

## MAIN SECTION

# On οἶκος

## The role of aesthetics in Félix Guattari's urban ecosophy

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines Félix Guattari's ecosophy as a transversalist framework articulating the interdependence of environmental, social, and subjective ecologies, with particular emphasis on its implications for urban theory and aesthetics. Drawing on Guattari's concept of machines and autopoiesis, the study argues that ecosophy extends ecology beyond biological life to encompass technological, social, and semiotic processes, thereby situating subjectivity within transindividual assemblages rather than individualist models. The article clarifies three recurrent ambiguities in interpretations of ecosophy: its distinction from deep ecology, the problematic proliferation of additional "ecologies," and the misconception of a nostalgic return to an original nature. It then explores Guattari's analysis of the city as a megamachine that produces both flows and segmentations, shaping contemporary modes of subjectivation. Central to this reading is the role of the "new aesthetic paradigm," understood not as aestheticization of the social but as an orientation toward sensibility, creativity, and heterogenization of values. By foregrounding urban stratification, media processes, and participatory practices, the article positions ecosophy as a political project aimed at fostering non-segregative, resingularized subjectivities capable of resisting capitalist homogenization.

## KEYWORDS

*Félix Guattari; Ecosophy; Transversality; Urban Aesthetics; Historical City*

## PEER REVIEWED

<https://doi.org/10.60923/issn.2612-0496/24259>

ISSN 2612-0496

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### 1. Three ecologies, three ambiguities

Félix Guattari used the term 'ecosophy' to refer to an "ethico-political articulation [...] between the three ecological registers," namely "the environment, social relations and human subjectivity."<sup>1</sup> The texts selected and organized by Stéphane Nadaud in the collection *Qu'est-ce que l'écosophie?*<sup>2</sup> demonstrate both the breadth and the conceptual richness of the ecosophical approach, as well as the enduring and complex nature of Guattari's engagement with this problematic, which extends far beyond the scope of the slim volume *The Three Ecologies*.<sup>3</sup>

According to Ernst Haeckel's classic definition, ecology is the "science of the relationships of organisms with their environment and their conditions of existence."<sup>4</sup> Ecosophy can therefore be understood as an extension of this discipline.<sup>5</sup> Whether the world 'outside' the organism is physical, social, or virtual, ecosophy treats these dimensions as determinations of a single reality and analyses their mutual implication. For such an extension to be possible, Haeckel's conception of the organism must be expanded through the concept of the machine. Driven by a lifelong philosophical concern,<sup>6</sup> Guattari finds the cornerstone of his ecosophy in Francisco Varela's theory of the autopoietic machine, which generates its own organization,<sup>7</sup> and, unlike in Varela's formulation, is extended beyond the strictly living. In fact, for Guattari, technological machines are always entangled with living beings and with autopoiesis in general; for this reason, they may also be considered autopoietic, albeit by proxy.<sup>8</sup>

A secondary—and complementary—manner of conceptualizing the status of machines within the domain of ecology was proffered to Guattari

1 Félix Guattari, *Les Trois écologies* (Paris: Galilée, 1989), 12-3; Eng. trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, *The Three Ecologies* (London-New Brunswick: Athlone, 2000), 28.

2 Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que l'écosophie?*, dir. Stéphane Nadaud (Paris: Lignes, 2013) [abbr. = QQÉ].

3 For a very brief introduction to the topic, see Gary Genosko, "The Three Ecologies," in Gary Genosko, Eugene B. Young, Janell Watson, *The Deleuze & Guattari Dictionary* (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2013), 31; Gary Genosko, "Ecosophy," in Gary Genosko, Young, Watson, *The Deleuze & Guattari Dictionary*, 100-2.

4 Ernst Haeckel, *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen. Allgemeine Grundzüge der organischen Formen-Wissenschaft, mechanisch begründet durch die von Charles Darwin reformirte Descendenz-Theorie*. Bd. II (Berlin: Reimer, 1866), 286.

5 See Félix Guattari, "Qu'est-ce que l'écosophie?," *Terminal* 56 (1991), 22a-c; réed. QQÉ, 71.

6 See Félix Guattari, "La passion des machines," interview par Emmanuel Videcoq et Jean-Yves Spanel, *Terminal* 55 (1991), 44-45; réed. QQÉ, 251-259.

7 Francisco Varela, *Principles of Biological Autonomy* (New York: Elsevier-North Holland, 1979).

8 See Guattari, "Qu'est-ce que l'écosophie?," 72; Félix Guattari, "À propos des machines" (1990), *Chimères* 19 (1993), 88-89; réed. QQÉ, 117-118; Félix Guattari, "Félix Guattari et l'art contemporain" (1992), interview par Olivier Zahm, *Chimères* 23 (1994), 16; réed. QQÉ, 168-169; Eng. trans. Stephen Zepke, rev. Andrew Goffey, "On Contemporary Art. Interview with Olivier Zahm, April 1992," in *The Guattari Effect*, ed. Eric Alliez, and Andrew Goffey (London: continuum, 2011), 51; Félix Guattari, "La passion des machines," 44b; réed. QQÉ, 253; Félix Guattari, "Les systèmes d'interface machiniques," *Terminal* 62 (1991); réed. QQÉ, 286.

by Gregory Bateson. Beginning from his research in cybernetics, Bateson proposed an ecology that encompasses the physical and what he defined as ‘mind.’<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, ecosophy can be described as the science of the relationships between machines, the external world, and the conditions of their existence.<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, the individual emerges within a transindividual field, with which it subsequently enters into relation.<sup>11</sup>

In a 1992 interview, when confronted with the assertion that his “manner of thinking about subjectivity finally puts an end to the primacy given to the concept of the individual (opposed to the socius), as the pivot of postmodern sociologies,”<sup>12</sup> Guattari explicitly reaffirmed the philosophical premises underlying the political dimension of his ecosophy. He explained that he started:

from the idea that subjectivity [was] always the result of collective assemblages, which involve not only a multiplicity of individuals, but also a multiplicity of technological, machinic and economic factors... a multiplicity of factors of so to say pre-personal sensations. The individual [...] is only a particular case of assemblage linked to a certain type of culture, and of social practices. I reject in advance the kind of reductionism which consists in thinking communication and culture result from an interaction between individuals. There is no interaction between individuals; there is a constitution of subjectivity at a scale that is transindividual from the outset.<sup>13</sup>

9 See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972); trad. fr. Fériat Drosso, Laurencine Lot, Christian Cler et Eugène Simion, *Vers une écologie de l'esprit*, tt. I-II (Paris: Seuil, 1977-1980). For the passages in which Guattari refers to Bateson, see Guattari, *Les Trois écologies*, 11, 50 and 68; Eng. trans., 27, 54, 93-94; Félix Guattari, “Vers une écosophie” (1992), in *QQÉ*, 59. In general, on Bateson and Guattari, see Enrico Mastropiero, “L’art de l’Éco: Guattari e Bateson,” in *Governare l’ambiente? La crisi ecologica tra poteri, saperi e conflitti*, cur. Ottavio Marzocca (Milano-Udine: Mimesis) 2010: 233-40; Ida Ninni, “Bateson e Guattari. Prospettive utopiche per il presente,” *Formazione & Insegnamento* 12, no. 4 (2014), 95-100; Robert Shaw, “Bringing Deleuze and Guattari down to Earth through Gregory Bateson. Plateaus, Rhizomes and Ecosophical Subjectivity,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 33, no. 7-8 (2015), 151-171; Sergio Ferlito, “L’ecologia come paradigma delle scienze sociali,” *Teoria e Critica della regolazione sociale* 2 (2020), 37-59; Jan Jagodzinski, “Thinking Bateson with Deleuze and Guattari. Response-ability of Artisans-Artists-Designers in the Anthropocene,” *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* 17, no. 3 (2023), 387-423; Julie Van der Wielen, “Cybernetic or Machinic Ecology? Guattari’s Parting Ways with Bateson,” *Environmental Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (2024), 61-89.

