

ANOTHER URBAN: CONSIDERATIONS ACROSS SOLÀ-MORALES AND CARERI
UM OUTRO URBANO: CONSIDERAÇÕES ATRAVÉS DE SOLÀ-MORALES E CARERI
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Abstract

This article brings other ways of inhabiting the city based on Ignasi Solà-Morales' reflections about the contemporary urban phenomenon, aiming to put Francesco Careri's nomadic walkscapes as translations that incorporate and territorialize them as a counter-hegemonic spatial praxis. For this purpose, anchored in a literature review of Careri and Solà-Morales, and their critiques of contextualist urbanism and urban design, we seek to present the reflexive vocabulary power that both provoke and enable. More than delimiting structures, their placements open the horizons of the urban field in a rhizomatic way that does not find an end in itself: rather, they inscribe the urban exercise beyond a (neo)liberal production of the city spaces. Through the concepts of mutation and *terrain vague*, the Catalan researcher makes it possible to tension the thought about urbanism and architecture interpreted here through Careri's wandering walkscapes. The Italian architect began to experiment with Deleuzian smooth space, traversing through the peri-urban regions of Paris and Rome as a practice of displacing the material urban framework of the cities' urban fabric. Both Solà-Morales and Careri find in environments of indeterminacy –intellectual and materialized– that the uprooting of urbanism provides them with other ways of thinking and practicing spaces.

Keywords: Urban Phenomenon, Terrain Vague, Mutation, Walkscapes, Counter-hegemonic Urbanism.

1 Introduction

If our proposal of cultural categories to understand the new relationships between architecture and today's great metropolises began with the notion of "mutation" as the most appropriate to understand the phenomena of sudden transformation, the last one we propose, *terrain vague*, is practically its counterpoint, the reverse side of the same metropolitan medal. Only equal attention to both values of innovation and values of memory and absence will be able to keep alive the confidence in a complex and plural urban life. The role of art, Deleuze has written, also of the art of architecture "is not to produce objects for themselves, self-referential, but to constitute itself as a revealing force of multiplicity and contingency" (Solà-Morales, 1996, p. 23, our translation)¹.

In the present article, we looked for using the reflections of Ignasi Solà-Morales regarding the contemporary urban phenomenon and Francesco Careri's *walkscapes* as provocations to other praxis, ways of thinking and acting, about the urban. To do so, it was necessary a quick path of how the discussions about cities ended up in their complex theoretical apprehensions, taking into account from some postmodernist criticisms to the consequent unfolding on urban theory and practice, consolidated in what became known as contextualist urbanism and represented through the construction of the Olympic Village in Barcelona and the reconstruction of Berlin after the end of the Cold War.

Ignasi has the characteristics of his contemporaries and also post-structuralist French influencers, such as Deleuze and Foucault, who blend an extensive referential and theoretical body with an enormous reflective vocabulary power and, therefore, are not closed in themselves. More than delimiting structures, his concepts open the horizons of our fields of study in a rhizomatic way. In this sense, understanding is not immediate, or is it taxative. The plastic and fruitful reflections on his statements that we find in this article help us to glimpse an expanded philosophical framework, placing us in a momentum of displacement and contingency.

Approximations found in our elaborations of the Catalan architect, historian and philosopher in combination of the wandering practices of the Italian architect Francesco Careri are brought here as a way of embodying and territorializing the

¹ From the original in Spanish: "Si nuestra propuesta de categorías culturales para entender las nuevas relaciones entre la arquitectura y las grandes metrópolis actuales empezaba por la noción de mutación" como la más adecuada para entender los fenómenos de transformación súbita, la última que planteamos, *terrain vague*, constituye prácticamente su contrapunto, el reverso de la misma medalla metropolitana. Sólo una igual atención tanto a los valores de la innovación como a los valores de la memoria y de la ausencia será capaz de mantener viva la confianza en una vida urbana compleja y plural. El papel del arte, ha escrito Deleuze, también del arte de la arquitectura 'no es el de producir objetos para sí mismos, autorreferentes, sino el de constituirse en fuerza reveladora de la multiplicidad y la contingencia'".

conceptualizations of Solà-Morales in a counter-hegemonic context of understanding architecture and urbanism. Understanding them as contesting epistemologies of a totalizing thought and practice put into practice on a large and uncritical scale currently in praxis on spaces. To this end, we anchored ourselves on a literature review by Careri, in his concept of nomadic wandering and walking as an aesthetic act, and by Solà-Morales, in his understandings about mutation and the *terrain vague*. Thus, both are understood here as Stalkers who find, in the Zone of indetermination, that the uprooting of urbanism provides them a different, alternative and borderline way of thinking and practicing architecture and urbanism.

