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Title	Introduction: We Construct Collective Life By Constructing Our Environment
Type	Article
URL	https://clok.uclan.ac.uk/id/eprint/37175/
DOI	https://doi.org/10.1080/20507828.2021.1885164
Date	2021
Citation	McEwan, Cameron and Holm, Lorens (2021) Introduction: We Construct Collective Life By Constructing Our Environment. Architecture and Culture, 8 (3-4). pp. 529-548. ISSN 2050-7828
Creators	McEwan, Cameron and Holm, Lorens

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work.
https://doi.org/10.1080/20507828.2021.1885164

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Introduction: We Construct Collective Life By Constructing Our Environment

An Introduction on the individual

> "Politics deals with the coexistence and association of difference."
>
> Hannah Arendt, "Introduction into Politics," 1955.[1]
>
> "… the subject, the localization of a universal singularity, is bound up with the infinite, the ontological law of being-multiple."
>
> Alain Badiou, "Thinking the Event," 2009.[2]

This special double issue of *Architecture and Culture* on architecture and collective life is predicated on the centrality of the agency of the individual. This introduction is written by individuals, even if we write it together. We acknowledge the individual – a bio-technic necessity – even as we critique it. These papers explore architecture and collective life from diverse geographical and epistemological backgrounds. They are moreover anthropocentric even if they diverge from the centrality of the human as universal subject, as in Yael Padan's critique of Western-centric ethical research, Tal Bar's affirmation of a post-human digital architect-artisan, or Hazem Ziada's hybrid digital crowd. We believe in the agency of human beings to act, think, imagine, to turn the conflict of individuals and social relations into a form of coexistence. That conflict is also within the self: the uncertainty of the body made of flesh, the instability of thought and subjectivity. The individual is always incomplete, never fully accomplished and always in a constant process of coming into being. Paolo Virno calls this "individuation … which is never concluded."[3] Deleuze and Guattari's *dividual* draws attention to its incomplete nature. Lacan, following Hegel, argues that the subject is split and inhabited by absence.[4]

We return to the agency of the individual, because we resist the post-human which entered theoretical discourse over the last 30 years, and has severed the individual from agency.[5] We are not post-human, post-political, post-critical, or post-ideological. We have rarely experienced a more political and ideological world than that in which we presently live, and there has never been a greater need for criticality. The problem with the demarcation post-human and the denial of the universal subject is that it fragments the solidarity of individuals, which leads to identity politics.

Whilst the "post" positions may be a refreshing change, a new illumination of old problems, we are suspicious of the triumphalist and objectifying drift of the "posts" – the promise of a new start – and we return to the agency of the human subject and human subjectivity as the site for conflict and its resolution, and through this dynamic, the evolution of the human subject. We live in troubled times. We face political, social, economic and environmental crises. The occurrence of social movements and uprisings over the last few decades – Podemos, Syriza, DiEM25, *Gilets jaunes*,

Occupy, Reclaim the Street, the Arab Spring – arise from different contexts with their own logic, signify a desire for an alternative collective life. François Cusset has argued that those movements and others are inscribed within "the same global space of struggle," which suggests a "global common consciousness."[6] We insist upon the universal subject, because we are human beings first, before we assume an identity.[7]

One of the most compelling assertions of the individual as general intellect and universal subject is the autobiographical research of Jane Rendell. Autobiographic research would not be possible without the possibility of making universal claims about the subject. The universal subject is what is in all subjects, whether we recognise it always or not. If nothing else, it is the linguistic necessity for reference. To assert that there is no universal subject is to not recognise the possibility of the signifier *I*. To assert the universal subject is not to attest to a thing or essence that is common or shared, what is universal may simply be the emptiness of the *I*, the endless sliding of the signifier along the signifier chain.

The question of centricity at play in this introduction and the repositioning of the individual and collective relationship, public and private, subject and object, the political, the ethical, the psychoanalytical is an attempt to find a language and a method with which to theorise collective life as it relates to architecture and the city in particular, society, and the environment (built/unbuilt, spatial/digital).

