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WHY GUATTARI? A LIBERATION OF CARTOGRAPHIES, ECOLOGIES AND POLITICS

Edited by
Thomas Jellis, Joe Gerlach, and JD Dewsbury



Why Guattari? A Liberation of Cartographies, Ecologies and Politics

This book examines Félix Guattari, the French psychoanalyst, philosopher, and radical activist, renowned for an energetic style of thought that cuts across conceptual, political, and institutional spheres.

Increasingly recognised as a key figure in his own right, Guattari's influence in contemporary social theory and the modern social sciences continues to grow. From the ecosophy of hurricanes to the micropolitics of cinema, the book draws together a series of Guattarian motifs which animate the complexity of one of the twentieth century's greatest and enigmatic thinkers. The book examines techniques and modes of thought that contribute to a liberation of thinking and subjectivity. Divided thematically into three parts – 'cartographies', 'ecologies', and 'micropolitics' – each chapter showcases the singular and pragmatic grounds by which Guattari's signature concepts can be found to be both disruptive to traditional modes of thinking, and generative toward novel forms of ethics, politics, and sociality.

This interdisciplinary compendium on Guattari's exciting, experimental, and enigmatic thought will appeal to academics and postgraduates within Social Theory, Human Geography, and Continental Philosophy.

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On Teddy Cruz's diagrammatic urbanism

Christoph Brunner

Introduction

Diagrams play a crucial role in architectural, artistic, and scientific practices. Diagrams often define a technique for visually expressing the relations between entities or movements as part of a complex system. They sketch out, provide overviews, and express the relational nature of complex sets of information. Beyond the representation of such complexities, diagrams can also emphasise process and movement, in addition to connecting entities. In the following, I want to conceive of the diagram as a “relation-specific” tool for speculative thought and practice following Derek McCormack’s (2010) elaborations on Brian Massumi’s work. Through the term relation-specific, rather than site-specific, I understand diagrams not as spatializing representation but rather as sets of relations enabling a dynamic understanding of complexity and movement through their coupling. In other words, from a relation-specific point of view, diagrams provide a vital material investigation of the movements between a visual expression of complex systems *and* their potential for activating movement at the same time. Through the work of architect Teddy Cruz and his *Estudio Teddy Cruz* (ETC),¹ I will outline a conception of the diagram as both a visual technique attentive to relations, and as a concept emphasising and generating the movement across and among these relations. The particularity of diagrams, if used as technique of relation, is their double function as visual tool of confinement and a means for expressing movement beyond confinement. Especially in architecture and the arts, diagrams are used to open up a dynamic dimension in processes of formation.²

ETC’s architectural procedures and practices make extensive use of diagrams, as it folds social, economic, and material dimensions into each other to develop propositions for what Cruz calls a *transborder* urbanism “beyond the property line”. The diagrams often include structural elements, common to visualisations of specific states of affairs, and these are combined with a wild range of colours, photographs, lines, and arrows, weaving highly complex visual expressions suggestive of, for example, Situationist International’s work on psychogeography or Dadaist collage art. However, their purpose is purely pragmatic, seeking to communicate problems of urban development in migrant communities to a public audience, while paying specific attention to the power of aesthetic refinement.

ETC's aesthetic approach fuses with political and activist concerns while avoiding the subsumption of one under the other.³

Through the diagrams an aesthetic dimension operating on the level of perception charges political empowerment and activism. ETC's techniques focus on how to find modes of political practice based on emergent relational qualities in experience, across different modes of existence and ways of acting and thinking. The studio provides inventive *techniques for activation* that address socio-political problems pertaining to issues of trans-border migration, exploitation, and community activism. These diagrams operate as techniques for aesthetically opening up a political issue towards a process of empowerment and direct engagement seeking change. In the first instance I will outline ETC's procedural architectural approach. A second movement addresses how its practice resonates with Félix Guattari's developments on metamodelisation, as an attempt to think the emergent quality of practices in activist research.

