he reflects upon the transforming urban conditions and the concurrent transforming societies, carefully denoting the 'critical zone' found within the contemporary city as a result of a process of 'implosion-explosion' in the urban field.



[source: *The Urban Revolution*]

This leads him to raise three questions: 1) What can be done to change this (critical phase)? 2) How can we build cities or "something" that replaces what was formerly the City? 3) How can we re-conceptualise the urban phenomenon?

Urban reality, simultaneously amplified and exploded, thus loses the features it inherited from the previous period: organic totality, belonging, an uplifting image, a sense of space that was measured and dominated by monumental splendour. It was populated with signs of the urban within the dissolution of urbanity; it became stipulative, repressive, marked by signals, summary codes for circulation (routes) and signage. It was sometimes read as a rough draft, sometimes an authoritarian message. It was imperious. But none of these descriptive terms completely describes the historical process of implosion-explosion (a metaphor borrowed from nuclear physics) that occurred: the tremendous concentration (of people, activities, wealth, goods, objects, instruments, means and thought) of urban reality and the immense explosion, the projection of numerous, disjunct fragments (peripheries, suburbs, vacation homes, satellite towns) into space. [Lefebvre, 2003, pg 14]

The modern era rigorously attempted to 'deal' with the urban desires by conceiving urban compositions that were 'efficiently' mono-functional while retaining a high aesthetic quality from a birds-eye perspective. A possible 'second modernity' did not attempt to deal with the resulting urban problematic, but chose to superimpose a new economic based strategy, namely that of Large Urban Projects, maintaining the conviction that multi-functional projects could become self-sustaining settlements in the urban fabric. Possibly so, but this did not react to the substantial urban detrimental effects illustrated through urban sprawl, brown fields, gated communities or any other fragmented effect due to the 'modern' interventions.

A desperate need was generated towards struggling architects, urbanists and engineers to find new tools that could react to the growing awareness of the city as an uncontrollable and unpredictable urban entity. But instead of allowing the proper 'tools' to be generated, 'devices' to further control the urban growth were manufactured. Devices that were used by to give the 'ministers of knowledge' yet more conviction through which a spatial governing practice could be administered. These premature urban tools were based on the presumption that a new (and improved) reality could be imposed. Data, as it was utilised, was the

resultant effect of layers of evolutionary process. An image, or composition that either worked or failed. Henri Lefebvre eloquently described this state of bewilderment like dealing with a 'black box'. He states how "the architect and the urbanist, sometimes confused as partners in an ambiguous duo, sometimes as twins are warring siblings, as distant colleagues and rivals, examine the black box. They know what goes in, are amazed at what comes out, but have no idea what takes place inside." (Lefebvre, Urban Revolution) Before examining the pertinent characteristics of intrinsic and extrinsic requirements that need to be inherently embedded in any tool, one must first also consider the context of the subject, object. and the environment to which it applies, in this case that of the transforming urban society and their socio-spatial perception.

### **Transforming Societies**

Taking the evolutionary process and looking at the urban developments from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Industrial Revolution spawned the establishment of a 'society of production', skilfully depicted in Frits Lang's Metropolis in 1927. With technological advancements facilitating faster and greater developments, the insatiable appetite for 'material' assets intensified. A society of accumulation fostered an intense division between the 'developed' and 'developing' societies. This evolutionary process sustained through the modern era culminating to its height during the Second World War – the quintessence of the insatiable appetite for 'accumulation' invigorated by political desire. Since a wariness to any 'alternate' productivity had been evoked, the subsequent period initiated what can be referred to as a 'disciplined society' – a seemingly 'cultured' society that was dealing with the aftermath of unimaginable acts of war. The evolution of this post war society was further facilitated by the rise of the IT revolution, helping the governing powers to get more and more 'grip' over their 'subjects'. The growing instable political situation on a global scale, illustrated by the LA Riots of the early 90's, carrying through the break-up of Yugoslavia and reaching its epitome during the attacks on the World Trade Centre made way for the society in which we find ourselves today... the 'controlled society'. A society controlled by 'fear'. Fear which has been inserted by the market, that has generated a 'debt society', and fear that has been inserted due to global terrorism, giving the governing powers more latitude to induce anti-terrorism acts. And with these acts, once again new tools to represent the urban dynamics are put forth.

