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Title   **INVOLUTION: A Mereotopological Perspective**

Abstract

It is time for the discipline of architecture to awaken from the slumber of *anthropo*centrism and shake off the baggage of nature/nurture dichotomies. The paper will propose that we drop *anthropo*morphism for *geo*morphism, mereology for mereo*topology*, and reconfigure ethology so as to become a theory of capacity. The opposite of the concrete is not the abstract, but the discrete. Rather than localising it in individuals, behaviour is to be treated epigenetically as a function of *con*dividuation by way of traversing phyletic lineages and organismic boundaries. Against a Darwinian *nucleo*centric view of evolution as a 'struggle for survival', the paper will build on the theories arguing that in most cases an evolutionary novelty arises as a consequence of 'creative' *symbio*genesis. The virtually limitless connectivity between heterogeneous beings puts *atmospheres* before *objects*, *alliances* before *filiations*, *contingency* before *necessity*, and *contagion* before *heredity*.

The recent interest in the brain is not to be dismissed as *neuro*reductionism, but as the locus of the most promising research trajectory that places biology and history – nature and culture – on the same footing. After all, only humans are biologically 'compelled' to modify and redesign their environment in an innovative and historical manner. 'Evolution by other (i.e. niche-constructionist) means' exposes the vulnerability of exclusively Darwinian explanations. Passive adaptation – evo – is always already complemented by active modulation – evo-devo. While *geno*reductionists insist that genes are responsible for our behaviour, it has now become undeniable that the environment itself contributes to the phenotypical expression.

The paper will promote *epi*genesis as a theory of development in which forms are influenced and modified by environmental factors. No wonder that it should appeal to architects who could be said to *allo*poietically sculpt brains by way of sculpting the existential niche. The distinction urges us to rethink the long-lasting legacy of privileging *episteme* over *tekhne*. Strictly speaking, architecture as a *sedimented* epigenetic mnemo-technology has a higher order of 'monumentality' (as a block of sensation), which makes it epi*phylo*genetic. If epigenetics is the concept of non-genetic heritability (such as language acquisition), then epiphylogenesis teaches us that it is the 'what' that invents the 'who' at the same time that it is invented by it, weather permitting.

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Bio

Andrej Radman has been teaching theory courses and design studios at TU Delft Faculty of Architecture and The Built Environment since 2004. In 2008 he was appointed Assistant Professor of Architecture. As a graduate of the Zagreb School of Architecture in Croatia, Radman received a Master's Degree with Honours and a Doctoral Degree from Delft University of Technology. His current research focuses on New Materialism in general and Ecologies of Architecture in particular. Radman is a production editor and member of the editorial board of the peer-reviewed architecture theory journal *Footprint*. He is also a licensed architect with a portfolio of built and competition-winning projects.