2 The Contextualist Urbanism

The last century was a very busy time in the field of architectural and urban theory and practice. From the fruitful development of political ideologies and the emergence of new materials and technologies accumulated throughout the industrial and military revolutions, the modernist movement successfully managed, at the beginning of the last century, to create its own terrain, which broke with the treatadist models of architecture since the Italian Renaissance. The modernist agenda combined a paradigm of technical rationality with an ideology that expressed the desires and expectations of a period spirit (Solà-Morales, 2003). This *zeitgeist* was based on an instrumental use of history, on an inescapably teleological vision, which justified itself in its own ends: all the past led to a present that could not be any other. This philosophical heritage (Marxist and, consequently, also Hegelian) guided, in a totalizing way, all previous experiences, from the Baroque to the Vanguards, in the full development of the Modern Movement, the apex of a psychological expression and a technical refinement.

Beginning in the 1950s, the modernist model began to suffer hard criticism regarding its inability to deal with the complexity and diversity of the various territories of the world that its spread had managed to reach. The standardized model and the unidimensional answer to subjective and urban issues began to be questioned by regional movements that used other fields of knowledge of the human sciences (such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc.) to break with an ideal of a “happy ending”, as Colin Rowe points out in 1958 (Solà-Morales, 2003), that had no basis in lived experience. From this intense contact with other areas of human knowledge, the *tabula rasa* on which modernist architecture and urbanism were developed begins to understand history not as a legitimizing and teleological argument of a luminous present, but as pre-existences that needed to be considered in the reflections and interventions on space.

The instrumentalized use of history makes place for a history that claims to be the cornerstone of a theoretical foundation, as a critical history. At this point, the development of structuralist issues, especially semiotic and linguistic ones, gained ground not only in architecture but in a good part of the human sciences. This recent understanding sought to build alternative epistemologies to the single modernist narrative, incorporating structuralist discourses in order to formulate its own, self-centered and autonomous rhetoric. Faced with a certain preponderance of urban issues from the mid-twentieth century on, an intrinsic correlation between urbanism and architecture emerges in theoretical constructions. The works of Aldo Rossi (1984), for example, place urban morphology and constructive typology in a binary relationship that, together, present a dialectical urban logic. According to him: “Urban morphology is the study of city forms. Building typology is the study of building types. Both disciplines study two orders of homogeneous facts; in addition, the constructive types that are materialized in the buildings are what physically constitutes the city” (Rossi cited in Pereira, 2012, our translation)².

Equipped with this imbricated understanding that architecture and urbanism get in a postmodern moment, this intrinsic correlation between form and superstructure no longer allows a detached understanding of any of these fields without somehow spilling over to the other. Moreover, taking into account that this correlation is also based on a critique of the cultural and identity reductionism of the Modern Movement, Contextualist Urbanism is materialized in the construction of the Olympic Village in Barcelona and in the reconstruction of Berlin. Much of the contextualist urban reforms in Barcelona consist of the intervention carried out to host the 1992 Olympic Games.

The Olympic Village of New Icaria, a place built to host the athletes during the event, sought to integrate with the pre-existing Cerdarian urban fabric at the time while the city's waterfront was being rebuilt, occupied until then by port and railway facilities.

² From the original in Portuguese: “A morfologia urbana é o estudo das formas da cidade. A tipologia construtiva é o estudo dos tipos de construção. Ambas as disciplinas estudam duas ordens de fatos homogêneos; além disso, os tipos construtivos que se concretizam nos edifícios são o que constitui fisicamente a cidade”.