Procedures over products – towards a diagrammatic urbanism

ETC's practice is a hybrid mix between architectural thinking and artistic ways of communicating its ideas or, in Cruz's words, "between research and practice".⁴ From an architectural point of view the studio's practice is defined by a unique relation between urban re-development projects, mostly for Hispanic migrant communities in the USA, fused with conceptual developments in community organisation and activism, and a particular interest in flows of humans and goods across national border zones worldwide. Born and raised in Guatemala and trained as an architect, Cruz teaches in the Visual Arts department at University of California San Diego, where he has worked for almost 20 years on urban development along and across the San Diego-Tijuana border zone.⁵

While architectural propositions are often the initial motive for his work, Cruz states, "we can not only design fantastic buildings, but also configure social, political, and economic agendas that can yield particular architectures and special configurations" (Cruz and Sokol, 2008: np). His unconventional architectural approach becomes apparent when looking at the former website of ETC, which is now Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman. The works presented were not necessarily "architectural" in the conventional sense of built structures.⁶ The site contained only videos showing ETC's projects and design research models, ranging from design propositions often developed along specific devices (like a light-weight scaffolding), to documenting workshops held along the San Diego-Tijuana border, or a diagram-movie explaining the negotiation processes for urban re-development between communities, political stakeholders, and industry representatives. Only one project, *Casa Familiar*, is a housing development, explored under the title of "the performance of a small parcel".⁷ Symptomatic of all of the project presentations is the use of bright colours and collaged photo-material. Often the technique of colouring is not just used to separate different domains or signifiers, such as social groups in a specific suburb, but it is a highly refined design strategy as part of a more general social and political practice at the heart of ETC.

By design strategy, we can understand a relational and participatory approach towards architecture which attempts to insert specific techniques or tools into the existing urban fabric. Accordingly, ETC's approach is different from architectural endeavours that pursue the construction of a new building as the minimum point of departure. The particularity of ETC resides in the aesthetic strategies it chooses to underline its practice, which is as much carried by an architectural approach towards urbanism as research strategies from design, social work, art, and cultural theory. One could say that its approach is site-specific, basing its mode of conceptual, social, political, and material engagement on the problem at stake. On the website, the videos or slide shows interlaced visual elements with processual aspects such as animated graphs and short accompanying texts explaining the foundational concepts and stakes for each project while emphasising its overall dynamism. Similarly, the projects bear titles which include a sense of movement and process: "the informal: not its image but its procedures", "60 linear meters of transborder conflict", or "a micropolicy for the neighbourhood", to mention just a few. While, on first glance, these titles seem like suggestive aphorisms, they refer directly to the procedural level carrying each project. The entire website itself emphasises processes over products and avoids confined representations, such as the building sketches and models common in architectural practice.

For Cruz, one cannot treat a particular public or private territory without investigating the underlying power relations such as political or economic stakeholders, existing values, social needs, and flows of movement at the heart of local communities.⁸ Cruz calls this process of instigating new relations between these factors "trans-border urbanism" where design aims at changing conditions for social and architectural processes to emerge. ETC's practice focuses on *conditions of emergence* and their *transversal* (or trans-border) qualities, rather than assuming pre-set and confined structures.⁹ Such a thinking extends accustomed habits of architectural development by focusing on "complexity, hybridity, and improvisation" providing a *temporal urbanism of insurgency* (Heath, 2009: 94–98). Accordingly, ETC has developed a body of work that focuses on procedures, operations, and retooling architectural (and artistic) means of intervention and representation. One can conceive of such a procedural practice as a "populist architecture of hypothesis approached as a community-wide collaborative initiative" (Gins and Arakawa, 2002: 61).¹⁰ It is the intensification of heterogeneous elements through aesthetic means, such as the visualisations, power point presentations, and actual diagrams, that renders ETC's practice what might be called a *diagrammatic urbanism*.

The notion of the diagram refers in a first impulse to Michel Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power exhibited by the infamous example of the Bentham Panopticon. Foucault describes disciplinary power as "a diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form" and as "a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use" (1995: 205). With his conception of the diagram he provides a crucial element immanent to ETC's work: the analysis of underlying power structures permeating heterogeneous domains of a politically charged territory operating through the mutual insertion of forces into each