10 See Félix Guattari, “[Rhizome et arbre],” in *QQÉ*: 535-538. On the role of the “from outside (*dehors*)” as an instance addressed by schizoanalytic reflection, particularly in relation to Guattari’s concept of rhizome, in addition to the contributions of Peter Pál Pelbart, “La pensée du dehors, le dehors de la pensée. Blanchot, Foucault, Deleuze,” in *Deleuze et les écrivains. Littérature et philosophie*, dir. Bruno Gelas et Hervé Micolet (Nantes: Défaute, 2007), 39-55; Paolo Vignola, “Deleuze, il fuori e il testo. Percorsi nomadici tra aforismi e rizomi,” in *Fuori. Evasione, esposizione, esteriorità*, ed. Eleonora de Conciliis (Pompei: kaiak, 2021), 35-54, please allow me to refer you to Francesco Di Maio, “L’Arbor è un albero? Umberto Eco lettore di Rhizome, Gilles Deleuze lettore dell’Isagoge,” *VS* 139, no. 2 (2024), 377-396.

11 On this topic, which is rooted in Simondonian thought within the context of contemporary French philosophy, allow me to refer you to my *Univocità e individuazione. Gilles Deleuze lettore di Giovanni Duns Scoto* (Senigallia: Ventura, 2023), 171-216.

12 Félix Guattari, “Félix Guattari et l’art contemporain,” 3; réed *QQÉ*, 150; Eng. trans., 40.

13 Ibid., 3-4; réed. *QQÉ*, 150; Eng. trans., 40-41.

Foregrounding these aspects allows us to avoid three recurrent misunderstandings concerning Guattarian ecosophy. Firstly, it clarifies the distinct differences between Guattari’s philosophical project and other synonymous doctrines that have been described as ecosophical in recent decades.<sup>14</sup>

An important exception, however, is the ecosophy of Arne Næss,<sup>15</sup> with which there has been a greater dialogue and mutual influence, at least at the level of critical reception.<sup>16</sup> Næss distinguishes between deep ecology—understood as the genuine form of ecosophy, which seeks to rethink the place of human beings within natural processes—and shallow ecology,<sup>17</sup> which may be likened to what Yves Citton defines as “managerial (*gestionnaire*) ecology.”<sup>18</sup>

Although Guattari resolutely rejects liberal approaches to nature grounded in exchange value and capitalist exploitation, it must nonetheless be emphasized that, unlike Guattari, Næss does not develop a sustained reflection on nature in relation to sociological and technological dimensions.

This absence tends to encourage an idealization of “wilderness,” exemplified by the Norwegian mountains, and implicitly evokes a mythical golden age to which humanity might supposedly return—aspects that Guattarian ecology drastically rejects, as we will see.<sup>19</sup>

14 See, e.g., Michel Maffesoli, *Matrimonium. Petit traite d’écosophie* (Paris: cnrs, 2010); Michel Maffesoli, *Écosophie. Une écologie pour notre temps* (Paris: Cerf, 2017). Other ‘écosophies,’ focusing on σοφία understood as wisdom directed towards οἶκος, find their centre in the dimension of the sacred. The most famous example is that of Raimon Panikkar, *Ecosofia. Para una espiritualidad de la tierra* (San Pablo: Madrid, 1994); Raimon Panikkar, *Ecosofia. La sabiduría de la Tierra* (Barcelona: Fragmenta, 2021). See also, under various headings, Luciano Valle, *Dall’ecologia all’ecosofia. Percorsi epistemici ed etici tra Oriente e Occidente, tra scienza e saggezza* (Como: Ibis, 2011); Jean-Yves Leloup, *Vers une écologie intégrale. Écologie et écosophie* (Toulouse: uppr, 2018; réed. Paris: Entremises, 2020); Luciano Dottarelli, *Ecosofia. Sapienze della terra per la coltivazione dell’umanità* (Grotte di Castro: Annuli, 2021). It should be noted that Gregory Bateson already believed it necessary to integrate the dimension of the sacred in order to perfect his ecological epistemology. See Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson, *Angels Fear. Toward an Epistemology of the Sacred* (New York: Hampton, 1987). Other uses of the term ‘ecosophy,’ not further detailed, can also be found in the titles of Gianluca Cuozzo, *A spasso tra i rifuti. Tra ecosofia, realismo e utopia* (Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2014), and Giovanni Leghissa, *Postumani per scelta. Verso un’ecosofia dei collettivi* (Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2015).

15 See Arne Næss, *The Selected Works of Arne Næss, vol. 10, Deep Ecology of Wisdom. Explorations in Unities of Nature and Cultures. Selected Papers*, ed. Harold Glasse, Alan Drengson, Arne Næss, and Bill Devall, George Sessions (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

16 See, e.g., the seminar work of the Italian research group ubiminor, such as *Ecosofia. Percorsi contemporanei nel pensiero ecologico*, cur. Gianluca De Fazio e Paulo Fernando Lévano (Modena: Mucchi, 2017); *Prontuario di ecosofia. Bibliografie metastabili*, cur. Gianluca De Fazio, Paulo Fernando Lévano e Irene Sorrentino (Senigallia: Ventura, 2019); Prisca Amoroso, *Ecologia* (Roma: Castelvecchi, 2023); *Soglie della visibilità. Ecologie, consumi e sensibilità*, cur. Camilla Bernava e Gianluca De Fazio (Ventura: Senigallia, 2024), as well as the publications of the series ‘mappæmundi – Una collana di ecosofia’ by Ventura Publishing.

17 See Arne Næss, “The Shallow and The Deep, Long-range Ecology Movement. A Summary,” *Inquiry* 16, no. 1-4 (1973), 95-100; now in *The Selected Works of Arne Næss*, vol. 10, 7-12, and “The deep ecology movement: Some philosophical aspects,” *Philosophical Inquiry* 8 (1986), 10–31; now in *The Selected Works of Arne Næss*, vol. 10, 33-56.