Bohigas (1992), an architect who participated in the Barcelona project, points out that the city was understood as a collage of juxtaposed smaller systems (neighborhoods) hierarchically coordinated by a larger morphological system that takes into account a question of Catalan identity. Besides regarding the characteristics of Cerdà's plan, also takes care of the actual everyday uses of these devices, capable of spreading a positive "metastasis" of urban vitality. Predominantly with a residential use blended with a waterfront with an eminent tourist appeal, New Icaria combined this concern with the identity and specific characteristics of Barcelona, and Catalan architects were directly involved in the residential portion of the project. The remodeling of the waterfront attracted foreign investment in a more cosmopolitan city, with buildings designed by renowned architects, such as Frank Gehry and Álvaro Siza (Bronstein, 2012). The reconstruction of Berlin took place in the 1990s, based on political issues that were very specific to the context of the city. Until 1989, the year The Wall was demolished, Berlin had been divided by that physical barrier that separated very different ways of living.

Therefore, the intended reconversion of the city into the Germany's capital, now reunified, posed challenges for an urban reconstruction that was also eminently political and economic. After the end of the Cold War, both East and West Berlin were in crisis. So, the reestablishment of the capital was a way to stimulate the country's industrial sectors and also attract investment to the city (Bronstein, 2012). The reconstruction of Berlin was a path to defuse the economic and political crisis the city was in, attempting to create jobs and open places, such as *Friedrichstraße*, for private lease (Harvey, 2005). Using critical history as argumentative support, Stimmann establishes very restrictive urban norms for a unique reconstruction of a city that was, at least, bipartite. These attempts to homogenize and erase the wars as a recent and evocative past in the city resulted in both aesthetic criticism, concerning the lack of architectural and urbanistic experimentation and expressiveness; as well as political, concerning authoritarian attitudes and, to a large part, the historical obliteration of East Berlin. The inability to translate the complexity and fractal traumas experienced by the city resulted in a superficial identity harmony that did not match recent Berlin.

3 Another urban praxis suggested by Solà-Morales

Despite the plurality of criticisms of architecture, especially of modernist urbanism, Solà-Morales, in his understanding of the different historiographical practices in architecture in the last century, identifies a certain common point in these two contextualist approaches. From an inability to build a single methodological approach that could account for the totality of cities. In this model of local claims and regionalisms, this particular focus found its way by fragmenting and dismembering the urban into several entities that are recomposed in a "reassembly" grounded through a process of critical historicization (Solà-Morales 2003). This point is well illustrated in architecture by Venturi who, even in his criticism of a certain moral puritanism of modernism in architecture, insists in his "Gentle Manifesto" to a complexity and a contradiction, in an instance of totalizing inclusion:

I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning; for the implicit function as well as the explicit function. I prefer "both-and" to "either-or," black and white, and sometimes gray, to black or white. A valid architecture evokes many levels of meaning and combinations of focus: its space and its elements become readable and workable in several ways at once. But an architecture of complexity and contradiction has a special obligation toward the whole: its truth must be in its totality or its implications of totality. It must embody the difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion. More is not less. (Venturi, 2002, p. 23)

This structuring necessity also appears in the considerations of Rem Koolhaas (2014) in his elaboration of a theory of Greatness. In his theoretical call for the incorporation of the category of Greatness into architecture and urbanism, he states that in a contemporary context, "architects stand in the position of the creators of Frankenstein: instigators of a partially successful experiment whose results have been seized with unbridled madness, therefore, discredited" (2014, p. 47, our translation)³.

³ From the original in Portuguese: "os arquitetos ficam na posição dos criadores de Frankenstein: instigadores de uma experiência parcialmente bem-sucedida cujos resultados foram tomados de uma loucura desenfreada portanto desacreditados".

That is, even for postmodern theorists, this process of “reassembling” referred to by Solà-Morales is only allowed within a kind of arboreal spreading (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995) that recognizes a regional and identity multiplicity (and, therefore, distinguishes itself from a modernist totalizing unidimensionality). And it also maintains a unique point of contact from which to carry out a historical genealogy and thus justify its praxis based critically. Deleuze and Guattari (1995) elucidate this possibility of genealogy, with a common root, of arboreal knowledge when they conceptualize, in contrast, their renowned philosophical figure of the rhizome:

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb “to be,” but the fabric of the rhizome is a conjunction, “and . . . and . . . and” This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be”. Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995, p. 36, our translation)⁴