other. These rather programmatic points focusing on a political understanding of power nonetheless hint at an ethico-aesthetic expansion of the analytical scope, as developed in the works of Félix Guattari. For Guattari the question of power and its relational character differs strongly from a mere unveiling of already existent power relations as structures. Power as force, and here he refers to Foucault, is always productive, an “existential production” which he calls the “diagrammatic function” (1996: 178). While Guattari, similar to ETC, acknowledges the “power formations” held together by “relations of forces”, he emphasises that these relations are of a primordial constituent quality that is dynamic and relation-specific. In a first instance, ETC’s approach starts with an analysis of existing power structures. However, instead of schematically outlining these structures – like a mere mapping of the relevant stakeholders – the visual techniques deployed by the studio shift the main focus towards its capacities of enabling new potentialities for thought and action by mobilising the sensuous field. Most crucially, this happens through aesthetic techniques like animated videos, collages, colours, and diagrams that supplant different and often heterogeneous elements (i.e. social relations combined with material flows) into a complex relational and transversal cartography.

Similar to Gilles Deleuze’s adaptation of Foucault’s concept of the diagram, ETC’s main practice resides in multiplying diagrammatic functions, if we consider these functions as the very capacity of heterogeneous forces to interlace (such as social, political, or material forces) and generate new expressions. In this vein, Deleuze writes: “a diagram is a map, or rather several superimposing maps. And from one diagram to the next, new maps are drawn. Thus there is no diagram that does not also include, besides the points which it connects up, certain relatively free or unbound points, points of creativity, change and resistance” (1988: 44). The diagram takes on a double function in Cruz’s practice. On the one hand it is an analytical tool for understanding power relations. On the other hand, it becomes a creative technique that functions through aesthetic forces of (visual) diagramming. Throughout ETC’s practice, diagrams in their analytic and expressive (visual) function actively shape and “modulate” how complex relations affectively interlace and how to enable modes of resisting dominant power relations. Modulation, in this context, can be understood in proximity to Guattari’s conception of meta-modelling as a technique similar to ETC’s diagrammatic practice undermining the power relations of dominant representations. Such representations also concern the approach of how to conduct research and how to communicate insights. At the same time, Guattari and Gilles Deleuze resonate in their assertion that modulation becomes also a primary technique of late capitalist uses of information fragmenting former relations in order to render them compatible (in a modular fashion) with the “mechanics of social domination” (Guattari, 1995: 105; Deleuze, 1995: 177–182). For Guattari, meta-modelling, in a nutshell, becomes a way of deciphering the modelling of systems, for instance the overall approach of a method, and ensuring “transversal passages between different problems of different kinds” as can be found in the heterogeneous visual assemblages of ETC’s practice (Guattari, 2012: 17). Modulation as core element of the process

of modelling then becomes a technique not only adapted by operational modes of capitalist value extraction but also in terms of opening up new relations while anchoring them in the concrete concerns (problems) at stake like communal housing projects or trans-border migration.¹¹

To give an example, the housing project in collaboration with NGO Casa Familiar, a community centre for mostly Hispanic migrant communities in San Diego's suburb San Ysidro, entails a complex set of procedures enabling its final realisation. Due to the informal social and economic structures of local migrant communities, a modular and dense building complex was devised, including different spaces for smaller and extended families to co-inhabit varying and modular units, community spaces for micro-entrepreneurial exchange such as weekend markets, as well as studio-flats for artists to live in and provide services to the community (see Bratton, 2004). To effectuate the building of the centre, a change of municipal zoning laws of San Ysidro had to be achieved. In other words, architectural procedures as means to address representational politics were needed – or, different diagrammatic functions and their maps had to be interlaced.

There was no way for Cruz to move forward on the project other than getting elected to the city hall's urban planning board (or so he contends). Once elected, Cruz had to convince the board to modify its single-unit-per-parcel policy towards a multi-unit architecture. In other words, he had to shift from the usual suburban family home (which ETC calls "McMansions") to a denser urban multi-unit architecture. This political and representational procedure took many years before reaching its goal, and Cruz's withdrawal from the board after achieving his goal is part of the procedure. Overall, ETC conceives of the architectural procedure of Casa Familiar as a process from "official conforming" to "informal non-conforming". And what Cruz calls "urban pedagogy" encompasses all conceptions of such extended architectural procedures as ways to "enable new institutional protocols by producing new interfaces with publics and unorthodox cross-institutional collaborations, rethinking the very meaning of infrastructure, housing and density, and mediating top-down development and bottom-up social organization" (Cruz, 2011: 111). What ETC terms "institutional protocols" might be called diagrams in the sense that they express the weaving of heterogeneous domains (such as infrastructure or housing density) with practices such as cross-institutional collaborations.