As a result, the role of 'spatial' tools must undergo much scrutiny, since the result of the 'information' that they promise to produce, has been designed a priori to the making or scripting (inscribing) the computational logics that the program adheres.

Simultaneously, another problematic emerges as the effects of global migration and the political economic forces collide. While generic, totalising and globally influenced forces strive to seek standardisation in order to generate a market-driven operation, a diversity in its subjects grows as the culturally produced societies find themselves situated in a field of different spatialities.

This standardization of urbanity has, and will continue, to be counteracted by (social) resistance. This residue found in the urban is so overwhelmingly apparent, that perhaps it is not a residue at all. The seemingly marginal may in fact be the majority. I mean to state that resistance is in fact everywhere, in human as well as non human agents. The urban field is saturated with moments 'outside' the constructed order, whether temporal or permanent. We find it in architecture (as a former student of mine referred to it as "no-good architecture"), or in our life styles (at first skateboarding and graffiti represented the most apparent resistant urban cultures, and now we have 'Free Runners' as a

new urban culture). Even nature resists as witnessed by the grass which grows between the cracks of a well tiled floor. But we do not only need to look at extremities, we can find them in the most 'common' spaces of the city. Who has not cut the corner of some 'conceived' urban park simply because it was the most logical way to get to where you needed to go. Or who has not inscribed their name, through graffiti on a wall, or carved in the bark of a tree? I don't think that there is a toilet door in this world that hasn't been the canvas of multiple artistic endeavours.

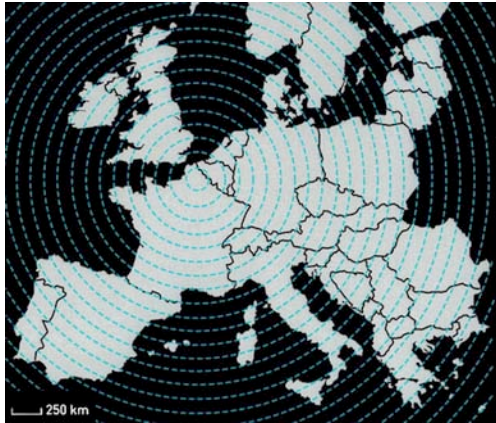
Human agents seem to have an inherent necessity to inscribe their spatiality, or temporal presence in their environments. But there is also another field of 'placeness', socially produced places. What of the few neighbourhood children (or even grandparents) who appropriate the corner of the street to tell tales of past experiences? Is the sidewalk at that moment not more than simply an infrastructural space to accommodate pedestrians? Do you not feel the omnipresence of some 'vibe' as you walk through them, as if you were invading their socially produced space? A type of privatization of the public realm. Even two individuals chatting on both sides of the train tracks, appropriate the space in between them. Communication, in any form or matter, inscribes a spatiality, whether temporal or permanent. Just look at someone answer the phone, the gestures of their body paint a canvas of emotions highly personal even in the most public of spaces. Not to mention the intricate complexities that we can find in analyzing the spatial appropriation when simply taking a picture, not only physically (in the printed product), or only digitally (within the camera's memory) or only virtually (within the action and reaction while taking the picture). [Vollebregt, 2005]

So, a second problematic presents itself, how can the spatial tools attempt to relay informative data concerning 'active' space from a field with such seemingly non-representational data.