This affiliation and a kind of essentialism (imposition of the verb “to be”) that Deleuze and Guattari counterpose to the rhizome can be understood as anchors of structuralist thinking. As Koolhaas himself (2014) exemplifies a little later, in his elaboration on Greatness, there is still, in this Contextualist Urbanism, a need to organize itself from an arboreal thought: “the attraction of Greatness lies in its potential to rebuild the Whole, resurrect the Real, reinvent the collective and claim maximum power” (2014, p. 22, our translation⁵). Not coincidentally, categories of thought such as the Whole and the Real are issues discussed by Hegel (Hegel, 2008). In contrast, according to Solà-Morales, this Hegelian heritage found in Marx and Freud reaches a conceptual exhaustion from the moment Foucault (Solà-Morales, 2003), and later retaken up by Deleuze and Guattari (1995), points out the danger of a certain positivist and hegemonic formulation in this field. In addition to proposing the archeology of knowledge as a less coercive and universalist approach to the sciences, a way of “distrusting this desire for essentiality” (Foucault, 2012, p. 248, our translation⁶).

This new way of approaching can be understood within the thinking about the contemporary city in Solà-Morales' effort to situate it from disorder, multiplicity and differences as points of departure and no longer points of arrival. Concepts such as *terrain vague* and mutation are used to understand territories and landscapes as fragmentary and changeable processes of an urban category emancipated, from the centralizing *logos* of urbanism: a possibility to resist and escape the idea of architecture and urbanism only as a representation of power.

4 Mutation and *terrain vague*

To understand this “rhizomatic urban” it is necessary to atomize the readings about the city as its own epistemology, “as Ignasi de Solà-Morales correctly detected, the existence of a geography, an anthropology and an urban economy that confers total credibility to the hypothesis that the urban constitutes a specific cultural category” (Bronstein, 2012, our translation⁷). This understanding leaves the urban capable of displacement without the burden of referring to critical history or urban anthropology as guidelines (failing to represent its contents as a form) since all this multiplicity of understandings crosses and constitutes it. This removes a theoretical immobility and allows us to face the contemporary urban experience as such.

⁴ From the original in Portuguese: “Um rizoma não começa nem conclui, ele se encontra sempre no meio, entre as coisas, inter-ser, intermezzo. A árvore é filiação, mas o rizoma é aliança, unicamente aliança. A árvore impõe o verbo ‘ser’, mas o rizoma tem como tecido a conjunção ‘e... e... e...’ Há nesta conjunção força suficiente para sacudir e desenraizar o verbo ‘ser’. Entre as coisas não designa uma correlação localizável que vai de uma para outra e reciprocamente, mas uma direção perpendicular, um movimento transversal que as carrega uma e outra, riacho sem início nem fim, que rói suas duas margens e adquire velocidade no meio”.

⁵ From the original in Portuguese: “a atracção da Grandeza está no seu potencial de reconstruir o Todo, ressuscitar o Real, reinventar o colectivo e reivindicar a potência máxima”.

⁶ From the original in Portuguese: “desconfiar dessa vontade de essencialidade”.

⁷ From the original in Portuguese: “como bem detectou Ignasi de Solà-Morales, a existência de uma geografia, de uma antropologia e de uma economia urbana confere total credibilidade à hipótese que o urbano constitui uma categoria cultural específica”.

It is thus detached from a certain historical-structuralist slowness process that decodes the environment into an a priori of the past that the concept of place and critical regionalism constructs.

(...) behind the abusive claim that architecture was the instrument with which to manufacture and control the totality of the environment, there was hidden the need to refer to urban models from the past and the inability to literally imagine, to have a global image of what is really happening in our surroundings. (Solà-Morales, 1996, p. 10, our translation)⁸

To talk about this incapacity for imagination in contemporary urbanism, Solà-Morales brings the concept of mutation. According to him, this “rupture on the natural mechanisms of growth” (Bronstein, 2012, p. 174, our translation⁹) provokes in contextualist urbanists a call for order, harmony, and coherence, making them seek references of meaning in an anachronistic past that does not hold the visions of contemporary becoming. Mutation, on the other hand, allows urban planners to think from the atypical and strengthen this creative force for the “adoption of open and interactive morphologies” (Bronstein, 2012, p. 174, our translation¹⁰). Mutation would come from the biological sense, from a transformation that is not only morphological but also physiological (Solà-Morales, 1996). This transmutation is brought by Solà-Morales as an explosion of original creation close to chaos, an absence of the model orderliness of a life form: rather a life that sprouts without following preconceived parameters, sudden and uprooted from a sequential evolutionary process. In this sense, a mutation would be a form of non-arboreal, rhizomatic, spontaneous conception. It is an epistemology and ontology of non-teleological creation.

