

Urban Correlationism: A Matter of Access

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Drs. ir. Stavros Kousoulas studied Architecture at the National University of Athens where he received his first Master diploma in 2009. He received his second MSc in Architecture from the Faculty of Architecture of the TU-Delft in 2012. Since 2012 he has been active in the capacity of guest lecturer and researcher at the Theory Section of the Faculty of Architecture of the TU-Delft. Currently, he is a PhD candidate at IUAV Venice participating in the Villard d' Honnecourt International Research Doctorate. His doctoral research focuses primarily on morphogenetic processes framed within assemblage theory. He has published and lectured in Europe and abroad. He is member of the editorial board of Footprint since 2014.

If one is to provide an alternative account for the plurality of, intentional or other, morphogenetic processes that take place constantly within the urban field, then one has to examine the intricate relationship between the field itself and our access to it. In this dividing line between ontology and epistemology, any attempt to prioritize one of the two will lead to fallacies of all kinds, which would eventually exclude our access to a world from the world itself. Ontology, epistemology and the -urban- world are put forward in this paper. Throughout it I deal with the first of consequences that 'urban correlationism' entails; that of the primacy of a subjective access over a 'hylomorphically' malleable present. The claim that correlationism is the episteme of architectural theory and practice is expanded with an amplified version of epistemes themselves. It is through an ecology of material-discursive practices that the apparatus of architectural thinking can be traced genealogically and posited as an abstract machine catalyzing a very specific image of thought. That of a meta-subject which privileges its access to a world bifurcated in primary and secondary qualities so as to trace the transcendental elements of its own justification.

My aim is to diffractively expose a genealogical line that runs from the first attempt to theoretically reflect on issues of spatial production, their later interpretation and critical transformation in defining the outlines of formal architectural qualities, to the combination of both under the premise of modernist emancipation. However, as Deleuze would have it, it's not a matter of bringing all sorts of things under a single concept, but rather of relating each concept to the variables that explain its mutations. Vitruvius, Alberti and Le Corbusier will be considered as the 'conceptual personae' that highlight issues attached to spatial production while nevertheless expanding beyond it. The question of access appears under the mode of a problem, forcing one to consider its implications on a population of heterogeneous fields. What is at stake here is that all the actualizations of modernity are based on the incarnation of an ideal possibility, an archetypical futurity which is somehow to be brought from a transcendent exterior to a malleable present via the manipulation of the access between primary and secondary qualities.

Therefore, most of spatial theories seem to ignore a quite simple fact; that a horizontally expanded experience is the phenomenon whose existence is more certain than the existence of anything else. It is on this premise that architectural theories, for the sake of their own persistence and individuation, should shift focus from the *relata* of the discipline to the experiential relationships that precede them. I conclude this paper by arguing that if any architectural theory and practice is to aim in a break from the past then it is through the focus on the contingent actuality of a virtual state of affairs. The question therefore for any architecture to come, is whether space can topologically afford and be afforded the virtual; afford the non-neutralization and the non-confinement of desire.