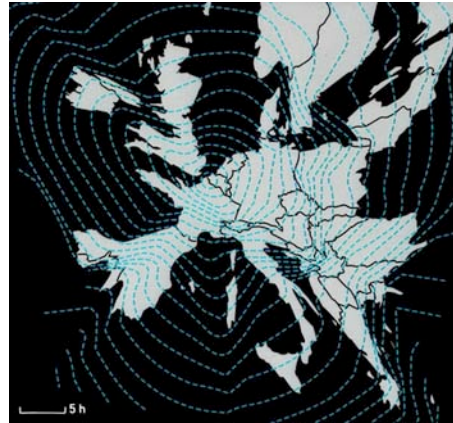
### **Transforming Spaces**

While the previously portrayed evolutionary process illustrates both a philosophical paradigm shift regarding space, as well a socio-political paradigm shift, another, perhaps even more significant transformation must still be taken into account. This is the transformation of socio-spatial relations as a result of technology and its effect on our infrastructures.

The developments in technology, have reconfigured the contemporary urban condition intensifying its possibilities for communication and movement. While the ITC's have allowed ones ability to 'connect' oneself almost regardless of ones position, our mobile infrastructures have initiated vast and increased speeds of movement, generating a new perception of scale of ones locality, and thus new possibilities of spatial experience. The traditional geographical representation of distance has been completely replaced by a more appropriate space-time representation. Space-time compression has allowed us to travel great distances in shorter time periods. Where the infrastructure is provided, the relationship of proximity throughout the city has been completely reconfigured. As the perception of space (or distance) is measured in time, that what was perceived to be geographically distant, has now become experientially near, and vice versa, that what may seem to be near, can in fact be quite remote (or even disconnected). As can be seen in the modified geographical and space-time representations of Europe illustrated in [Netzstadt](#).



Geographic representation of Europe



Space-time representation of Europe

(source: *Netzstadt*)

This new experience affects our perception, and our resultant positioning and movement in the urban field. Phrases such as “around the corner” or a “stones throw away” do not apply to the contemporary urban condition, a condition initiated through vast and increased speeds of movement, generating a new scale of ones locality and new possibilities of spatial experience. With new modes of perception the nature of experience too changes and subsequently a new mode of identity emerges. We now engage in a dispersed form of experience through a network of one’s ‘locales’. The network of the urban inhabitant has transcended Cartesian distance as we know it. The time-based occurrence required to travel throughout the urban field have not so much changed, as has the distance covered during the same time period. This space-time compression reconfigures ones movement and experience of both the individual as the mass of urban organisms swarming through urban field. Our traditional centralised urban life-worlds have undergone serious transformations in regards to the notion of the proximate, this in turn generates new requirements for our understanding of contemporary spatialities and new spatial structures.

This reconfigurations proposes that the city is not simply a centralised unit anymore, nor is it merely a poly-nuclei urban entity, but is constitutes an even more dynamic and complex configuration that entails *centralities*. Centralities that are produces through the make up of diverse ingredients. For a centre (in the classical term) to exist, it needs to be positioned in the centre of some form. Such as the geometric centre of a circle or square. However, how does one understand this new notion of centralities without re-conceptualising the urban form, baring in mind the new space-time reality.

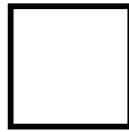
Similar to the re-presentation of Europe through a space-time perspective, centralities in the city can be found once the form of the city has been represented. An experiment follows:

If you were asked to draw a square, your first reaction would probably be to draw that what you were taught was a representation of a square constituted through intrinsic relations as each side must be of equal measurement.



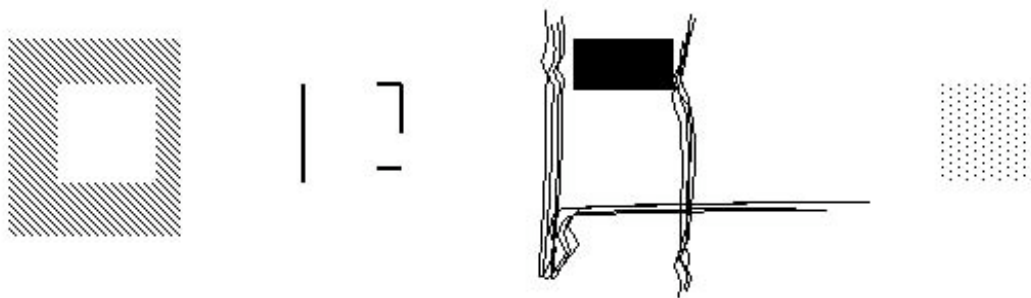
And this of course cannot be refuted to represent the form a square. You use lines, dimensions and a mathematical formula to illustrate your drawing. Now if you were asked to draw another representation of the form of a square, what

would you do then? Perhaps you may modify the scale and make it more dominant, because this too will constitute as a new form of a square.