Meanwhile, the concept of *terrain vague* appears to highlight the importance of absence in the contemporary urban experience. The idea of absence was opposed throughout the historiography of architecture and structuralist urbanism, understood primarily as the construction of matter, of substance. According to Solà-Morales (1996), the word *terrain*, in French, has a more urban character than land, in English, that is, it presents a certain constructive limitation to the territory. While this *terrain* has a somewhat determined meaning, it also concerns larger and less precise sizes, linked to the physicality of the portion, to the virtualized potential of the territory. The term *vague* has different genealogies, in German it has to do with the movement of water and waves, fluctuation and instability. In Latin, its origin comes from emptiness, vacancy and inoccupation. Solà-Morales anchors the absence present in *terrain vagues* as a promise of still undetermined possibilities. In this second sense, *vague* meets vacant (both from the Latin, *vagus*) which means something indeterminate. Bringing together both etymologies of *vague*, Ignasi poses as this oceanic indeterminacy of possibilities, the emptiness that moves. For Solà-Morales (1995), to comprehend the urban gap as urban potency is to reinterpret the fissures left by the ordered city of structuralist urbanisms, finding evocative values in obsolete residues. To talk about these *terrain(s) vague(s)*, Ignasi speaks about the imagetic construction of the city through photography in the architectural and urban imaginary and how, over the last century, photography has been used to make explicit the experience of the big city.

Through photographs we are not seeing the cities. Even less through photomontages. We only see the images, in their static and framed impression. But through the photographic image we are capable of receiving clues, physical impulses that lead in a certain direction the construction of an imaginary that we establish as that of a certain place or city. Because we have already seen or because we are going to see some of these places, the semiological mechanism of communication through clues is consummated, and the memory that we accumulate by direct experience, by narrations or by simple accumulation of new indications is that which, indefinitely, produces our imagination of the city, of one or of many cities. (Solà-Morales, 1995, p. 124, our translation).¹¹

⁸ Originally in Spanish: “(...) tras la pretensión abusiva de que la arquitectura era el instrumento con el que fabricar y controlar la totalidad del ambiente, se escondía la necesidad de referirse a modelos urbanos del pasado y la incapacidad de, literalmente, imaginar, tener una imagen global de lo que realmente está ocurriendo a nuestro alrededor.”

⁹ Originally: “ruptura nos mecanismos naturais de crescimento”.

¹⁰ From the original in Portuguese: “adoção de morfologias abertas e interativas”.

¹¹ From the original in Spanish: “A través de las fotografías no estamos viendo las ciudades. Menos aún a través de los fotomontajes. Sólo vemos las imágenes, en su estática y encuadrada impresión. Pero a través de la imagen fotográfica somos capaces de recibir indicios, impulsos

In this quotation, the author registers the importance of the photographic image not as a compositional abstraction but, above all, as a provocative trigger of the imaginary that will effectively be produced as an imagery set of the city in the experimentation of signs and lived experiences. And it is in this sense of the photographic image that the *terrain vague* presents itself to the contemporary urban “empty, therefore, as absence, but also as a promise, as an encounter, as a space of the possible” (Solà-Morales, 1995, p. 126, our translation¹²), and that by bringing this power of multiple possibilities is configured as “a message that contains expectations of mobility, wandering, free time, freedom” (Solà-Morales, 1995, p. 126, our translation¹³).

Barron and Mariani (2013) read these *terrains vagues* as residual and ambiguous existences, common to all cities: “where the landscape has gone to seed and been left to its own devices, is in suspended redevelopment. or is being furtively inhabited or otherwise used, under the radar of local authorities” (Barron; Mariani, 2013, p. 1). The author reinforces the memorial issue of the concept, of the absence of the landscape as a process that illustrates the “gapness” reconstruction of memory, especially the everyday, collective and shared memory of the city. A place that holds the contradiction and insubordination of emptiness as a form of construction, since that lies in memory a dialectical exercise of remembering and forgetting. And this is how Solà-Morales (1995) understands an epistemic possibility to shelter the contemporary phenomenon, through the *terrain vague* as an urban remainder that allows a dialectic of the negative, of the virtual (Lévy, 2011).