18 Yves Citton, *Pour une écologie de l’attention* (Paris: Seuil, 2014), 45. On this link, see Manola Antonioli, “Les deux écosophies,” *Chimères* 87, no. 3 (2015), 42.

Secondly, it is important to avoid the 'numerology' of ecologies. While the title *Les Trois écologies* may invite further enumerations,<sup>20</sup> the desire to foreground additional dimensions of analysis should not lead to the indefinite multiplication of ecological registers (for instance, temporal or linguistic ecologies).<sup>21</sup> Such additions risk weakening Guattari's proposal, which is grounded in a principle of disciplinary transversality. The maxim *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem* thus remains fully applicable to ecosophy.<sup>22</sup>

Although the meaning of transversality evolved throughout Guattari's work,<sup>23</sup> its core does not lie simply in interdisciplinarity, but in the capacity to investigate the genesis of objects of knowledge through the interaction of disciplines, their situated applications, and their relations to an external, chaotic field. From an ecosophical perspective, disciplines live and interact in a manner comparable to machines or organisms. Transversality therefore serves to prevent the dispersion and autonomization of registers. If such domains become isolated, they risk being reified and acquiring unwarranted transcendence. Guattari's ecosophy ultimately extends the principle of transversality to the scale of the cosmos—a vision encapsulated in the Joycean term *chaosmosis*.<sup>24</sup>

Third and finally, these considerations counter any interpretation of ecosophy as a call for a return to an originary nature to be defended at the expense of other dimensions of reality. Guattari criticizes the ecological ideology that emerged in the preceding decade, which promoted a fictitious protection of nature compatible with the developmental logic of capitalist states.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, rejecting the concept of nature as a foundational category helps to dispel persistent misunderstandings surrounding the theory of the desiring machine, often misconstrued as an uncritical affirmation of egoistic superhumanism.<sup>26</sup> The doctrine of desiring machines, as articulated in *Anti-Oedipus* by Guattari and Gilles Deleuze,<sup>27</sup> proposes instead a form of radical constructivism that cuts across subjectivities, social relations, and natural processes alike.

As Guattari explains:

The machine is always in dialogue with otherness: in its technological and human environment, but also through its phylogenetic links with the machines that preceded it and those that will follow. This gives rise to a new form of otherness: that which is situated in time. In addition to otherness, the machine establishes finitude: it is born, breaks down, breaks, and dies. For this reason, we [with Gilles Deleuze, in *Anti-Oedipus*] expanded the concept of the machine beyond technical machines to include biological, social, and urban machines, megamachines, linguistic machines, theoretical machines, and even desiring machines. This concept therefore envisages the possibility of the machine abolishing itself.<sup>28</sup>

"Finitude" and "otherness" thus constitute the two philosophical poles of Guattarian ecosophy. Yet this framework is not grounded in dogmatism or in transcendent instances presumed to resolve, once and for all, the problems of the present. Rather, ecosophy proposes a mode of composition: a

25 This was what Dario Paccino had already analysed and denounced in Italy in the previous decade. See Dario Paccino, *L'imbroglione ecologico. L'ideologia della natura* (Torino: Einaudi, 1972; n. ed. Verona: ombre corte, 2021). See also *L'ecologia politica di Dario Paccino. Tra l'imbroglione ecologico e le lotte contro il nucleare*, cur. Gennaro Avallone e Sirio Paccino (Verona: ombre corte, 2024).

26 This misunderstanding is still present in the reception of schizoanalysis. To give an example in the ecological debate, see Manlio Iofrida, "Un dialogo con Alberto Lorenzini sul soggetto, sull'incarnazione e sulla coscienza," in *Per un paradigma del corpo: una rifondazione filosofica dell'ecologia* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2019), 199: "Everything depends on a subjective perspective, there is no reality and therefore everything is possible: green light for the free production of desire, for Deleuze and Guattari's famous 'desiring machines!' Needless to say, nothing could be further from the ecological perspective that you [sc. A. Lorenzini] and I pursue." On this topic in general, allow me to refer you to my *Univocità e individuazione*, 185-188. A similar misunderstanding can be found in architectural contexts, for example with Marco Biraghi, *Rem Koolhaas. L'architettura al di là del bene e del male* (Torino: Einaudi, 2024), 21-24, 28 notes 22-25, and 61, 75 note 1, and 103, 111 note 8. Here, the theory of desiring machines is associated with the explicitly neoliberal theoretical and practical output of star architect Rem Koolhaas. Explicitly neoliberal, indifferent to social issues and the problems of subjectivity and emancipatory practices and policies, as well as to any ecological sensibilities, this book concludes with a self-referential discourse defending the architect's work and, consequently, the status quo.

27 See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Edipe. Capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972); Eng. trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York-London: Continuum, 2004).

28 Félix Guattari, "La passion des machines," 44a; réed. *QQÉ*, 251-252.

19 The distance between Guattari and Næss is analysed not only in Antonioli, "Les deux ecosophies," but also in Silvano Cacciari, "Deep ecology ed ecosofia tra Arne Næss e Félix Guattari," *millepiani* 36 (2010), 23-36; John C. Tinnell, "Transversalising the Ecological Turn. Four Components of Félix Guattari's Ecosophical Perspective," *Deleuze Studies* 6, no. 3 (2012), 357-388; Simon Levesque, "Two versions of ecosophy. Arne Næss, Félix Guattari, and their connection with semiotics," *Sign Systems Studies* 44, no. 4 (2016), 511-41.

20 Franco La Cecla provides an example in his "Postfazione. Le tre ecologie più una: La pornoecologia," in Félix Guattari, *Le tre ecologie* (Casale Monferrato: Sonda, 1989), 49-71.

21 See, for instance, Thierry Paquot, "Tre, quattro, cinque ecologie!," it. trans. Tiziana Villani, *millepiani* 32 (2007), 43-50, following Einar Ingvald Haugen, *The Ecology of Language. Language Science and National Development* (Stanford: sup, 1972).

22 See Félix Guattari, "La transversalité" (1964), *Revue de psychothérapie institutionnelles* 1, no. 1 (1965), 91-106; réed. dans *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (Paris: Maspero 1972; réed. Paris: La Découverte, 2003), 72-85; Eng. trans. Rosemary Sheed, "Transversality," in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955-1971* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2015), 108-102, and 377. See also Andrew Goffey, "Introduction to Guattari on Transdisciplinarity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 32, no. 5.6 (2015), 125-130 and *Deleuze, Guattari, and the Problem of transdisciplinarity*, ed. Guillaume Collett (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2020).

23 See Félix Guattari, "Vertige de l'immanence. Refonder la production d'inconscient" (1992), interview par John Johnston, *Chimères* 38 (2000), 15; réed. *QQÉ*, 303-327; Eng. trans. "The Vertigo of Immanence. Interview with John Johnston, June 1992," in *The Guattari Effect*, 26-27.