But are there other (more creative) ways that the form of a square can be represented? The problem of re-conceptualising the city is not one of simply increasing the intensities. It is not only a question of scale (that everything has become bigger). Space-time reconfigures a new form of Europe as illustrated above. But 'form' can also be perceived differently through new relations.

Returning to the form of our square, if, as in the city, we can talk about new relationships being generated, then what other forms of representation can we use to illustrate our square. Presented are four squares constituted through extrinsic relations:



[source: *De[sign]ing Thirdspace*]

Each form here, both similar and different to our original conception, is constituted through a set of relations, may they be intrinsic, extrinsic or a combination. This is a starting point to opening up our perception and thus our re-conception of the city.

Lefebvre proposes that we examine the problem by looking at the city, not as city, or as metropolis, but as an urban field.

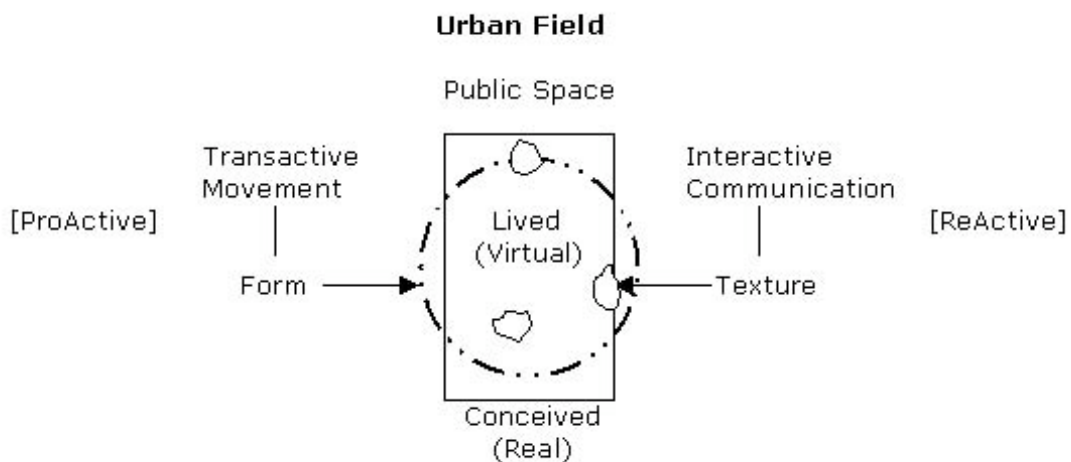
To explore this field, to see it, change is necessary, the abandonment of earlier viewpoints and perspectives. During this new period, differences are known and recognized, mastered, conceived and signified. These mental and social, spatial and temporal differences, detached from nature, are resolved on a much higher plane, a plane of thought that can grasp all the elements. Urban thought (not urbanism), that is, the reflection of urban society, gather the data that was established and separated by history... it rediscovers the community and the city, but at a higher level, on a different scale, and after their fragmentation. It recovers the key concepts of a prior reality and restores them in an enlarged context: forms, functions, urban structures. It is constituted by a renewed space-time, a topology that is distinct from agrarian and industrial space-time. Urban space-time, as soon as we stop defining it in terms of industrial rationality appears as a differential, each place and each moment

existing only within a whole, through the contrast and oppositions that connect it to, and distinguish it from, other places and moments. [Lefebvre 2003]

A relational space, an active space; Not a utopic conceived configuration that inhibits societal and urban transformations.