Collective Life

Architecture & Collective Life is committed to the proposition that we use architecture to construct collective life. Collective life is not the default condition of the many. It is a construct of human agency. It is indirect: we do it by doing other things. We construct collective life by constructing our environment: a continuous and incremental process of constructing housing, places of assembly, accidental stopping places, whether intentionally or not, as expressions of power or as acts of resistance to power. If it is true to say that much of our environment is not constructed by architects, it is nevertheless architecture where we understand it and theorise it. The city is not only our single largest cultural artefact, but it is – or has been until recently – our single largest interactive environment. And at risk of overreaching our case, we assert that there is nothing outside collective life. All individuals are connected, even their alienation from others is articulated with respect to others. The life of humans is collective or it is not life. If it is not collective, it is simply biological. Like the city, it is everywhere where there is an individual. There is no outside of the city. The city is everywhere. There is no outside to the artefactual world of human creation. And not simply because we have entered the Anthropocene Epoch, the final human stage of geological time, it has always been so.

Architecture & Collective Life asserts moreover that architecture and collective life are a single thing. Not two things, architecture or collective life, or architecture conjoined to collective life,

or first architecture then collective life or first collective life and then architecture, but one, a single formation, articulated and overdetermined by a pervasive spatial, linguistic, temporal grammar. Architecture = the built form of collective life. Collective life = a social formation.

How does architecture *architect* collective life? There are a number of ways:

- When communities work jointly to put new artefacts into the world that will outlast the mortality of individuals (Arendt's *work*).
- When cities become the sites for collective action (Arendt's *polis*)
- When the city becomes a figure in the collective imaginary (Rossi's *analogical city*).
- When we think of the architecture of the city as a form of life (Agamben's *bio-polis*).
- When cities are historic artefacts (Stiegler's *tertiary memory devices*).
- The architecture of the city is the intersubjective environment in which we articulate our subjectivity (Lefebvre's *urban society*).

One of the aims of the conference was to shift spatial thinking from the political categories "public-private" – whereby the public is the site of politics and the private is the site of the family – to the social categories "individual-collective." It is a different section cut through life, and it may reopen ethical and political discourse to architecture. Stoane points out that Arendt argued that the twentieth century is marked by a shift from the public life of politics to a society of families.[8] Neutralising the distinction between private and public, family and state, is the hallmark of twentieth century social life. This shift is latterly abetted by the internet, which makes each individual a political agent in their bedroom. Our recent experience with the COVID-19 virus has borne this out, where the political response to the virus has been to discipline the family.

We need to distinguish the individual from the subject, although we accept that the terms are not used consistently. Not all individuals are subjects and not all subjects are individuals. Individuals are subjects only when they are positions in a syntactic scaffold. The subject is a collective social formation, an effect of the many. The collective is always on the verge of calcifying into a unity; the individual is always already on the verge of dispersal into fragments. Think of Deleuze and Guattari's *dividual* and Lacan's split subject. Think of Beckett's vibrating tympanic subject, "I'm the tympanum, on one side the mind, on the other the world." This instability has implications for the fluidity of individual and collective. The subject is disenfranchised from claim on any but an imaginary unity. Lacan argues that the subject is a linguistic formation. It could not articulate itself as individual outside an environment whose primary feature is that it is linguistic and syntactic, because it is the linguistic nature of this environment that puts it in relation to others. We are reminded also of Marx's social individual who is shaped and reshaped by the productive force of individual labour and social relations. Marx's social individual reappears in Virno's idea of the "multitude" as a collective subject. The introduction by Jodi Dean of the psychoanalytic formations of drive and desire into political

discourse speaks to the coagulation of individuals into collective formations, rather than binary publics and privates.[9]

We are interested in how the collective is organised, how – to borrow Virno – the multitude has a grammar. Virno side-stepped public-private by re-habilitating the concept of the multitude for political discourse; he argues that the politician's *the public* or *we, the people* is an imaginary unity masking a real multitude, and the political project for today is to understand its grammar. For architects Virno is of interest because he insists that the multitude has a linguistic grammar and not simply a spatial one; and because this grammar never forms a unity, it does not conform to familiar unities like architectural typologies of enclosure. Lacan called this linguistic environment *the field of the Other* and we are interested in how Lacan's Other converges with Virno's multitude. The field of the Other is the field of intersubjective relations, other subjects and other objects – whatever signifies for the subject – in so far as it has the capacity, perhaps fleeting and never fully realised, to coagulate into an address (hence the capital O; think: the voice of Oz, Rossi's hand)[10]. The field of the Other is an irreducibly collective social formation but which does not relinquish the agency and individuality of the subject. This social field exists for the subject in a precise form: it is the field of signifiers with which it articulates itself and its subjectivity as distinct from other individuals. The lesson of the field of the Other is that the sense of self is impossible without the field of others, a condition which is always disavowed by the ego. We articulate our subjectivity spatially so as to accommodate our bodies; and understanding how we traverse the field of the Other, in particular its spatiality, is one of the tasks for architecture. If we equate Virno's grammar with Lacan's Other, because it is our burden as editors to attempt to link discourses, we also recognise that it would take a separate paper to put them in a productive dialogue, let alone to show that they are parallel formations, and this brief sketch and scattered comments will have to suffice.