24 See Félix Guattari, *Chaosmose* (Paris: Galilée, 1992; réed. Paris: Lignes, 2022); Eng. trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1995). The term 'chaosmos' is a hapax from James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber & Faber 1975), 118. Guattari's attention to this term may have been drawn by the French edition of Umberto Eco, "Dalla Summa al Finnegans Wake. Le poetiche di Joyce," in *Opera aperta. Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee* (Milano, Bompiani, 1962), 215-361; n. ed. *Le poetiche di Joyce. Dalla Summa al Finnegans Wake* (Milano: Bompiani, 1965); trad. fr. Chantal Roux de Bézieux et André Boucourechliev, "De la Somme à Finnegans Wake. Les poétiques de James Joyce," in *L'Œuvre ouverte* (Paris: Seuil, 19712), 169-304; Eng. trans. Ellen Esrock, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce* (Tulsa: University of Tulsa Press, 1982; reprint Cambridge: HUP, 1989).

pragmatics of living multiplicities that necessarily implies an anti-universal tension.

In conclusion, the environmental movements with which Guattari maintained a *compagnon de route* relationship<sup>29</sup> required a philosophy capable of addressing the novel conditions that emerged from the 1970s onward.<sup>30</sup> As René Schérer observed, ecosophy calls for a “new philosophy of Nature,” a “‘philosophy to come,’” which “rings the death knell for ontology as a ‘science’ or ‘approach’ to Being.” More than an ontology, ecosophy is a philosophy of life and nature. Or rather, Schérer corrects himself: “No, there is no ontology; this is what Félix tells us during his speech;” there are only “sets, diversely organized multiplicities, relationships; and they are moving, flowing. They are diversely machined.”<sup>31</sup>

## 2. Ecosophy and urban stratification

One of the major strengths of Stéphane Nadaud's collection of Félix Guattari's ecosophical texts is that it opens with the article “Ecosophical Practices and the Restoration of the ‘Subjective City.’”<sup>32</sup> As Nadaud notes in the French edition, this text constitutes “one of Guattari's most beautiful expressions of his ecosophy.”<sup>33</sup> It foregrounds the central role played by cities—and, more broadly, by the urban dimension—in the contemporary world, and thus underscores the urgency of ecosophical reflection in this domain.

Guattari maintains that one “can no longer be satisfied with defining cities in spatial terms. The urban phenomenon has changed nature. It is no longer one problem among many. It is problem number one: the problem situated at the crossroads of economic, social, cultural, and ideological stakes.”<sup>34</sup> This is because the city “forges the destiny of humanity through its social advancements and segregations, the formation of its elites, the future of social innovation, and of creation in all fields.”<sup>35</sup>

Guattari's sustained interest in urban phenomena—evident throughout his work—has its institutional roots in the experience of the Fédération des groupes d'étude et de recherches institutionnelles (FGERI), founded

in 1965. This organization was structured around the principle of inter-disciplinarity, later adopted by the Centre d'études, de recherches et de formation institutionnelles (CERFI) and by the journal *Recherche*.<sup>36</sup> These collectives and workshops brought together not only psychiatrists, ethnologists, students, economists, psychologists, educators, and writers, but also architects and sociologists.<sup>37</sup>

Within his ecosophical reflections,<sup>38</sup> Guattari repeatedly suggests that we are entering what may be called an “urban age,”<sup>39</sup> given forecasts that an ever-growing proportion of the world's population will live in urban agglomerations. The “world-city of the new figure of integrated world-wide capitalism is deeply deterritorialized, and its diverse components are scattered across every surface of a multipolar urban rhizome encircling the planet.”<sup>40</sup>

Guattari elaborates:

The growth of certain cities, like Mexico City, that in a few more years will reach a population of 30 million inhabitants, and has record levels of pollution and congestion, seems to be up against insurmountable obstacles. Other wealthy cities, like those in Japan, envisage bringing enormous resources to bear upon the remodeling of their layouts. But responses to these problems outstrip the scope of both urbanism

36 Cfr. Sven-Olov Wallenstein, “Genealogy of Capital and the City. CERFI, Deleuze and Guattari,” in *Deleuze and the City*, ed. Hélène Frichot, Catharina Gabrielsson, and Jonathan Metzger (Edinburgh: EUP, 2016), 111-27. On FGERI and CERFI, in addition to Félix Guattari, “*Pratique de l'institutionnel et politique*,” in Jean Oury, Félix Guattari, François Tosquelles, *Pratique de l'institutionnelles et politique*, Vigneaux: Matrice, 1985, 46-47; réed. QQÉ, 220-221, see also Janet H. Morford, *Histoire du CERFI. La trajectoire d'un collectif de recherche sociale* (Paris: Mémoire de D.E.A., EHESS, 1984), [http://www.editions-recherches.com/special\\_revue.php](http://www.editions-recherches.com/special_revue.php); François Fourquet, “The story of CERFI,” *Site 2-3* (2002), 12-23; Anne Querrien, “CERFI. Four points,” *Site 2-3* (2002), 11-12; Liane Mozère, “Foucault et le CERFI. Instantanés et actualité,” *le portique* 13-14 (2004); François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari. Biographie croisée* (Paris: La Découverte, 2007), 97-100, and 109-111; Eng. trans. Deborah Glassman, *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari. Intersecting Lives* (New York: Columbia UP, 2010), 267-271, and 276-281; Susana Calò and Godofredo Enes Pereira, *CERFI – Analysis Everywhere. Militancy, Research, Architecture and Psychiatry* (Colchester-New York-Port Watson: Minor Compositions, 2025). On the journal *Recherches*, see Stéphane Nadaud, “*Recherches* (1966-1982). Histoire(s) d'une revue,” *La Revue des revues* 34 (2003), 47-76.

37 It was in fact following his meeting with Guattari that Gilles Deleuze began to take an interest in urban issues, which he had only touched upon briefly in his previous works. On this subject, see the detailed reconstruction by Massimiliano Guareschi, “Rilievi geofilosofici. La città nel pensiero di Gilles Deleuze e Félix Guattari,” in *Filosofie della metropoli. Spazio, potere, architettura nel pensiero del Novecento*, cur. Matteo Vegetti (Roma: Carocci, 2009), 221-38. See also Ubaldo Fadini, “Deleuze e Guattari 'disambientati.' Su filosofia e città,” in *Spazio dell'abitare e la genesi della metropoli nel pensiero filosofico da Kant al Novecento*, cur. Roberto Morani (Napoli-Salerno: Orthotes, 2022), 161-73. On the relationship between ecosophy and urban studies, in light of Guattari's research, it is worth mentioning the work of Tiziana Villani and, more generally, the workshop of the journal *millepiani*. Among the various publications, see, e.g., Tiziana Villani, *Psychogéographies urbaines. Corps, territoires et technologies* (Paris: Eterotopia France/rhizome, 2014); Villani, *Ecologia politica. Nuove cartografie dei territori e potenza di vita* (Roma: la talpa-manifestolibri, 2015); Villani, “Ecosofia. Percorsi di produzione delle pratiche di senso,” *millepiani* 32 (2007), 31-41.