The "ecology of practices" (Stengers, 2005) composing the architectural procedure called *Casa Familiar* are felt most concretely through the visual diagrams accompanying and visually communicating the project and its genesis. In ETC's work, diagrams become an active operational tool of complexification, communication, and transformation of architectural, as well as social, and research practices. A procedure, as outlined in Cruz's work, is a folding of heterogeneous acts, materialities, and practices through "techniques of relation" (Manning and Massumi, 2014: 91–92, 101), including diagrams as aesthetic tools and concepts as lures for thought. ETC's procedures attempt to rethink architectural practice in the way it engages with social and cultural concerns, its use of communicating beyond the confined entity of built structures, and deployment of concepts as

mostly abstract explanations. ETC transforms the power of conceptual invention into a procedural approach attentive to social and political issues, and their material and economic entanglements. The creative potential of concepts thus instigates a speculative movement of thought that co-evolves with social, political, and material movements. In such a diagrammatic and procedural unfolding, these practices constitute new *ecologies of relation*.¹² Through their interlacing, the conceptual, social, and political do not pre-exist one another in ETC's practice but mutually shape each other according to their shared ecological field of emergence. In other words, the ground from which the heterogeneous forces composing such ecologies emerge might be considered as *transversal geographies*, in this case most prominently exhibited by the San Diego-Tijuana border zone.

What Cruz calls the procedure of an "urbanism of insurgency" involves a rethinking of the social dimension in relation to contemporary urbanism and possible architectural interventions. In general, his focus on procedures, flows, and movements underlines a reworking of scale, density, and confinement towards a mobile conceptualisation of urban activity. Many of his projects address the material circulations of debris and labour power across borders. A major concern for ETC lies in detecting these flows and movements, investigating their temporal dimensions, and identifying spatial urban "fragments waiting to be activated through synergistic development, their potential residing in a certain contingency rather than cure-all master planning" (Bratton, 2004: 120). ETC emphasises a strong political agenda, not only in terms of re-negotiating local and often conflictual situations. It also critically approaches architecture as spatial structuring in relation to contemporary forms of global neoliberal capitalism, and the way it affects the organisation of (social) space (Cruz, 2008, 2009, 2011). At this point it becomes clear that the diagrammatic and procedural techniques deployed by ETC underline the relevance of aesthetic dimensions of such political processes. In this sense, the studio's work resonates strongly with what Félix Guattari terms "ethico-aesthetics", where the way political processes yield effects cannot be separated from the way they are felt and experienced (Guattari, 1995: 127). In activating a sensitivity for the complexities of political intricacies at stake in ETC's work through the sensuous power of diagrams, the studio opens up an experiential dimension that is both felt and thought at the same time. Diagrammatic urbanism comprises what Brian Massumi calls "speculative pragmatism" as part of an affective politics (McKim and Massumi 2009: n.p.). Put differently, the diagrammatic functions immanent to ETC's work open up an affective and aesthetic politics capable of mutually including pragmatic as much as speculative elements, where the speculative is what activates new modes of thinking and feeling while grounding them in pragmatic techniques producing concrete effects (such as a change in zoning laws).

ETC's projects work through redefinitions of the social by extending its scope. On the one hand, it analyses the social conditions for emergence, such as confinements, movements, economics, relations, modes of production, and the ethics implied in them. On the other hand, by focusing on the procedural, the notion of the social extends to "more than human" dimensions (Manning, 2013: 228, n.2),

generating concepts for thinking relations across various domains. In this type of diagrammatic urbanism, the social includes both human and more than human forces, such as material flows and power relations, affects and intensities. From an architectural point of view, Cruz re-imagines the urban along such “vectors of force”, which are not based on individual actors but *ecologies of relation* (Cruz and Tate, 2010: 82). As a result, the procedural and movement-based practice of such an urbanism requires new ways of conceptualising and aesthetically expressing these transversal geographies and their activities.