We are architects, not political philosophers or psychoanalysts and, without abandoning the linguistic connotations of the word *grammar*, or the libidinous connotations of the Other, we intend to extend *grammar* beyond the linguistic and into the fabric of the city. Grammar organises speakers into subjects and others, relates the speaking one to the cohering many. Collective life is the life of the cohering many. We ask how the many cohere, how the one coheres to the many. How the way we dwell is an outcome of policy, social preferences, history. Thus we are interested in the relation of the single dwelling to the block to the street. We are interested in the ways of living, working, playing together. What are the axes of collective life? Its grids? Its positions? Its flows and parameters? Its lines, edges and frames? Its spaces and forms? Its props or supports? Its successions, genealogies, hierarchies? What are the *absences* about which it clusters? We read the plan of a city as a template for the social cloud within which the subject emerges. If there is a formal plan typology of cities, and for city streets and districts, in particular residential streets and districts, and for housing and institutions, to what extent does it correspond to a typology of social forms? A continuous pattern

language of use and arrangement extends from the bedroom window to the national rail network and we must articulate it.

Virno and Lacan are important because we are interested in theoretical models for collective life that satisfy our reason as well as our experience. Other models are also put forward in these articles. Collective life is put into practice as ethical action. Ethics is concerned with the relation of the one to the many. It puts the action of the individual in dialogue with the social codes of others. There are computational models that capture swarms of qualities, quantities, people, digits, to make sense of them at the planetary scale; and digital models that describe how media creates hyper-connectedness amongst individuals.

These articles address the political question of what it is for an individual to be a subject. Either implicitly or explicitly they ask what it is for an individual to present theirself in a public forum, before others, respectfully and with dignity. What sort of subject of the city – and what sort of city, these are the same question – has the capacity for togetherness and concourse that allows decisions to be made about the critical issues confronting us? Identity politics promotes otherness and hates it. Against a current drift in public life toward identity politics, the universal subject opens the space for difference without identity, and hence the potential for an otherness and plurality without alienation.

We hope that putting individual and collective into wider circulation will shine a light on the predicaments of collective action by individuals, in cases where public and private are no longer operative. We find increasingly that decisions which *look* as if they are a matter of public debate are decisions about our private lives which need to be made collectively, together with others, and that they do not follow the familiar political model of the public resolution of conflict between special interest groups. Climate change – the current name for the environmental damage that we have been inflicting upon ourselves for three generations – has this category-busting form of collective decision-making: collective because we have to make these decisions together; private because they relate to our forms of living and individual action, and will determine our families, our tastes, where and how we live with others.

These articles constitute a speculative enquiry about how to read the city and its forms of life, and its truth depends upon the cogency and utility of the reading, what it allows us to do by opening new possibilities for action. These articles explore how subjects congregate into collective social formations, regardless of whether these social formations are public or private, and how subjects individuate themselves with respect to social formations, regardless of whether these subjects are acting publicly or privately. While we are interested in the material facts of the city and the social facts of everyday life, the correlation between plan typologies and social typologies will not be found as if they were pre-existent; they will be read into the material and social world by a creative act of cognition. We are committed to the possibility that new theoretic models for understanding architecture and collective life have the capacity to provoke change in the world, and if these papers

succeed, it will be to see planners and policy makers address more directly the problems of the city in terms of the grammars that organises people into forms of concourse rather than to address the imaginary entities and objects that currently dominate the debates about the city and only ever proliferate more of the same.