38 See Guattari, “Pratiques écosophiques...,” 34; Eng. trans., 99; Félix Guattari, “L'environnement et les hommes. Émergence et retour des valeurs ou l'enjeu éthique de l'écologie,” in *QQÉ*: 532.

39 For a critical introduction to the topic, see Niel Brenner, and Christian Schmid, “Urban Age' in Question,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 3 (2014), 731-55.

40 Guattari, “Pratiques écosophiques...,” 37-38; Eng. trans., 101. See also Félix Guattari, and Gilles Deleuze, *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), 258; Eng. trans. Brian Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 212.

29 See Stéphane Nadaud, “Félix Guattari l'écosphie,” in Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que écosophie?*, 14-18.

30 Similar political and philosophical concerns can be found in other authors in the decades that followed. See, e.g., Bruno Latour, *Un monde pluriel mais commun. Entretiens avec François Ewald* (La Tour-d'Aigues: Aube, 2005), 56-60.

31 René Schérer, “Les visions écosophiques de Félix,” *Chimères* 76, 1 (2012), 16-17; n. éd. ampl. dans *Théories et pratiques écologiques. De l'écologie urbaine à l'imagination environnementale*, dir. Manola Antoniolli (Paris: Presse Universitaire de Paris Ouest, 2013), 13-15.

32 Félix Guattari, “Pratiques écosophiques et restauration de la cité subjective” (1981, 19922), in *QQÉ*, 31-57; Eng. trans. Gary Genosko, “Ecosophical Practices and the Restoration of the ‘Subjective City,” in *Machinic Eros: Writings on Japan*, ed. Gary Genosko, and Jay Hetrick (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 97-116.

33 See *QQÉ*, 31, note 1.

34 Guattari, “Pratiques écosophiques...,” 45-46; Eng. trans., 107.

35 *ibid.*, 46; Eng. trans., 107.

and economics, and require the mobilization of socio-politics, ecology, and ethics.<sup>41</sup>

These tendencies are inseparable from Guattari's ecosophical framework. Urban overpopulation entails an "evolution of urban mentalities," which in turn makes a "collective reorientation of human activities" unavoidable.<sup>42</sup> The significance of urbanization for ecosophy lies not only in the environmental footprint of cities, but also—if not primarily—in their role in the production of subjectivity. The urban age encompasses not merely cities but the entire planet. Even if approximately 80 per cent of humanity comes to reside in urban areas, the remaining "rural" population will remain deeply dependent on urban economies and technologies. Consequently, the distinction between city and nature undergoes a profound transformation: so-called natural territories increasingly become sites of tourism, leisure management, second homes, ecological reserves, and decentralized industrial activities mediated by telecommunications.<sup>43</sup> What appears to be a clear opposition between the natural and the cultural thus collapses under the pressure of the urban phenomenon. In this sense, we can no longer meaningfully escape to, or nostalgically long for, a pristine "natural" environment. For Guattari, the task is therefore not to oppose the utopia of a new "Celestial Jerusalem" to the harsh realities of the present, but rather to establish "a 'subjective City' at the very heart of these realities, by reorienting technological, scientific, economic, and international ends (in particular the relations between North and South) and the great mass mediatic machines."<sup>44</sup>

Any project of urban life that seeks to avoid engagement with urban spaces by retreating into an imagined form of anchoritism must, from this perspective, be denounced as regressive, if not outright reactionary. As Guattari insists:

It is not a matter of dreaming of a return to the walled medieval cities, but to move, on the contrary, in the direction of a supplementary deterritorialization, shifting the city toward new universes of value, to confer on it as a fundamental goal a production of a non-segregative and resingularized subjectivity, that is to say, ultimately, liberated from the hegemony of a capitalistic valorization solely based on profit. This is not to say that all of the regulations of the market must necessarily be abandoned.<sup>45</sup>

41 Guattari, "Pratiques écosophiques...", 42; Eng. trans., 104.

42 *ibid.*, 34; Eng. trans., 99.

43 *ibid.*, 34; Eng. trans., 99.

44 *ibid.*, 34; Eng. trans., 99.

45 *ibid.*, 39; Eng. trans., 102. Guattari's historiographical basis, specifically regarding the city, is the work of Fernand Braudel: "Throughout history, one cannot speak of a rapport—in the sense that they spoke with one voice—between cities and rural areas. Cities interfered in every area of civilization. Thus, in the 16th Century, there was a veritable proliferation of city models correlative to the emergence of processes of urbanization and the collective apparatuses of the great national capitalistic entities." (*ibid.*, 36; Eng. trans., 100).

Cities and countryside are therefore not to be understood as idealized opposites, one utopian and the other dystopian. Nor should their osmosis imply the negation of their respective specificities. From an ecosophical standpoint, urbanization must be analyzed simultaneously on a planetary scale—within global networks—and at the level of local stratifications, for instance according to densities of agglomeration and modes of subjectivity production. As will become clear below, ecosophy's attention to aesthetics provides a crucial analytical lever in this regard.

Guattari thus characterizes the city not as a homogeneous space of limitless openness, but as a *megamachine*<sup>46</sup> whose operations generate systolic and diastolic movements of global flows through successive processes of reterritorialization and deterritorialization under capitalism. On the one hand, the city functions as a surface of inscription for flows due to its privileged relation to power. On the other hand, this very relation enables those flows to be relaunched and reorganized. The city is a "threshold of density" of equipments, of "machines of the socius," of their "body without organs." It tends toward a form of pseudo-totalization—an illusory grasp of global flows—that, if fully realized, would risk its own abolition. This desire is most vividly expressed in dreamlike and artistic registers, such as German expressionist cinema or the biblical image of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Rather than advancing a postmodern vision of the city as ineffable and indeterminate,<sup>47</sup> Guattari reiterates that it is "a spatial projection, a form of reterritorialization, of blockage," in which collective equipment constitutes a "social unconscious" operating across all structures of representation.<sup>48</sup> The city thus appears as an informational megamachine<sup>49</sup> that both aspires to an impossible unity of the world and simultaneously organizes flows through segmentation and enclosure.

These dynamics intensify with the emergence of new media, which accelerate deterritorialization while multiplying barriers and boundaries, both material and immaterial. Such processes threaten the cohesion of the socius and transform modes of singularization, producing homogenized

46 See *ibid.*, 42-43; Eng. trans., 105; Guattari, "À propos des machines," 88; réed. *QQÉ*, 115; Guattari, "La passion des machines," 44a; réed. *QQÉ*, 252; Guattari, "Subjectivité machinique plutôt que transcendance," in *Qu'est-ce que l'écosophie?*, 339, and Guattari, and Deleuze, *Mille plateaux*, 533, 571, and 575; Eng. trans., 444, 457, 460, 570 note 55, and 570 note 58. In this regard, see also Gary Genosko, "Megamachines. From Mumford to Guattari," *Explorations in Media Ecology* 14, no. 1-2 (2015), 7-20; Gary Genosko, "Postscript. For an Urban Machinic Ecology," in *Deleuze and the City*, 241-245.

