

the ontological organization

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Morality consists in this for each individual: to attempt each time to extend its region of clear expression, to try and augment its amplitude, so as to produce a free act that expresses the most possible in one condition or another. (Deleuze 1993:73)

abstract

Efficiency is the soul of capitalism, expression is the soul of the ontological organization. To be effective the ontological organization must have active participants in place/event and not just space/time. Constant becomings within the organization are affirmations experienced as ontology. Individuals experience new becomings as the flow of feelings of creativity, self worth, accomplishment... as the place you want to be and the events you want to do. An ontological organization is something that expresses being, not something that represents lifestyle.

space/time

Deleuze and Guattari (D&G) illustrate the meaningless of space/time without ontology through the umwelt of the tick. Experiments have shown the tick to sit dormant for over twenty years before being activated by the pheromone of a passing mammal. A tick has no eyes or ears, responds only to scent by leaping towards it. If the tick lands on a mammal, it burrows under the skin, sucks blood, lays eggs, dies and falls off. And another cycle of tick life begins. In the twenty years without the trigger, nothing happens: What is space/time that is not experienced?

Or recall any extended trip you have done. Once you may have marked the route as a continuous line across a map but now when you recall the experience, all you can recollect are the events and places along that way. You know you once connected the dots with travel but now you may as well have been asleep: 'Nothing' happened. Why is it I have such strong memories of going through the Rocky mountains whereas the rocks, lakes, and trees of my own province, not so much. How would it be different if I was from the mountains?

I remember Lake Louise and Winnipeg as places but the 1,000 kilometres of flat space in between is pretty vague. Place in a 'progressive' or 'global' sense becomes intimately connected with our personal narratives of space and time and life¹. Because progressive place always has to do with my personal narrative it bears a resonating and dynamic organic relationship with my subjective identity. The presence of objects that anchor place are signs that generate memories attached to the subjective self and are always in an ambiguous relationship with the exploration of the new. While progressive place can instil the comfort necessary to explore the new, it can also generate resistance to that exploration.

We fall back onto the abstractions and generalizations that unite us as a collective as if they were defining our essence clouding our ability to see particulars for what they are in themselves. In other words, the need to represent our subjective identity and identify with this representation resists our expression of who we are as possibility. This is a force that pushes us to identify with what remains the same over time and resist change.

(D+G) give examples of desire as expressed in the vectors of nursing child and mother's breast, orchid and wasp. These couplings produce flow: Milk and hormones, nectar and pollen, in the machinic integration of subject and object. Full engagement in an assemblage causes the subject to disappear as in for example, 'la petite mort' of sexual intercourse, the ultimate becoming. We become 'other' in a tiny increment of consciousness.

This is because one does not think without becoming something else, something that does not think – an animal, a molecule, a particle – and that comes back to thought and revives it. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994:42.)

The machinic coupling of individual with genius loci makes a more inclusive, process event as becoming place and raises an increment of consciousness. We become place in a way that is singular, experiential, not dependent on subjective identity, no longer attribution but entirely predication, no longer representation but entirely expression. Place in this Deleuzian sense consists of the exchange or flow of an individual as a space of possibility with the spirit of the place. This becoming place always has a

¹ Massey, Doreen (24 June 1991). "A Global Sense of Place". *Marxism Today* 38.

temporal aspect that grounds the individual in a timeless oneness with earth. Becoming place is the configuration of [I+here+now]. Space/time becomes place/event.

To make place is to integrate man and space and time. It is the handprint on a cave wall that brings order to the chaosmos, the temple of Apollo at Delphi, or Le Corbusier's Ronchamp... Identity, all representation, drops away. Distinctions dissolve and we become the world as the seamless event of [I+here+now]. Primary vectors collide, the silence of I, the universe of here, the eternity of now...

Place is framing. A framing of intensities of maximum flow. As the sound of one hand clapping stalls the cognitive brain dislocating our subjective identity; as the tea ceremony calls fourth the presence of the experience beneath the habit; as the arrow, the bow, the body become one integrated assemblage in archery: Place resonates. The impact is overwhelmingly sensual, overwhelmingly non-cognitive.