To illustrate this *terrain vague* in its imaginative image power, the film *Stalker* (1979) by Russian director Andrei Tarkovski is a good example. The film, based on the book “Roadside Picnic” (1971), evokes a territory that, after contact with extraterrestrials, becomes a foreign landscape for those who experience it. The images of the Zone (as the territory influenced by this event is called in the film) show the remains, the vestiges, of this passage of the Other in a territory that evokes in the *Stalker* (those who pass through it), memories, affections and actions as well the otherness in themselves. The Zone can be understood as a territory that, being incapable of being understood by human knowledge, in the film, scientists and the military spend several years trying to understand and determine it without success: it constitutes itself as a foreigner, resistant to the submission of the city control.

In the movie, attempts by the science and the military to delimit the Zone are always frustrated, as if itself refused and remained unapproachable in its permanent expansion. The efforts of these two forces to submit the Zone to control is an illustration of what Deleuze and Guattari proposed as a distinction between smooth and striated space: “It is the difference between a smooth space (vector, projective or topological) and a striated space (metric): in the first case, 'one occupies space without measuring it, in the other, 'one measures space in order to occupy it” (Jacques, 2012, our translation¹⁴). In *Stalker*, the Zone is a *terrain vague* that resists numerous attempts at cooptation, transforming itself into a landscape that can only be experienced or somehow understood from the displacement in it.

5 Careri and the walkscapes as a praxis of the *terrain vague*

Despite the difficult task of fitting practices into this theoretical framework that rejects the strict delimitation of boxes, some dislocations in this attempt to understand the contemporary urban phenomenon are close to the proposals that Solà-Morales outlines. In this regard, the walkscapes and the reinterpretation of New Babylon, developed by Francesco Careri, can be understood as a catalyst for these non-coopted imaginaries of a contemporary urban. Patrick Barron and Manuela Mariani

físicos que dirigen en una determinada dirección la construcción de un imaginario que establecemos como el de un lugar o una de ciudad determinada. Porque ya hemos visto o porque vamos a ver algunos de estos lugares, el mecanismo semiológico de la comunicación a través de indicios se consume, y la memoria que acumulamos por experiencia directa, por narraciones o por simple acumulación de nuevos indicios es la que, indefinidamente, produce nuestra imaginación de la ciudad, de una o de muchas ciudades.”

¹² Originally: “Vacío, por tanto, como ausencia, pero también como promesa, como encuentro, como espacio de lo posible, expectación”.

¹³ From the original in Spanish: “es precisamente el mensaje que contiene expectativas de movilidad, vagabundeo, tiempo libre, libertad”.

¹⁴ From the original in Portuguese: “É a diferença entre um espaço liso (vetorial, projetivo ou topológico) e um espaço estriado (métrico): num caso, ‘ocupa-se o espaço sem medi-lo, no outro, ‘mede-se o espaço a fim de ocupá-lo”.

(2013) approximate the *terrain vagues* presented by Solà-Morales (1996) to Careri through the manifesto of their collective Stalker (named after Tarkovsky's film), its states:

Terrains vagues are what the architect-and-artist collective Stalker (1996) calls, in its manifesto, 'spaces of confrontation and contamination between the organic and the inorganic, between nature and artifice' that 'constitute the built city's negative, the interstitial and the marginal, spaces abandoned or in the process of transformation. (Barron; Mariani, 2013, p. 2)

Francesco Careri and the Stalkers carried out peri-urban deambulatory walksapes. This means that they walked on the limits of what was considered urban, to experience the emptiness, the gaps in the territory, and the landscape between the striated spaces par excellence of cities (Deleuze cited in Jacques, 2012). Much of his walksapes activities took place in the surroundings of Paris and Rome — cities that carry a historical heritage and, in the case of Rome, is still the birthplace of Aldo Rossi's neo-rationalist linguistic methodology, in addition to also presenting the "marks of distinction" and the spectacular tourist character that Harvey (2005) and Debord (1997) comment on, respectively. So, these incursions into the territory "in-between", enabled Stalker to shift from the substantial structuralist referential to a *terrain vague*, engaging the group in a resistant, non-codified praxis of place.