Today, the urban reality itself, with its problematic and practice, is hidden, replaced by representation (ideological and institutional) that bear the name "urbanism"... The urban considered as a field is not simply an empty space filled with objects. If there is a blindness, it does not arise simply because we can't see these objects and the space appears empty. No, the urban is a highly complex field of tensions, a virtuality, a possible-impossible that attracts the accomplished, an ever-renewed and always demanding presence-absence. Blindness consists in the fact that we cannot see that shape of the urban, the vectors and tensions inherent in this field, its logic and dialectic movement, its immanent demands. [Lefebvre 2003]

We are momentarily operating in a period where the emergent reality, intensely invigorated by new space-times realities, which are generated by movement (not infrastructure) and communication (through agent relations) have exponentially complexified the urban field. It would be limiting, for any profession or tool, to engage with the city without a thorough re-conceptualisation of this urban problematic. The city must be seen as process and product! A multitude of layers of processes with intrinsic and extrinsic relationships, producing ever interrelated products that any binary epistemology will never be able to fully grasp.



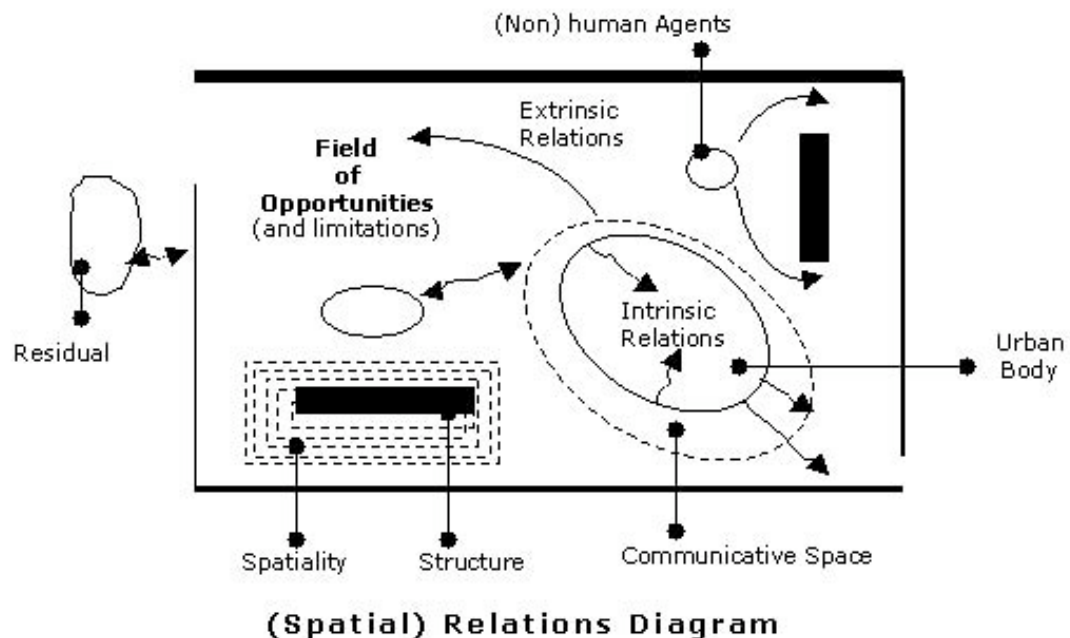
(source: *De[sign]ing Thirdspace*)

Both of these (movement and communication) are each steered by hidden structures which in turn generate hidden places. Placeness, or activity, is not inserted by program or defined by conceived borders, but is a temporal, fluid, dynamic activity. It is in constant flux. The true *form* of the city is not the configuration of buildings and infrastructure, but is generated by our movement through the city. Just as the true *texture* of the city is not the materialisation of the urban fabric, or is it characterized by the overlaid program inserted to facilitate the city, but it is generated by our engagement within the city through the appropriation of space through social relations.