47 On the debate surrounding the definition of cities, see, for an introduction, §§60-98 in Franco Farinelli, *Geografia. Un'introduzione ai modelli del mondo* (Torino: Einaudi, 2003), Eng. trans. Christina Chalmers, *Blinding Polyphemus. Geography and the Models of the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

48 Guattari, Fourquet, and Foucault, "Premières discussions, premiers balbutiements," 28-30; Eng. trans., 109-110.

49 This is a thesis that was then taken to its extreme consequences by Friedrich Adolf Kittler, "Eine Stadt ist ein Medium," in *Vienna. Geburt einer Hauptstadt*, vol. III, *Am Horizont*, hrsg. Dietmar Steiner et al. (Wien: BuchQuadrat, 1988), 507-31; Eng. trans. Matthew Griffin, "The City Is a Medium." *New Literary History* 27, no. 4 (1996), 717-29.

and infantilized subjectivities: “[c]ontemporary human beings have been fundamentally deterritorialized. Their original existential territories – bodies, domestic spaces, clans, cults—are no longer secured by a fixed ground; but henceforth they are indexed to a world of precarious representations and in perpetual motion.”<sup>50</sup>

From this standpoint, Guattari analyses the possibility of closed reterritorializations, whether around charismatic leaders or in the resurgence of nationalisms. Rather than simply condemning these phenomena, he emphasizes the necessity of understanding the conditions of their emergence and of constructing counter-dynamics oriented toward otherness.

It is in this context that Guattari's interest in late-1970s media transformations should be situated. At that moment, user participation in content production appeared increasingly central, leading Guattari to speak of a “post-media” era.<sup>51</sup> He links these developments to the constitution of “existential territories”: provisional anchors produced through refrains that allow subjectivities—human and non-human—to withstand chaotic flows.<sup>52</sup> Active participation in radio and television thus appeared to him as a possible vector for new relational configurations and for the emergence of novelty and curiosity during what he called *les Années d'hiver*.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, Guattari remained acutely aware of the ambivalence of new media. Far from indulging in technological utopianism, nor descending into the depressive depths of specific interpreters,<sup>54</sup> he increasingly recognized their role in fragmenting and segmenting urban life. In 1990, Gilles Deleuze famously described a city imagined by Guattari in which access is regulated by electronic cards that modulate movement through continuous control.<sup>55</sup>

The multiplication of enclosures is therefore not accidental, but intrinsic to capitalist development.<sup>56</sup> Because the city simultaneously produces flows and segmentarity, it constitutes a privileged site for ecosophy to analyze the production of subjectivity in relation to media and to changing conceptions of nature.

The political task, accordingly, is to intervene within media production to foster a new collective sensibility, consonant with what Guattari calls a “new aesthetic paradigm.”<sup>57</sup> Values such as solidarity, neighborliness, mutual aid, and the active construction of existence are, for him, “endangered species.” An ecosophy that is not merely managerial must therefore work to preserve and cultivate these immaterial forms of life. As Guattari asks:

[i]s there a way of living, a possible inventiveness in the realm of immediate social life, aesthetic collective life, etc.? The concept of “practice” has been undermined. If we do not reinvent practices of solidarity, practices of constructing existence, there is a risk of falling into a catastrophic depression.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. New aesthetic paradigm and urban aesthetics

Félix Guattari's concept of aesthetics explicitly refers to the etymology of the Greek term αἴσθησις, meaning “sensibility” or “perception,” as it was understood when Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten first introduced it as the name of a philosophical discipline. Guattari's reflections therefore concentrate on the dynamics of sensation through which subjectivities are formed. The “new aesthetic paradigm” aims to provide an alternative to the paradigm of exchange value as a transcendent instance by moving toward a heterogenization of values.<sup>59</sup> Although Guattari draws direct inspiration from modern and contemporary art,<sup>60</sup> his ultimate focus

50 Guattari, “Pratiques écosophiques...,” 31; Eng. trans., 97.

51 See, e.g., “Vers une ère post-média,” *Terminal* 51 (1990), réed. QQÉ: 429-430; en trans. Alya Sebti and Clemens Apprich, “Towards a Post-Media Era,” *Mute*, 01/02 (2012), <https://www.metamute.org/editorial/lab/towards-post-media-era>. On this topic, see Michael Goddard, “Félix and Alice in Wonderland. The Encounter between Guattari and Berardi and the Post-Media Era,” *Generation-online* (1996), <https://www.generation-online.org/p/fpbifo1.htm>; Bernard Prince, and Emmanuel Videcoq, “Félix Guattari and Post-Media Arrangements. The Experience of Radio Tomate and Minitel Alter,” *Multitudes* 2, no. 21 (2005), 23-30; Sara Baranzoni, “Leco di Guattari: ambiente, soggettività e tecnologie nel XXI secolo,” in *Ecologia. Teoria, natura, politica, cur.* Igor Pelgreffi (Tricase: Youcanprint, 2018), 139-160; Benjamin Bandosz, “Potentialities of Post-Media: Networks of Resistance and Subjugation in Félix Guattari's A Love of UIQ,” *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* 15, no. 1 (2021), 117-139; *Deleuze, Guattari and the Schizoanalysis of Postmedia*, ed. Joff P.N. Bradley, Alex Taek-Gwang Lee, and Manoj N.Y. (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2023).

52 On refrain, see Deleuze, and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, 381-433; Eng. trans., 310-350.

53 See Félix Guattari, *Les Années d'hiver*. 1980-1985 (Paris: Barrault, 1985; réed. Paris: Les Prairies ordinaires, 2009).

54 The reference is to Franco “Bifo” Berardi, who hoped for “a non-depressive consciousness of depression” at the end of his “Introduzione,” in Félix Guattari, *Caosmosi* (Genova: costa&nolan, 20072), 12. The proponent who developed this line in the most philosophically robust manner is arguably Paolo Godani in his *Melanconia e fine di mondo* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2025). Regarding Guattari's depression, see Nadaud, “Félix Guattari l'écosophe,” 11, note 1, *contra* Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari*, 27; Eng. trans., 14-15.

55 Gilles Deleuze, “Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle” (1990), in *Pourparlers 1972-1990* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 46; Eng. trans. Martin Joughin, “Postscript on Control Societies,” in *Negotiations, 1972-1990* (New York: CUP, 1995), 180-181.

56 For further insight into this topic, refer to the research conducted by Pierpaolo Ascari, *Corpi e recinti. Estetica ed economia politica del decoro* (Verona: ombre corte, 2019).