Spatial boundaries become less rigid. Between interior and exterior, between inside and outside, between private and public, between here and there. Again the "between" space. Between two. Being "between" does not mean being one thing or another, it means being temporarily one thing and another. To be in the middle of (*en train de*)... In trans-formation. It is not just being in the middle or in a medium, but being the means itself." (...) "The vacant land (*terrain vague*) is always in between, they are in suspension, in a provisional, intermediate, unfinished state. (Jacques, 2013, our translation¹⁵)

In Solà-Morales' concept, the *terrain vague*, due to its obsolescence in the face of the effectiveness of urbanism, provokes a sort of magical oddness capable of awakening the radical transformations that Careri also proposes. Ignasi illustrates his proposal for a contemporary urban praxis with the power of the emptiness that can substantially transform urbanism. Because, in opposition to structuralist urbanism, it is capable of evoking "forces instead of forms, the incorporated instead of the distant, the tactile instead of the optical, the rhizomatic instead of the figurative" (Solà-Morales, 1995, p. 131, our translation¹⁶). The emancipation of the contemporary urban, distancing itself from its Hegelian conception of "form towards a certain content", be it from any field of knowledge, also appears as fundamental for Debord. The New Babylon was an attempt to outline situationist concepts into a practical reflection of the urban. However, the intent to materialize this proposal, encapsulating it in a defined design form, caused Constant's break with Debord within the situationist movement (Jacques, 2013). For Debord, fixing it in the form of a project would fall back on the structuralist ties that tried to immobilize the changing understanding of the city onto a model. Constant, on the other hand, researched gypsy settlements in Rome and proposed his model as a "global nomadic village".

According to Jacques (2013), the best way to understand this village is as a utopian model that, before being propositional of the future, presented itself as a critique of the present, "not capable of being built: a non-place or nowhere". Careri, recalling this situationist idea, resignifies it by saying that New Babylon was not dreamed of or an abstraction, but that it always existed. According to Francesco, this city can be found on the margins, in the peripheries, in the urban unfinished, in the fissures, and in the vacant lands of spectacularized cities. It would be the nomadic component, Deleuze and Guattari's smooth space of deterritorialization, within the striated sedentary space of the city, the "Nomos within the Polis" (Jacques, 2013). In his way

¹⁵ From the original in Portuguese: "Os limites espaciais se mostram menos rígidos. Entre interior e exterior, entre dentro e fora, entre privado e público, entre aqui e lá. Novamente o espaço do "entre". Entre dois. Estar "entre" não quer dizer ser uma coisa ou outra, quer dizer ser temporariamente uma coisa e outra. Estar no meio de (*en train de*)... Em trans-formação. É não somente estar no meio ou em um meio, mas ser o próprio meio." (...) "Os terrenos baldios (*terrain vague*) são sempre no meio, eles são em suspensão, em um estado provisório, intermediário, inacabado."

¹⁶ In Spanish: "las fuerza en lugar de las formas, lo incorporado en lugar de lo distante, lo háptico en lugar de lo óptico, lo rizomático en lugar de lo figurativo".

of seeing, the playful game that Debord referred to in the experience of the city is the movement to find these spaces of amnesia within the contemporary urban, because these amnesias are also amniotic and contain the germ of the creation of the urban.

New Babylon is not an urban planning project. Neither is it a work of art in the traditional sense of the term, nor an example of an architectural structure. It can be understood in its current form, as a proposal, an attempt to materialize the theory of unitary urbanism in order to play creatively with an imaginary environment that is there to replace the insufficient, unsatisfactory environment of life today. The modern city is dead, a victim of utility. New Babylon is a project for a city where you can live. And to live means to create. (Jacques, 2013)

6 Final Considerations

In this paper, we consider Solà-Morales' epistemological criticisms of modern and “counter-modern” thinking together with Careri's deviant wandering practices as counter-hegemonic reflections on thinking and acting in the contemporary urban phenomenon. The encounter between these researchers takes place here in their attempts to propose different paths to guide, through other references for the construction of an ideal of the city. In fact, it is rather a consciously desired abandonment of a projective proposal of tight ideals and predetermined places to be achieved. Both architects seek to employ their critical and constructive energy in a praxis that exercises the urban detachment from an idea of production (above all, in its neoliberal capitalist developments).