In the new urban setting, connectedness and accessibility are constituted through the urban condition, a condition, or form that is made up primarily through two aspects. Namely that which is made as a result of hard or permanent structures, may it be physical, economical, political, technological or social (both locally and globally). And those that are generated out of 'soft' or temporal structures that are the result of urban dynamics. Urban dynamics, or flows that in fact make up the form of the city. They could be referred to as the 'veins' or 'arteries' of the city, comprised of movement of people, economies, ideas, and any other process that influences the working of the urban body; whether represented through the city as urban 'membrane' (understood as a layer that synthesises *both* the 'real' urban fabric and the 'virtual' operations thus generated), or the human agent as an urban 'organism' that not only inhabits the urban field, but is in fact constituted through its living experiences organised by the conditions (also real and virtual) in which it habits.

The growing awareness that our beings are more and more generated through a relational and process driven condition re-conceptualises our understanding of the urban, and the resultant city as a 'process-product'. A layered city, where relationships intrinsically effect processes within a layer, as well as relationships and process in the adjacent layers. This layering, or levelled processes, generate urban complexities that by definition cannot be represented by a 2-D interface without unintentionally levelling out the intricate relationships that constitute the urban condition.

The question now arises as to what type of information, or intelligence is produced through computing spatial syntax relations. No doubt that the myriad of urban infrastructures are reconfigured into a structured pyramid of connected components illustrating a part-whole relationship. But to what extent does this 'connectedness' relate to the re-conceptualised socio-spatial relations previously depicted? And in what manner, and to what extent can this diagrammatic representation be utilised to feed back into our understanding of the urban phenomenon?



(source: *De[sign]ing Thirdspace*)

## **Transforming Instruments**

The problematic of transferring one source of 'information' to another in order to make it 'intelligent' can be examined by extracting the essence of the resultant logics. In other words, the discourse on mapping, diagramming and modelling all deal with the issue of translating, or preferably 'transcoding' information. A data level is re-presented to carefully produce an informative level. The derived information is then processed further to another level until a 'model of understanding' is generated that can be applied back to the original source. The problem slowly presents itself, since through each level, the 'abstracted information only gets exponentially larger, giving highly limited substance to the model.

When thinking about models we utilise primarily computational models, static as well as dynamic models. Since these models went paired with the technological capabilities available, history shows that the static model - where sets of data were inserted and then computed to derive a result - were more frequently used, however limiting this linear process may be. The advance in technology has allowed us to start considering the dynamic model, or parametric model - which is becoming more and more favourable - as a means to both interrelate data sets and allow the system to be effected by extrinsic forces, leading to a complete reconfiguration of the relationships. Once again this can be considered as an enhanced development, but it fails to represent the 'condition' that emerges that the whole generates. I am not referring here to the computational relationships that have been carefully scripted throughout the system, but more pertinently about the virtual conditioning that the synthetic membrane spawns.

The limitation that this algorithmic approach to information-processing produces, limits, if not questions, the significance of the resultant 'knowledge'. The mass interrelated complexities cannot all be computed by arithmetic relations. With new technological developments presenting themselves, the once so promising research into neural networking (which stagnated precisely due to limitations in technology) has found its way back into field of research concerning information processing. The field of neural network engineering will allow us to device a model that can mimic the system of intelligence that we as urban beings generate through our daily habit. This will produce a system which will be able to interact with 'noisy' data from the environment, handle massive parallel data streams, deal with fault tolerance, and as a result adapt itself to circumstances; four principal aspects that are absent in the algorithmic model. Research in this field is being carried out by the MIT Media Lab and producing evocative and innovative results.

## **Conclusion**

With the underlying motto, "Create space = create value" Space Syntax strives to generate an understanding of urban space that allows planners and designers to design a connected urban fabric that produces valuable and active public space. Thus how can one reflect upon the information that Space Syntax as a spatial instrument provides. The essay has attempted to illustrate that information derived through a computation of physical urban conditions, is highly limited in its elaboration of *true* urban conditions. True in this sense as produced through relational processes. The complexities that comprise the urban world, both real and virtual, embedded with intrinsic and extrinsic relations, are such that the instruments we manufacture and utilise may possibly illustrate a false perception. The derived information may not only produce a limited oversight, but may even produce an urban illusion.

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