The arts of Zen, archery, gardening or taking tea, are exercises to make the event surge forth and dazzle on a pure surface. (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002: 68)

Place is here. This is the event. This is always the event... and the assemblage is the afterthought, always thought after. Dionysius leads the dance, ever to be reviewed by Apollo...

The condition of making the event surge forth is the absorption of the self in the process of the event. We become the event losing the duality of subject/object in process. We become a seamless assemblage, a process without boundaries absorbed into the present. Humans must necessarily bring judgement to bear by stepping out of process to represent their experience through sign but sign never equals event. We are either in process or observing process: First we become, then we think about it as being, one an action, the other an object, and the two bear the same relationship as sex and and the foldout from Playboy.

The Disneyfication of the world is driven by the machinery of capitalism, the relentless marketing of experience flattens space and hides the truth of ontological place. Making space asserts representation over reality while place is pure expression of dynamic forces. Space represents conceptually while place expresses the rich sensation of here and now. One is the sign of, while the other, the lived reality: 'Finding yourself' is routinely superficial as hollow representation, always a question in the lived world of

expression; always the root of the ontological tensions of life. Only exploring this tension is moral.

Morality consists in this for each individual: to attempt each time to extend its region of clear expression, to try and augment its amplitude, so as to produce a free act that expresses the most possible in one condition or another. (Deleuze 1993:73)

To make space is to replace resonance with image, to compose signs of experience as an assemblage of representation - a house, a school, a factory - which is simply a socially determined habit of non-thought, the architecturally configured morphology of a functional typology. It is very useful in a world where thinking gets in the way of consuming making one unsure when so called 'knowledge' is revered. Making place requires actual thought, thinking through the event, the immediate ontological present, the 'what is' and 'who is' of here and now, always unique and therefore never known, only explored.

Place and event are not identical: Place emphasizes the assemblage, event the process: You cannot have one without the other. Different dimensions of a continuum, inseparable. Place as [I + Here + Now]. Event as [I + Now + Here]. Place/Event embraces that question of who we are. Becomings resonate, an integral component of process... so pure that identity disappears insinuated in the fabric of the place/event... Remember the experience of being 'Lost in a good book?' Of course not: You were so present 'you' weren't even there². You were so actively engaged in the event that you simply expressed you as doing. No time for representing being, entirely absorbed in becoming. Your identity only showed up after the event, a self consciousness memory that inevitably stands in your way. When you 'think' too hard about doing it is difficult to even walk across a room full of onlookers, your natural behaviour becomes scripted and you 'act' rather than become. We begin blessed with innocence but soon develop into an ego that hides us in thought.

Place is here. This is the event. This is always the event... and the assemblage is the afterthought, always thought after. Dionysius leads the dance, ever to be reviewed by Apollo...

Identity is sign. Who we think we are, who others think we are, is a sign, a

²*La Petite Mort, the disappearance of self at the moment of orgasm is the classic example.*

representation of who we are. And, as in all representations, a mere shadow of the past. We are not a corpuscle, we are a wave, or rather the action of a wave. Who we are is expression as process. We exist as long as that process resonates in the chaosmos, as intensity in the universe, infinitely rippling outward, meeting other ripples, reflecting other ripples. Gaining amplitude with resonance, flattening with dissonance. We behave as if the world is a sign, as if we are a sign, but we are responsible for the production of signs, the 'named'.