On metamodelling and Translocality

The most common critique of Cruz’s practice is the lack of actually building things: many of ETC’s projects exist on paper, in PowerPoint presentations or beautiful visual expressions, but not in “reality”. Such critiques, however, underestimate the diagrammatic activation of forces yielding effects in political practice *and* their ability to alter ways of thinking about contemporary forms of urbanism, that is, how to conceptualise with them. In opposition to such critiques, this section asks how a shift in the methods and models of contemporary architecture need to be deployed to arrive at a diagrammatic urbanism. The proposition outlined through Cruz’s practice not only accounts for movement and dynamic flows in urban environments but also the invention of new modes of analysis and expression.

A diagrammatic urbanism attentive to movement and flows abandons disciplinary boundaries for the sake of emergent, immanent, and procedural practices. The question might be, then: is it possible to devise such procedures independent of their context? Or, in a more architectural manner, is there an underlying model to be deployed and applied in varying environments? A diagrammatic practice is neither entirely local nor global, which Cruz hints at in his project *Political Equator*. Tracing a line around the globe marking zones of conflict – called “urbanities of labour and surveillance” like Tijuana-San Diego, Palestine-Israel, Ceuta-Melilla, Indian Kashmir/Pakistani Kashmir, and China – this work demonstrates flows between the “Functioning Core” (North) and the “Non-Integrating Gap” (South). While remaining slightly schematic on first glance, the crude divides are supplanted by very specific and case-sensitive (or relation-sensitive) movements that ETC traces. The phenomenon of the re-enforcement of strong boundaries and borders seems even more pressing under contemporary political regimes and their conceptions of border control. The same accounts for the control of migration and the different translocal flows of humans, goods, and information that have been recently described as part and parcel of a general logistics (see Mezzadara and Neilson, 2013). Arriving from the south, migrants are seeking work, while the functioning core outsources its production zones to the south. While there are global processes, which can be assimilated between these border zones, Cruz emphasises that his practice consists of “series of minor modifications” and not building a “humanist utopia” (Cruz and Tate, 2010: 81).

In Cruz's work, the site-specific tendency transgresses and translates into what might be called a *relation-specific* approach through the ethico-aesthetic technique of a diagrammatic urbanism. Conceiving of borders as a tool for thinking – thus making this endeavour an ecology of practices – allows us “to speculate on how we can address all the cities and all the territories around the world” (Cruz, 2008: np.). A relation-specific approach requires one to thinking the urban as a translocal structure of converging and diverging forces. Accordingly, the local never transforms into the global, or vice versa; this is an insufficient binary. On the contrary, a relation-specific and diagrammatic approach enables us to embrace the heterogeneous and open flow of social, material, and political forces and to identify techniques and tools for addressing them – both locally as a situation and in resonance with a more globally encompassing context. While we perceive new modes of capitalist integration on a global scale through what Guattari calls an “Integrated World Capitalism” (preceding some of the north-south concerns later raised by ETC), the main point in ETC's practice is that the ecologies of relation perceived as geo-political and site-specific concerns require an extension towards more transversal, ethico-aesthetic dimensions and their speculative and pragmatic tendencies (Guattari and Negri, 2010). This means generating practices of radical inclusion rather than exclusion. At the same time, inclusion is never arbitrary but itself defines a complex process of interrelating diagrams. For Cruz's the notion of the *informal* emphasises such a tendency:

I see the informal not as a noun but as a verb, which detonates traditional notions of site specificity and context into a more complex system of hidden socio-economic exchanges. [. . .] I see the informal as the site of a new interpretation of community, citizenship and praxis, where emergent urban configurations produced out of social emergency suggest the performative role of individuals constructing their own spaces.

(Cruz, 2010: np.)

In this case, the conceptual exploration of the informal instigates architectural procedures from specific situations and provides the potential of relating this process to other situations. Such forms of situated emergence and trans-situational relating become clearest if understood as the operational capacities of a diagrammatic urbanism interlacing forces and power relations both in their felt effects but also in their inventive potential for new modes of thinking and making. In other words, diagrams need to be actualised always anew in specific situations where they shift the entire set of relations through their expressive capacities. With each actualisation, Deleuze writes, a diagram integrates itself into other diagrammatic processes: “a collection of progressive integrations that are initially local and then become or tend to become global, aligning, homogenizing, and summarizing relations between forces” (1988: 37). Drawing attention to these processes we can see how the interlacing of the visual, conceptual, and material fold with their very own diagrams into the social, political, and architectural circulations

in the San-Diego-Tijuana border zone – and how they might transgress the local boundaries into larger (global) concerns.