The Conference

These articles are a selection from the conference *Architecture & Collective Life* hosted by the School of Social Sciences at the University of Dundee in November 2019. The Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) of which this was the annual conference, is the pre-eminent association of researchers in UK schools of architecture. This issue of *Architecture and Culture* and a companion volume in the Routledge *Critiques* series constitute, alongside the conference website, the main material traces of the conference and its constellations of thought.[11] The conference opening address (Foreword) and call for papers (Afterword) are reproduced here as conference artefacts. The conference programme and book of abstracts are available for download.[12]

We included articles on ethics and community activism, which treat practical questions regarding the relation of the one to the many; psychoanalysis and Lacan's field of the Other; cities and housing, which constitutes the material form of collective life; and digital crowds and computational space, the new individuals and collectives emerging from digital platforms, the human-digital hybrid. Recurring, are references to Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Henri Lefebvre, Aldo Rossi, Bernard Stiegler,....

The Articles

We use the word *article* not *paper* because that is the term our publisher Taylor and Francis uses, but we find it a bit too like the articles of a contract, or articles of war. As editors, our most decisive act was to select 18 of 180 conference papers, and to group them in four concourses: individuals, communities, cities, collectives. Into each of these seemingly straightforward categories we dropped a paper on Lacan and a paper on ethics, with the intention of disrupting their logic, exposing their complexities. This is usually the effect of psychoanalytic critique, some art/architecture practices, and philosophical critique. It is also the effect of ethics, when ethics is understood – not as prohibition – but as critical enquiry into a course of action. No one wants to be psychoanalyzed; or stood before the Good. Psychoanalytic critique always destabilises rational categories because it works with a compelling *ana*-logic (remember the *Ana*rchitecture of Gordon Matta Clark? remember the *ana*logic city of Aldo Rossi?).[13] The word *concourse* is taken from Vitruvius who says that concourse among people is the originary scenario for architecture.[14] We call them concourses because we suggest that our readers read them as dialogues, and concourse suggests speech and togetherness. The first and last articles are visual projects of eight colour images each, which bookend the collection. We summarise the discursive links.

Individuals – the individual as the site of critique

The first five articles are grounded in the individual, a particular subject, distinct from a universal one, or an abstract one (Architecture, the Good). Threats to the individual are themes in most of these articles. Penelope Haralambidou's artisan uses castings and drawings to produce an artefactual reading of Christine de Pizan's medieval text *The Book of the City of Ladies*. Her aim, as indeed was de Pizan's, is to build – with her allegoric sisters – a safe place for women within male-dominated cities, and perhaps more to the point, within male-dominated urban discourse. Discourse is as dangerous as cities to the dispossessed. Jane Rendell takes a personal position of conscience against the institution. In her first person singular critique, she argues that ethical action involves a form of truth-telling, or *parrhesia* that puts the self in danger. The ethical action of the individual involves a critical encounter with the codes of others, that – at its best – binds us into ethical assemblages, a form of intersubjective grammar that emerged as a theme in this issue. If Rendell's ethical encounter puts the individual in danger, even as it offers the safety of a code, Haralambidou's project finds a place of safety for women in beautiful artefacts. Guanghui Ding describes the emergence of subjectivity in two projects, Feng Jizhong's Garden of the Square Pagoda (1980) and Wang Shu's Xiangshan Campus (2002), to develop a genealogy of resistance to the dominant narratives of Mao's cultural revolution and latterly a deregulated capitalism that has now colonised the communist state. Subjectivity is always a form of resistance to the prevailing order, because subjectivity is always repressed, disguised, displaced by ego practice, and threatens to re-emerge. Angie Voela's critique of capitalist production focuses on the position of the worker – the particular position of the psychoanalytic subject within capitalist discourse. In her reading of *The Lego Movie* (2014) with Lacan and Bernard Stiegler, she maps the key players – including Emmet, Lord Business, the Kragle – onto the positions in Lacan's fifth discourse, the Discourse of the Capitalist. This is the first of four papers that reference Lacan's field of the Other as a critical frame for thinking cities and collective life. We put Tal Bar's article in this group because it is a critique of the individual in architectural discourse. Her post-human, bio-digital artisan-architect follows a hidden line of data across an algorithmic swarm-scape, which elides the individual and collective. Her bio-mimetic architecture aims to bring the swarm, the multitude of others, in both their material and symbolic registers, into a formal spatial discourse where architecture can address them.