*The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao
The name that can be named is not the eternal name
The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth
The named is the mother of myriad things*

That voice in your head, the image of you in the mirror, your 'identity' is simply your representation of you. A symbol, a sign. You are in fact the process that interprets signs. Expression is an ontological statement of becoming, of what something has the potential of becoming while representation is simply a listing of qualities, of signs. Expression is unmediated, not meaning something but something that means. Therein lies the morality: Morality is the clear expression of the ontic, the maximization of ontological resonance.

the ontology of organization

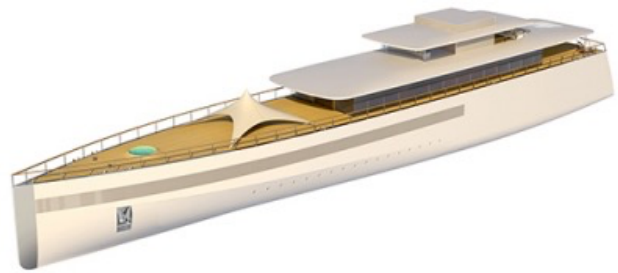
Organizations observing the effectiveness of workPlace routinely mis-understand its expression, grasping only its representation. Open concept space with a DC 3 wing hung from the ceiling³ is still space. Place is the expression of the ontology of space and cannot be simply represented but only expressed through becoming. WorkPlace is a assemblage that invites becoming. Making place is embodied is the process that the architect Herman Hertzberger developed where he left spaces unfinished with raw building materials lying around. The occupants moved in and created their own places with the materials left behind in the structure he created .

Capitalism breaks place/event into sequence (critical path) and hierarchy: There is a reason why D&G subtitled their popular work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: These are the extremes between reading everything as symbolic content (value) and everything as

³ See ABC's *the Deep Dive*, their documentary of IDEO.

singular (psychosis), between representation and expression. What follows is an illustration of representation and expression in a few design artifacts.

In the video, L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, with Claire Parnet, Deleuze says that style is what those people of whom we say that they have no style actually possess. This is in contrast to those fashionable people who attempt to 'have' style. What he means is people who express who they are in their singularity and uniqueness are the ones with style, their own style, as opposed to those people who are consciously trying to be stylish, following the latest fashions. The comparison is between expressing who you are versus representing who you wish you were.



The yacht design to the left by architect Zaha Hadid demonstrates the contrast between expression and representation in a design artifact. Clearly everything about the image represents an organic design yet the technology involved in building this, what it is to its core, is anything but organic. The yacht design to the right by designer Philippe Starck expresses not only what it is but how it is made. It is less a sign of something than an expression of what it is. The clarity of expression makes the meaning of the artifact transparent.

While representation uses signs to point to the thing, expression is a more direct path to the singularity of what it is. Who we think we are, who others think we are, is a sign, a representation, and, as in all representations, a echo of past experience. But we are not a corpuscle, we are a wave, or rather we are the action of a wave. Who we are is process as expression. We exist as long as that process resonates in the chaosmos, as intensity in the universe, infinitely rippling outward, combining with other ripples, reflecting other ripples. Gaining amplitude with resonance, flattening with dissonance. We behave as if the world is a sign, as if we are a sign in that world, but we are responsible for the production of signs.

That voice in our head, the image in our mirror, our 'identity' is simply our own representation. A symbol, a sign. We are in fact the process that creates signs, that interprets signs. Expression is an ontological statement of becoming, of what something has the potential of becoming, while representation is simply a listing of common qualities, of signs. Expression is unmediated, not meaning something but something that means. And therein lies morality: Morality is the clear expression of the ontic, the maximization of ontological resonance, the ripples of the wave.



Extolling the virtues of expression over representation is not the same as praising functionalism as a design principle. Functionalism is simply a minimalist aesthetic, reductionist in its notion of the aggregate formed. I think the formula that D+G give, pluralism = monism can be used here to understand that there is only one process (all is process) so any process that we spotlight is subjective and arbitrary. Expression of minimalist functionalism is not better than something more complex, with more forces resolved in the resulting machine. I like to use the stove top espresso makers by Alessi as an example of a more complex and superior machine.



The COD 9090 coffee maker in the top image is the first espresso coffee machine in Alessi's history (1979) and in the Permanent Design Collection at the New York Moma. It is the company's first "amphibious object", for kitchen use, but with its high design quality it can also be brought directly to the table. It was designed by the engineer, Richard Sapper as an attempt to re-image stove top espresso makers from a very functional perspective, to express as clearly as possible the process of coffee making.