57 See Félix Guattari, “Le nouveau paradigme esthétique,” in Guattari, *Chaosmose*, 137-163; en trans. “The new aesthetic paradigm,” in *Chaosmosis*, 98-118. See also Félix Guattari, “Chaosmose, vers une nouvelle sensibilité” (1992), *Art actuel* 72 (1999), 19b, and 21b; réed. QQÉ, 89, and 98; Guattari, “Combattre le chaos,” interview par Marco Senaldi (1992), trad. fr. Anik Kouba, *Chimères* 38 (2000), 31-33; réed. QQÉ, 99-102; Guattari, “Vers une autopoïétique de la communication,” *Futur antérieur* 11 (1992), 38; réed. QQÉ, 143; Guattari, “Félix Guattari et l'art contemporain,” 2, 10-12, and 14; réed. QQÉ, 159, 163, and 166; Eng. trans., 45-59; Guattari, “Vertige de l'immanence,” 19, 21, and 24; réed. QQÉ, 311, 315, and 319; Eng. trans., 32-34. See also Janell Watson, “Chaosmosis. An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm,” in *The Deleuze & Guattari Dictionary*, 62-63; Manola Antonioli, “What is Ecosophy?,” Eng. trans. Stephanie Daneels, in *Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy. Reading Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2017), 74-86; Colin Gardner, and Patricia MacCornack, “Introduction,” in *Ecosophical Aesthetics. Art, Ethics and Ecology with Guattari*, Gardner, and MacCornack (ed.) (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2018), 1-28. That the concept of paradigm is explicitly borrowed from Thomas Samuel Kuhn is stated in Félix Guattari, “O paradigma estético” (1991), interview by Fernando Urribarri, port. trans. Arthur Hyppólito de Moura, rev., and reed. Suely Rolnik, *Cadernos de Subjetividade* 1, no. 1 (1993), 30a.

58 Félix Guattari, “L'imagination au pouvoir,” interview par Guy Behloubu, *Le Lien social* 181 (1992); réed. QQÉ: 349.

59 Guattari, “Combattre le chaos,” 31-33.

60 On ecosophy and art, with a focus on the post-media era, see Roberto Barbanti,

remains on everyday experience, of which art constitutes an intensification. Art foregrounds the point of non-signification and non-discursivity, which aesthetic experience enables us to rework rather than abandon to infantilizing and homogenizing models.<sup>61</sup> Guattari is explicit on this point:

There mustn't be any misunderstanding: I'm not proposing an aestheticization of the social. I only refer to art as a paradigm that underlines three types of problem: that of processual creativity, of the permanent calling into question of the identity of the object; that of the polyphony of enunciation; finally, that of autopoiesis, that is to say, the production of nuclei [foyers] of partial subjectification.<sup>62</sup>

Aesthetics has always occupied a central place in Guattari's theoretical practice. On the one hand, it is evident in the poetic dimension of his writing, which seeks to avoid verticalization and transcendence through parataxis, repetition, and montage.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, transversality and conceptual production—hallmarks of philosophical practice—enable resonance between disciplines and the reworking of heterogeneous materials. From this perspective, several commentators have noted affinities between Guattari's thought and the aesthetic theory of Theodor W. Adorno, particularly regarding the emphasis on the antinomic character of art that resists full epistemic capture.<sup>64</sup> Within Guattari's framework, the production of new forms of sensible matter is not necessarily the ultimate goal, but it is unquestionably among the primary aims. This endeavor entails the creation of new lines of flight, described by Guattari as "dives into chaos," followed by the task of bringing these heterogeneous elements back and integrating them into one's existential territories.<sup>65</sup>

Dall'immaginario all'acustinario. Prolegomeni a un'ecosofia sonora (Teramo: Galaad, 2020); Marco Mancuso, Chimera. Il corpo espanso per una nuova ecosofia dell'arte (Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2023). For further information on Guattari's relationship with modern/contemporary art, see Stephen Zepke, "Art as Abstract Machine. Guattari's Modernist Aesthetics," *Deleuze Studies* 6 (2012), 224-239; Stephen Zepke, "Memories of the Future: I and Contemporary Art," *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* 16 (2022), 600-622. These notes were directed against Maurizio Lazzarato, "The Aesthetics Paradigm," Eng. trans. David Quigley, in *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, ed. Simon O' Sullivan, and Stephen Zepke (London: continuum, 2008), 173-83.

61 Guattari, "Félix Guattari et l'art contemporain," 12; réed. *QQÉ*, 162-163; Eng. trans., 47-48.

62 Guattari, "Vertige de l'immanence," 19; réed. *QQÉ*, 311; Eng. trans., 30.

63 See Nadaud, "Félix Guattari l'écosophe," 18-23; Christiane Voss, "Schizoanalyse und Ecosophie (Félix Guattari)," in *Schlüsselwerke der Medienwissenschaft*, hrsg. Ivo Ritzer (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020), 103.

64 Voss, "Schizoanalyse und Ecosophie," 103.

65 On the subject of dissensus, see Guattari, "Pratiques écosophiques..." 33; Eng. trans., 98; Guattari, "Qu'est-ce que l'écosophie?," 23a-b; réed., *QQÉ*, 76; Guattari, "Vers une autopoïétique de la communication," 52; réed. *QQÉ*, 148; Guattari, "Les modes de production de subjectivité" (1990), in *qqÉ*, 281; Guattari, "[Subjectivité machinique plutôt que transcendance]," in *QQÉ*, 329 note 1, 334, and 340; Guattari, "La forme d'organisation comme reflet du social," in *QQÉ*: 402; Guattari, "Écologie et mouvement ouvrier" (1992), *Chimères* 21 (1994), 98; réed. "Écologie et mouvement ouvrier. [Vers une recomposition écosophique]," in *QQÉ*: 410; Guattari, "Pour une éthique des médias," in *qqÉ*: 433; Félix Guattari, "Pour une refondation des pratiques sociales. Faillite des médias, crise de civilisations, fuite de la modernité [Vers une nouvelle alliance machinique]," in *qqÉ*: 496, and 508; Guattari, "La grand-peur écologique" (1989), in *qqÉ*: 517; Guattari, "Praxis éco," interview par Sylvie Constantinou, *Fil vert* (1991); réed. *QQÉ*: 554-557, and 561; Guattari, "Pavane pour un PSU défunt et des Verts mort-nés" (1986), in *QQÉ*: 570. For an analysis of the aesthetics of the process in Deleuze and Guattari, which emphasises the meaningless and disfiguring nature of writing and recording processes, see Stephan Hesper, *Schreiben ohne Text. Die prozessuale Ästhetik von Gilles Deleuze*

In schematic form, Guattari's aesthetic orientation may be summarized as follows:

1. the aesthetic grounding of thought and being within immanence;
2. an emphasis on processes of subjectivation involving human and non-human singularities alike (works of art, films, music, cities, technologies);
3. a focus on creative and transformative processes of production, paradigmatically observable in the arts (e.g., the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of semiotics and entities);
4. the differential integration of significant and insignificant elements in heterogeneous material configurations.<sup>66</sup>

It follows that the aesthetic does not compensate for the political; rather, it is constitutive of it. In this sense, Guattari's position converges with recent lines of inquiry that, beginning from everyday aesthetic experience, have sought to articulate a more nuanced account of sensation within urban phenomena. Contemporary urban aesthetics<sup>67</sup>—within which Guattari emerges as a key interlocutor—are concerned less with the formal qualities of the built environment than with the sensations that shape urban experience. In this respect, they recall the pioneering analyses of Georg Simmel on the intensification of nervous life in metropolitan contexts.<sup>68</sup>

Accordingly, Guattari's reflections on architecture are consistently mediated by the concept of the machine. Buildings are conceived as capable of generating new affects within the milieus they inhabit.<sup>69</sup> Without absolutizing their role in the constitution of the city, Guattari nonetheless stresses the ethical, aesthetic, and political responsibility of architects, and the extent to which their practice can transform environmental and social relations.

und Félix Guattari (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).