Communities – communities and their grammars

We begin these four articles on communities and their grammars, with Mhairi McVicar's article on the ongoing community redevelopment of the 1962 Bowls Pavilion within the context of former Prime Minister David Cameron's 2011 Big Society speech and the *Localism Act*, which devolved powers from central government to local government and encouraged communities to take over council services and assets. The community converges on a jointly held interest that will outlive them.

A building project organises a community within material (the pavilion, its dilapidation) and symbolic (ethics, big society) matrixes. In her article on community as opposed to institutional ethics, Yael Padan makes a case for a collective co-produced ethics that emerges in the lived experience of everyday life. This is a different model for ethics from what issues from Western education institutions and research protocols. It sheds light on the complex ethics implicit in McVicar's community, that emerges around a joint project in dialogue with a university architecture course. In his critique of the commodification of UK social housing, Andrew Stoane focused on the relationship between city and household, public and private life. He notes that in *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt argued that in the 20th century, mass society has replaced public life – and the public-private distinction central to Western politics – with an expanded family. Into these articles on communities, ethics, activism, and housing, we place John Hendrix's article on the building that announces its incompleteness with a missing column. In *Communitas* (2010), Roberto Esposito argued that community is organised around nothing, the nothing that is.[15] Every project enters the human world as a term in discourse with others. The deliberateness of Eisenman's design-act notwithstanding, it points to the absence that shadows every Bowls pavilion, and every social group in so far as they cohere. This point of absence is constitutive of human discourse, whether it is symbolic or material, and constitutes a critical category for understanding the community project as a focal point for change and cohesion.

Cities – the city as a form of life and history
We place two articles on the history of public housing, which we take to mark the centre point of Western thinking on the city, alongside two articles from the periphery. Andrea Migotto focuses on the transformation of twentieth-century social housing in Belgium by comparing the garden settlements of the 1920s and the neighbourhood units of the 1950s in order to explore how ideas of collectivity in public housing programmes, shifted from community to the social. Frederick Biehle describes the early history of social housing in New York City which, for reasons that are aesthetic and political, abandoned the typology of the perimeter block, for the slab in a park. There is a social charge to collectivity and an architectural agency that shapes it, pursued throughout modernity, political differences notwithstanding; there is also an urgent need to rethink social housing and/with new forms of welfare. Camillo Boano reads the condition of the refugee camp, where daily life is a struggle for existence and not only a struggle to be heard, against Agamben's biopolitics in *Homo Sacer* – forms of life, bare life – and defines a form of onto-ethics, ethics as an existential or ontological struggle for life. In his genealogy of the city, Francesco Proto argues that the urban grid of modern planning is a form of perversion. Perversion is one of the three clinical structures in Lacanian psychoanalysis alongside neurosis and psychosis. The pervert makes of themself the object of the Other's enjoyment. (The pervert's dalliance with a symbolic form of substitution speaks a life of leisure – the opposite the existential necessities of the refugee.) Proto is not the first person to draw on

the three clinics to understand collective culture, but he is the first we know to relate a psychical structure to an urban one, and to propose them as a genealogy of architectural culture (although Giedion comes close).[16] If we read Migotto's and Biehle's histories of housing through the peripheral lenses of Boano and Proto, city fabric appears as the architectural form of life. We construct the city in order to live well in it together. We put Boano's and Proto's articles in the context of housing because we want to ask, how the grid, the symptom of a perverse episteme, helps us understand the city as a form of life? What are the grid and the need to escape it, symptoms of? We note the public stigma associated with the NYC slab-in-the-park projects, and the anti-urban sentiments of its proponents, and speculate that the escape from grid to park – and not simply the grid itself – is part of the signifying complex of the perverse.