The next espresso coffee maker is COD 9002, La Conica, designed in the early 1980's as part of the "Tea&Coffee Piazza" project which saw famous architects taking up the challenge of designing a tea and coffee service for Alessi. It is architect Aldo Rossi's first mass produced object and very much an 80's design icon.

I use both machines and find the Rossi design superior in a number of ways. Firstly, it was designed as a part of an ensemble, tray, sugar bowl, milk pitcher... and so there is a unity in their presentation which makes experiencing coffee drinking more of an event - it is a machine for celebrating coffee making AND drinking. But, even for us who do not have the complete set it is superior in the way that it functions, the way that it is built, and the way that it presents.

It is interesting the way each was designed. The engineer did every part of the design work and presented Alessi with the final construction drawings. When the architect Rossi showed Alessi his drawings and Alessi asked when the final drawings would be ready, Rossi lost his temper: Rossi did not consider it his brief to do construction drawings or even the engineering required for construction: He did the look and feel. Others more specialized in engineering, function, construction technologies, etc., were responsible for the other details, with of course, Rossi approving the final production.

There's an ancient Japanese proverb that says, 'First, develop an infallible technique, then throw yourself to the mercy of inspiration'. I really love that, because the infallible technique is, in the architecture business... I would say is, being able to read a landscape, being able to make things, being able to just put stuff together... and mercy of inspiration is using your intuition as a guide to bring you to places you can realize things that you can't easily describe. - Ian MacDonald (architect)

From a design perspective, making place begins with a clear concept and solid building technique that expresses that concept as a positive interaction with the site. The designer creates support for the event to surge forth, masking dissonance while introducing mystery. Ian MacDonald created the place above after sensitive interrogation of the site for its potential: Clients typically have an image that precedes and often precludes the expression of their site as they focus on building as representation. Consequently, one of the most difficult conditions of the design process is the development of trust between client and designer. The client has a vision inspired by earlier work, the designer has a process. The client may begin with propositions but the designer must begin with questions. Inevitably, the client can only communicate the symbols of his experience which sets his expectations while it is the architect's responsibility to provide him with a real experience of possibility. An architect always aims much higher than the client with transformational space as the ultimate goal.

Of course the designer must think about the experience to make sense of it... but first

he must connect, resonate, become the site... This does not mobilize knowledge or techne in any way, in fact it involves suppressing any cognitive faculty. Actually, suppressing is too active, something more like wu wei, non-doing, or simply meditation. What I mean by this is that to experience the problem the designer has to sit with it and just be, watching the thoughts appear and disappear, not attaching to them. In this case, I am talking about the site as a meditation to experience what is unique, what resonates, what is special about 'this' space that will give character to the place...

There's never the perfect site... The perfect site, the house could be just about anything, it doesn't matter, there's some interesting ones, there were some not so interesting ones... What we get are sites that are extremely limited... they don't have those big views, they don't have the perfect orientation, you know they don't have many of those attributes that make a wonderful country house, but what I've learned from that is that your limitations are actually your best friends...you figure out what they are and you work with them and they give character to the final product in a way that having a perfect site would never allow you to have. - Ian MacDonald (architect)

The designer senses the genius loci, becoming place, designing affordances that enable others as transformational space... "*all it is is a little increment of consciousness*"...(Ian MacDonald). Place is a construct created by a consciousness with intentionality. Place is ultimately an affordance contrived through design: it is real, actualized or re-created through consciousness. While sensual awareness is the precondition of good design by a sensitive designer, the actualization of place through built form reinforces the positive, masks the negative, and adds mystery as a silence that beckons. Ian MacDonald spends time on the site absorbing the genius loci and does extensive analysis. He examines detailed photographic composites and determines the best location and configuration of the building. In interrogating the site for its assets and liabilities, Ian talks in terms of "spatial interpretation," "digestion of the landscape," "sequence of experience" and "strategic view-framing." in the end, Ian produces beautiful buildings seamlessly insinuated in harmony with the site by listening to his intuition and relying on his experience.