66 Voss, "Schizoanalyse und Ecosophie," 111.

67 For a critical reconstruction of the debate, see Andrea Borsari, "On Urban Aesthetics," *Iride* 2-3 (2024), 326-45.

68 The reference is mainly to the essay by Georg Simmel, "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben," *Jahrbuch der gehe-Stiftung Dresden* 9 (1903), 185-206; Eng. trans. Edward A. Shils, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 324-339. In general, on this topic, see *Georg Simmel et le champ architectural. Sociabilité urbaine, paysage et esthétisation du monde*, dir. Manola Antonioli et Andrea Borsari (Milan: Mimesis, 2020). Guattari's work does not appear to demonstrate any explicit influence from Simmel; however, a notable convergence of ideas can be observed between the French and German philosophers concerning the concept of nervous stimulation. This alignment is exemplified by Guattari's reference to the studies conducted by Viktor von Weizsäcker on pathetic vitality. See Peter Pál Pelbart, "The Deterritorialized Unconscious," in *The Guattari Effect*, 68-83.

69 On architecture in Deleuze and Guattari, see James Williams, "Deleuze Ontology and Creativity. Becoming Architect," *Pli* 9 (2000), 200-19; Marko Jobst, "Gilles Deleuze and the Missing Architecture," *Deleuze Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014), 157-72; Marko Jobst, "Writing Sensation. Deleuze, Literature, Architecture and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*," *The Journal of Architecture* 21 (2016), 55-67; *Architectural and Urban Reflections after Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Boundas, and Tentokali; Chris L. Smith, *Architecture After Deleuze and Guattari* (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2024). See also Manola Antonioli, "Deleuze, Guattari e l'architettura," *Iride* 51, no. 2 (2007), 319-27, which emphasises how architecture, understood as a minor art and science, ranks first among the arts because it is linked to οἶκος, thus assuming a paradigmatic role for ecosophy.

As he writes:

This interaction between individual creativity and the multiplicity of material and social constraints, however, places a sanction on truth: there exists, in effect, a crossing of a threshold by means of which the architectural object and the urbanistic object acquire their own consistency as subjective enunciators: choose life or remain dead! The complexity of the position of the architect and urbanist is extreme, but fascinating when their aesthetic, ethical and political responsibilities are taken into account. Immersed in the consensus of the democratic City, it is up to them to pilot by their design [*dessin*] and their intention [*dessein*], the definitive bifurcations determining the fate of the subjective City. Either humanity, with the help of the architect and urbanist, will reinvent its urban future, or it will be condemned to perish under the weight of its own immobilization, that today threatens to render it helpless in facing the extraordinary challenges with which history confronts it.<sup>70</sup>

Alongside his dialogue with architects such as Shin Takamatsu and his sustained interest in Japanese urban culture,<sup>71</sup> Guattari consistently frames architectural practice in terms of responsibility and of the creation of a new architectural machine conceived as polyphonic and multilayered, involving the entirety of urban life.<sup>72</sup>

From the standpoint of ecosophy, however, Stephen Luis Vilaseca's reading of Guattari's relation to urban cultural studies proves misleading. Vilaseca cites Frank Owen Gehry as a paradigmatic example of ecosophical architecture, emphasizing the meticulous calculation of errors and deviations in his studio's design process in order to reduce risk and cost while enabling formal experimentation.<sup>73</sup> Yet this example remains tied to an economy of waste reduction—that is, to the managerial optimization of waste within a cost-benefit logic—rather than to any engagement with the heterogeneous social stratifications that traverse urban space.

Ecosophy, by contrast, adopts a counterintuitive and paradoxical relation to waste. Rather than prioritizing quantitative reduction, it asks what practices can emerge *from* waste itself. Such practices arise unexpectedly, in interstitial spaces and times, and are generated by subjectivities that escape prediction. In this sense, ecosophical practices are intrinsically wasteful, and ecosophy entails a becoming-waste of practices. At the urban level, ecosophy therefore concerns itself with what Guattari calls "urban war machines."

70 Guattari, "Pratiques écosophiques...", 57; Eng. trans. 114-115.

71 See Guattari, *Machinic Eros*.

72 See Félix Guattari, "L'énonciation architecturale," in *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* (Paris: Galilée, 1989), 291-301; Eng. trans. Andrew Goffey, "Architectural enunciation," in *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (London et al.: Bloomsbury, 2013), 231-239, and 282-283.

73 See Stephen Luis Vilaseca, "Félix Guattari and urban cultural studies," *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014), 137-144.

As Manola Antonioli explains,<sup>74</sup> Guattari envisages urban renewal as a collective process that radically transforms participation in design. Beyond architects, planners, and politicians, this process must involve social scientists and, crucially, residents and users themselves. Such an expanded field of participation fosters research and social experimentation aimed at anticipating not only spatial transformations, but also new forms of life. Neighborhood practices, education, culture, sports, transport, childcare, and elder care thus become integral components of urban recomposition. Guattari is fully aware that such participatory processes generate tensions, ambivalences, and conflicts—particularly when the category of "inhabitant" exceeds juridical definitions of citizenship. Nevertheless, this engagement is indispensable if a more active and collective appropriation of the urban megamachine is to occur.<sup>75</sup>

In conclusion, Guattari's ecosophy—grounded in the transversality of environment, social relations, and subjectivity—assigns a central place to urban phenomena. Cities function as megamachines that stratify and segment spaces and flows while continuously reshaping singularities. Within this framework, politics is inseparable from the new aesthetic paradigm, which seeks to cultivate new forms of subjectivity through media practices, architectural experimentation, and everyday invention. Urban ecosophy thus operates within smooth spaces that cut across rigid boundaries. The chaosmosis we inhabit calls upon us, despite the vertigo of the abyss, to affirm the emergence of the new in everyday life before it is re-encoded. As schizoanalysis cautions: "Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us."<sup>76</sup>

74 See Manola Antonioli, "Introduction," in *Machines de guerre urbaines*, dir. Manola Antonioli (Paris: Loco, 2015), 13-20; Eng. trans. Stephanie Daneels, "Urban War Machines," in *The Dark Precursor: Deleuze and Artistic Research*, vol. II, *The Dark Precursor in Image, Space, and Politics*, ed. Paulo de Assis, and Paolo Giudici (Leuven: Leuven UP, 2018), 431-6.

75 On this broad topic, see at least Joëlle Zask, *Participer. Essai sur les formes démocratiques de la participation* (Paris: Le Bord de l'eau, 2011).

76 Deleuze, and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, 625; Eng. trans., 500.

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