Moving from site-specificity to relation-specificity produces an “interdisciplinary collaboration” focused on “operative dimensions” targeted at “exchanging procedures” (Cruz and Tate, 2010: 87). This exchange of procedures might be better understood as a process of relaying and modulation, which shifts ecologically when inserted into a new situation. Developing specific procedures tailored to the concerns at stake while generating new cartographies or maps – as Deleuze and Guattari call them (1987: 203) – for relation thus explodes the conventional conception of the model and moves towards what Guattari termed *metamodelisation* or *meta-modelling*. Similar to Cruz’s conception of the informal as a verb and not a noun, one might envision the process of modelling as an alternative to the rather confined notion of the model. Guattari’s urge for developing practices beyond disciplinary boundaries leads him to invent new strategies of *emergent modelling* rather than relying on pre-existing models for application.¹³

Cruz’s emphasis on temporal urbanism and his conception of interdisciplinary research resonate strongly with Guattari’s idea. In both works the key point revolves around defining and generating interfaces of resonance between heterogeneous approaches of analysis and their materials while accounting for their inventive relational capacities. For Guattari metamodelisation

has concerned something that does not found itself as an overcoding of existing modelizations, but more as a procedure of ‘automodelization,’ which appropriates all or part of existing models in order to construct its own cartographies, its own reference points, and thus its own analytic approach.

(Guattari, 1996: 122)

Auto-modelisation and auto-affirmation are key concepts in Guattari’s account of metamodelisation. Diagrammatic urbanism and Guattari’s practice of meta-modelling both aim at making new dimensions of potential felt in expression through the prism of ethico-aesthetic forces – and thus transforming the very realm of experience. They both emphasise “complexification [and] processual enrichment” (Guattari, 1995: 61). Operating both conceptually and in the visual format of the diagram, ETC has developed a “pragmatic cartography” that opposes reductive representations of dominant signifiers such as political stakeholders while opening up new dimensions of thought through aesthetic techniques (1995: 60).

ECT’s diagrammatic urbanism finds connections with existing systems of thought and procedures, activates new dimensions like material or human flows, and generates an auto-modelisation, providing each element with a procedural (diagrammatic) agency. However, such a process can never become universal (i.e. global) in its aims, which is what models often aspire to – and herein lies a distinct difference to the automatised and generalised operation of capitalist integration through modulation. On the contrary, as Guattari writes, “each modelization is always grounded and reaffirmed in a singular situation” (Guattari, 2000: 13). In other words, relation-specificity grounds the emergence of a new practice and the

invention of novel procedures; it generates effects. Without these effects, nothing in the overall discourse would change. By finding new modes of working between artistic experimentation and social engagement, ETC diagrammatically metamodelises the emergence of new techniques and procedures of an insurgent architectural and social practice – with both global and local repercussions.

Far from being a method or the cross-linking of different approaches, *metamodelisation thinks modelling as modulation*. Modulation names the process of a phase-shift of an unfolding process, a change of state, a new relational capacity.¹⁴ In addition, Guattari's insistence on self-referential enunciation and auto-affirmation underlines the autonomy of affective forces (Massumi, 2002: 35) inherent in each process of metamodelisation (Guattari, 1995: 60, 106). Auto-affirmation means that each modelling deployed consists primarily in resonance with its immediate milieu and is not a mere accumulation of parts. Auto-affirmation emphasises process and immanent change. Thus, metamodelisation as “operative diagramming” moves beyond the initially interesting but finally hollow statement that the whole is more than the number of its parts. Metamodelisation attempts to develop techniques based on extensive and excessive potential operating actively across an ecology of relation.

Metamodelisation is a way of accounting for diagrammatic movement as part of ethico-aesthetic activist practices. In relation to San Diego-Tijuana, it would seem evident that local phenomena refer to global causes such as poverty, exploitation, or capitalism. As a consequence, one might claim that each of the local effects has its very specific ecology of relation producing the singularity of the underlying state of affairs. Metamodelisation, on the other hand, concerns the emergent collectivity of practices in their ecological formation and endurance, their heterogeneous, heterochronous, and differential qualities. The process of meta-modelling requires tracing different historical, social, and economic factors, but also their operational potential, in terms of what they might become and how they may change along the way.