The most compelling feature of the room above is its experience of 'tree' - a treehouse in an ever changing canopy where one becomes 'tree', becomes seasonal change. Clearly the room has social aspects, seating arrangements, fireplace, full floor to ceiling glazing with view - as well contemplative space, the inglenook - a cozy low-ceilinged zone contained within the larger room with small side window of its own. Construction,

uses warm, natural woods in harmony with the site. It is not hard to imagine being at home here, in fact, even the images produce a desire to be at home here...

I would make the distinctions of place/time as illustrated by Ian's design. There is a sitting nook, a place of solitary reflection, more about generating place and a social aspect, fireplace more about generating event.

Expression as value seems somewhat straight forward in creating artifacts but bringing ontology to organization requires the organization to be a living dynamic. Clearly the ontology of organization cannot be symbolic for it to be effective so how is it achieved?



the ontological organization

It is generally accepted in organizational theory that communication calls organization into being. The ontology of organization is understood in this regard: An organization exists to the degree that it communicates. The distinction that I am making is fundamental to D&G as that between being and becoming. It is my assertion that an organization functions best as a becoming, a machinic coupling with the production of flow, but unlike capitalism, this flow is not just money in exchange for work. Money for work is a component but the machinic coupling produces resonance that emanates things like creativity and self worth. It is important to understand that the flow is real and expresses life, not simply represents value such as hours put in for money received. The ontic of an organization is life.

To 'become' is to become other, a melding of subject with object through an absolute empathy that steps out of space and time by dropping the duality of subject/object.

Thinking in this specific Deleuzian sense disrupts intentionality (utility) and opens space for possibility. Becoming other is 'putting oneself into their shoes'; it is to see through their eyes and not 'objectify' them through yours. 'Becoming woman' as Deleuze's best known example of becoming, is not to 'understand', cognitively, what a woman experiences in a male dominant culture, but to 'feel', to 'live', to truly 'become' the woman's experience, to 'become woman' in a male dominant culture, not 'a' woman as object, but to engage 'woman' as process. The difference is not subtle, nor is it inconsequential. To cognitively understand is to objectify both subject (you) and object (other) and see difference as different from, an external difference and not the internal difference at the core of the event (process) in itself. To 'become woman' is not to see how a woman is different from me as a man (attributes) but to experience who 'woman' is in her becomings (predication) as possibility: external difference is to see what she is not (negation), internal difference is to experience who she is through affirmation. Constant becomings within the organization are affirmations experienced as ontology⁴.

If efficiency is the soul of capitalism, then expression is the soul of the ontological organization. To be effective the ontological organization must have active participants, with their own style in place/event and not just space/time. Constant becomings within the organization are affirmations experienced as ontology. Individuals experience new becomings as the flow of feelings of creativity, self worth, accomplishment... as the place you want to be and the events you want to do. An ontological organization is something that expresses, not something that represents.

The eternal return⁵ is our timeless coming home, where we start and where we end, process within process. We are drawn toward knowing in the space of appearance, perceiving what we know, knowing what we perceive. We hold onto what we think is constant, what we can explain, driven by the language of conformity, celebrating good and common sense. But all is illusion: Nomads must push the edge of the real, dragging us along, kicking and screaming.

⁴ *Transcendent empiricism, in contrast to Kant's transcendent idealism holds that we experience more than we can say: I am trying to paint a picture of an organization that **feels** as the place you want to be and the work you want to do.*

⁵ *"The metaphysical comfort--with which, I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us--that life is at the bottom of things..." Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy,*

Resonance is primary and process is key: Ontologically, expression transcends the distance between subject and object revealing unity in process. Only in representation does subject and object show up as signs of their ontic. Drawn by the noise but only ever satisfied with silence, life is trying to recover what we know, return to where we already are, again and again...

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