To introduce this approach, small exemplary clippings of the theories and practices of urbanism in the last fifty years were conducted, which served as a basilar support to anchor the powerful criticisms that Ignasi provokes. His reading of how historical practices have argumentatively supported and ratified architectural practices up to the present day. From a tautological understanding of modernist urbanism, which justified its actions in the present based on a technical-psychological legacy, moving on to the claims of critical regionalism and a linguistic-structural interpretation of architectural and urban morphologies. Solà-Morales situates us in the complexity of the contemporary urban phenomenon, bringing to architecture and urbanism a marginal (Barron, Mariani, 2013) and emerging possibility to constitute a range of critique and practice of space.

Subsequently, we present that the engendering of urban morphology and constructive typology, headed mainly by Aldo Rossi's (1984) formulations, created a symbiotic relationship between the propositions about architecture and city, put into practice by what became known as contextualist urbanism. Focusing quickly on the cases of the interventions of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and the reconstruction of Berlin after the fall of The Wall, it can be observed how the transformations of these two urban territories were guided, to a greater or lesser degree, on an attempt to balance a multifaceted range of economic, political and historical arguments, which would be illustrated by a harmonious architectural-urbanistic set. Montaner, Koolhaas, Harvey and Debord's criticisms of the choices and achievements of these two projects, though elucidative. Whether in the issue of preservation, in the erasure of industrial heritage on the seafront of Barcelona. Whether in the criticism of the proposed plastering in the reconstruction of Berlin. Or in Harvey's (2014) consistent criticism of a co-option of urban reformulations by late capitalism. Or yet, in Debord's questioning (1997) about a spectacularization of a stillborn city, they are still restricted to a collateral reaction in the urban.

Taking from this context, Solà-Morales' criticisms confront us with the problem of this attempt to “reassemble” the urban as a only response to the plurality of different fields that cross it, while still being concentrated in an arboreal dispositions of knowledge. Solà-Morales invites an epistemological rupture in the structuralist way that Contextualist Urbanism had placed itself in these two exemplary cases and proposes a contemporary and rhizomatic urban praxis. To understand this rhizomatic urban phenomenon, Solà-Morales suggests looking at mutation and *terrain vague* as devices that trigger other forms of reflection and action in the urban field. Instead of trying to fix; harmonize, balance, repair them from a historical-structuralist perspective, we could try to understand them as contemporary urban phenomena and use them as a creative becoming of other forms of intervention in metropolitan landscapes. Fractals, dislodged from a set.

To understand the urban mutation that occurred after the fall of the Berlin's Wall, better saying, understanding this unsolicited or planned urban development, would be based on the idea that the frictions that the Second War and the Cold War should

not be appeased in an attempt to reconcile the two sides of The Wall, but incorporating this traumas passed by the city as a guideline for reflection and action over the Berlin landscape. On this case, Solà-Morales (1995) is incisive and states that the ruination of *Alexanderplatz* after the bombing in 1945 is a conversion of it into a *terrain vague* that brings out to the surface of the territory the strangeness and uninhabitability that this landscape contains. The intention to give a photographic image, in the rich sense that Ignasi proposes, to this *terrain vague* remains in filling it with possibilities for mutations, that evokes the Stalker's Zone as a landscape.

In this regard of emptying utilitarian use, we consider Francesco Careri's peri-urban transurban practices in the void between city striations as incorporations of a reflexive practice in the urban phenomenon brought by Ignasi. This insurgent praxis in an unsubmitive landscape appears as a repowering of the contemporary urban, through an strangeness capable of catalyzing transformations, able to rebuild a New Babylon in the obsolete emptiness of marginal territories and of creating a new urban life. The strange territory not co-opted by urbanism that configures itself as a possibility of other existences: where the Teacher, the Writer and the vagabond (characters in Stalker film) are able to make reflections and life performances that do not fit within their professional personas.

In this way, both Ignasi and Careri constitute themselves as stalkers in the routes they propose in the city gaps. Courageous and creative walkers of the Tarkovsky's Zone, they, in their nomadic walksapes through the zone of the contemporary urban phenomenon, are capable of signaling other possibilities of non-appropriable and colonized apprehension of space. They are configured themselves as undisciplined beings in a neoliberal urban thinking that pretends to be about the city and outline in its marginal borders, a stubborn and counter-hegemonic attempt to exercise the city.

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