The auto-modelisation immanent to diagrammatic practices emphasises the self-perpetuating activity of each process and plugs it into a more collective constellation of transversal becoming across different geographies/cartographies. In the case of ECT's work, diagrams function as the relaying device of an architectural metamodelisation of procedural practice and its relation to social, political, and material matters of concern. The diagram as force field, that is, as an emergent and dynamic cartography in the process of relating heterogeneous elements while constantly shifting – contracted into a visual form – allows for making the co-composition of the situated and the transversal felt as part of the same experience. If the diagram were only conceptually conceived without being felt, it would lose all its rigour, becoming a mere symbol devoid of any movement. The force toward expression defines the necessary passage for an affective contagion beyond mediation. ECT's practice would not gain such interest, nor a refined degree of complexity, if he did not choose the appropriate discursive and non-discursive *functions* to yield felt effects. The varying degrees of intensity and matter mobilising in this practice traverse personal political involvement, the

highly specialised craft of architectural and urban development, the active participation of social community workers, and the migrant inhabitants themselves in their everyday desires and activities. To find appropriate *forms* of communicating complexity without reduction affords more than creative representations or communicative skills. His practice asks concretely what new modes of a “distribution of the sensible” (Rancière, 2004) yield an affective aesthetic politics undermining dominant forms current power relations.

As an immediate process of formation, diagrams enable a perceptual process that opens a complex concern to a wider audience while being specific to the relational ecology at stake. As part of a procedural practice, ETC’s diagrams become a field for collective attunement, while simultaneously enabling singularisation. In their openness and precision diagrams invite individuals to resonate with and relate to a context in their singular way. From here, a mode of subjectivity emerges that is relationally composed and not situated in the subject of the perceiver. In addition, the relation between diagrammatic urbanism, metamodelisation, and subjectivity is crucial for its operational value. As Guattari writes, such a relationship “produces its own existence across processes of singularization, because it engenders itself as *existential territory*” (1996: 125). By existential territory, Guattari refers to lines of subjectivation coursing through a collectively sensed ecology of relation, thus grounding sensation in experience and rooting it in bodily, spatio-temporal continuities. This non-identitarian element of subjectivity is one essential aspect of a temporally extensive (that is, endured) and lived practice of existence. Similarly, ETC’s architectural procedures would not have any effects if they could not find ways of inserting themselves into the micro-social desires and needs populating a specific field of relations. In other words, “Metamodels are not just abstractions because they require the putting into place of the organizational and institutional means for their collective realization” (Genosko, 2003: 138).

The pragmatic aspect of the process of metamodelisation should not distract from its speculative openness. The diagrammatic functions exposed throughout ETC’s work provide the ground for a production of subjectivity that moves across an entire ecology of relation (a field of forces) in a relation-specific manner, without predetermining the effects of this process. However, for such a field-experience to take effect, it requires a marker or attractor taking hold of the encounter and generating its very own rhythm. The primary experiential encounter requires endurance while working itself into memory and feeling. The sought complexity expressed in diagrammatic practices extends not only through sensation, but also through auto-modelisation processes of subjectivation in abstraction: “What distinguishes metamodelization from modelization is the way it uses terms to develop possible openings onto the virtual and onto creative processuality” (Guattari, 1995: 31). Opening onto creative processuality does not mean adapting another creative model to be deployed in one’s own practice or thought. Rather, it foregrounds attentiveness to movements populating a tensed field, thus enabling potential transformations or transversal techniques singularising into new expressions. Guattari’s insistence on resingularisation and a ‘virtual ecology’

define the poles of diagrammatic expressions which tend toward future activations of a felt intensity.

From here we might further ask, how can such transversal, procedural, and diagrammatic practices of metamodelisation offer novel approaches of dealing with increasingly complex and charged geographies of conflict, crisis and oppression on a global scale? One of the propositions foregrounded here resides in investigating the ethico-aesthetic dimensions of resistant potentiality to dominant forms of discursive and sensible power relations. Investigating transversal geographies along their diagrammatic functions as fields of forces with specific capacities for affectively interlacing into ecologies of relation, we might approach new modes of metamodelisation that are both sensuously affecting and effective, shifting dominant power relations locally while modulating in resonance with other geographies of struggle. Metamodelisation, then, might offer new perspectives on translocal forms of activism through an aesthetic/affective relaying of practices.

Notes

- 1 Emphasising the collaborative and collective nature of the work, I will use *Estudio Teddy Cruz* throughout the chapter. In case of citations of Cruz himself, I will deploy his name referring to his personal utterance.
- 2 Amongst the many explorations of the diagram between art and philosophy the German essay collection “Materialität der Diagramme: Kunst und Theorie” (The Materiality of Diagrams: Art and Theory) by Susanne Leeb (2012) is closest to the relation-specific approach at stake in this article. Another, yet more research-creation oriented publication would be “Drawing a Hypothesis: Figures of Thought” by Nikolaus Gangsterer (2011).
- 3 In a way, Cruz’s popular but aesthetically finely crafted diagrams echo Walter Benjamin’s developments on the relation between aesthetics and politics. For Benjamin, art cannot be subsumed under politics. Aesthetics, if subsumed under politics – as an “aestheticizing political life” – leads to war. Politicising aesthetics, on the other hand, enables a wider range of individuals (for Benjamin, “the masses”) to collectively create a new political ground for society, which Benjamin attributes to Communism (2008: 41–42).
- 4 Cruz provides a distinct definition of his vision of research, while the notion of practice seems to remain rather underdeveloped as a concept. He writes, “Many architects talk about research and practice. I’m trying to problematize that relationship as well. This not only means researching issues for the sake or researching, but also that architects must enter into certain institutions to actually see the way that they are operating” (Cruz, 2008: np.).
- 5 The notion of San Diego-Tijuana received prominent exposure as part of the art-event inSite_05 including exhibitions, interventions, walks, and artist workshops including, Teddy Cruz in San Diego-Tijuana. See Osvaldo and Conwell, 2006.
- 6 See www.estudioteddycruz.com. For all further references to works of Estudio Teddy Cruz it is recommended to use the website in order to experience the full breadth of the aesthetic effects.
- 7 If not indicated otherwise, ETC’s expressions and short citations are derived from the short video-clips at www.estudioteddycruz.com.
- 8 Cruz differentiates his practice quite strongly from contemporary architectural phenomena, which he clearly criticises: “It has been unsettling to witness that some of the most ‘cutting edge’ practices of architecture rush unconditionally to China and the

Arab Emirates to build their dream castles, reducing themselves to mere caricatures of change and camouflaging gentrification with a massive hyper aesthetic and formalist project” (Cruz, 2010).

- 9 It should be mentioned that Guattari himself engaged in urban re-development projects. One called FGERI (*Fédération des groupes d'études et de recherches institutionnelles*) dealt in parts with the intersection of architecture and psychiatry (see the special number of the journal *Recherches* on “Architecture, programmation, et psychiatrie” (Guattari, 1967)). The other, CERFI (*Centre d'Études, de Recherches et de Formation Institutionnelles*) expressed one of Guattari’s life-long concerns, that of institutions, attempting to rethink institutions and institutional practices from a radically transversal point of view. Through several commissions CERFI was asked to conduct in-depth study on the “*système économique urbain*” paid by the Ministère de l'Équipement et du Logement and two projects to initiate urban transformation in two Banlieues, Alma-Gare in Roubaix and Petit Séminaire in Marseille. Anne Querrien describes both of these attempts as major failures (2012: 98–113).
- 10 Architects and poets Arakawa and Gins promote architectural procedures as one of their main concepts for rethinking the relation between architecture and life.
- 11 The more technical side of modulation in relation to a very singular theory of information beyond the mere reduction to bits in binary logics of digital media technologies have been explored in the works of Gilbert Simondon (1989: 130) and recently explored by Yuk Hui (2015).
- 12 “Ecologies of relation” is a key concept I develop in my PhD-dissertation entitled *Ecologies of Relation: Collectivity in Art and Media*. Available at: https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/979665/1/Brunner_PhD_S2015.pdf
- 13 Guattari himself successively developed a conception of transdisciplinarity through the notion of meta-modelling towards the end of his life. His thoughts in this direction are most concretely stated in Guattari (1992).
- 14 One of the most succinct explorations of the amplificatory power of modulation can be found in Gilbert Simondon’s article “Forme, Information, Potentiels” (2005, 531–551).

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