Collectives – the multitude and its grammars

These articles address the swarm of life. The swarm constitutes a self-structured field of subjects and objects. Cameron McEwan's paper on the analogical city and theory of the multitude states the humanist position. There is a material city and an analogical city: the city we live in and the city that lives in us. The city exists as a figure in the cultural imaginary; a society with a material grammar forms around it. The other articles focus on the digital. Hazem Ziada's article on the use of social media during the Arab Spring argues for the emergence of media-crowd hybrids in which the subject is de-individualised and collective agency materialises in the Instagram feed. David Capener's article on the production of space in the age of digital technology reads Lefebvre with Stiegler on how digital technologies (the cloud, tertiary retention devices) are changing the way we produce space. We navigate our desire in the city with our iPhones, click and collect hubs with planetary scale distribution networks, Google Maps, Alexa, and the like, a latter day digital *dérive*. Paul Guzzardo, Gustavo Cardon and Rodrigo Martín Iglesias's visual narrative is an analogical city project, gone digital. This manifesto is put forward as a critical tool for navigating the toxic digital maelstrom that has become the platform for public concourse. Donald Kunze's reading of popular culture argues that the field of self and other has a spatial form, and hence, is within the curtilage of architecture. It has the loopy logic of a non-oriented surface (mobius strip, plane of projection); which makes of architecture, with its tidy thresholds and logic of enclosure that encode inside/outside, me/you, a form of repression and falsification of social relations. Kunze's work gives spatial form to the grammar of the multitude; it is a surface, except that its extraordinary form eschews conventional architectural space-making. In different ways these papers treat of the desire of the individual, but they do it from the position of the field – digital and spatial, we might call it a navigational field, the subject's desire is a function of navigating the field – within which the individual's desire emerges. They also underscore the fact that there is no grammar *per se* – no desire either – except as a function of media.

Humanities

These articles raise the flag for the intellectual elite that congregates around the humanities.[17] Most elites – intellectual or otherwise – have become unpopular and the humanities are no longer a popular position. The only elite still acceptable is the money elite. The humanities are fighting a losing battle against a market culture that only wants its problems solved, and not its principles questioned.[18] Proto argued that we inhabit a perverse episteme. The assumption seems to be that our social and political foundations are assimilated so they can now be ignored. We no longer need the Aristotles and Arendts (or the Lacans and Marxs), we need problem solvers. There is no recognition that assimilation is never complete; it is part of the ongoing process of remaking our humanity. Against this technophility, these articles reassert the necessity and efficacy of close reading. Through acts of close reading, the Humanities engage with the thought of the past and channel it to new futures. They produce new understanding and hence leadership, not new knowledge. The resurgence of populism and isolationism has shown that statesmanship is not the universal form of politics, as Aristotle and Arendt thought, but the particular style of a leadership class (Aristotle's and Arendt's) that has been displaced. At a time when intellectual culture is side-lined from public life and when thinking and practice of architecture is often impoverished and in any case disenfranchised from the city, the intelligentsia need to lead by articulating its agency in reflective action.[19] We do not need more technology to solve the existential problems confronting humans, but more critical understanding of our position in the world as technological beings.

Capitalism

It is safe to say that if there is a subtext to these papers, it is the damage that market thinking is inflicting on collective life. In Voela's paper, the master capitalist attempts to lock down desire and social relations, destroying their fluidity because his discourse cannot master them. These papers are against capitalism. To the extent that capitalism is popular, because it gives people what they want or what they think they need, these papers are elitist. The intelligentsia is not about denying people what they want – we are in favour of what we want – but changing want. We try to understand want, and through understanding and discourse, make change. There has to be more to life than the happiness of consumerism and a social life organised around consumerism. We see consumer capitalism everywhere in our built environment: it is the grammar of collective life – its latest form. People vote with their credit cards. The aim of these papers is to provide new ways to read collective life. They could be framed as questions. Can we, by attending to the grammar of the multitude, the ethics of collective life, the intersubjective field of desire, find ways to replace capitalism as the form and grammar of collective life? Can the field of the Other – let's call it the infrastructure of desire, which recognises that the desire of the subject is always in the hands of its significant others and not in the acquisition of consumable objects – replace capitalism as the form-maker of our cities?

Virus

Although these texts were drafted in the Autumn of 2019, they were refined and assembled during this time of collective self-isolation. Covid-19 emerged as a point of articulation between natural and social forces.[20] It has been remarked in the press that the pandemic has done more to articulate a Leftist programme of politics, and collective solidarity, in a matter of months than the electoral Left has managed in 40 years. The pandemic has forced a rupture in thought. New convictions about public health, education, the nature of work and key workers, and how the individual relates to society are freshly foregrounded. This is the condition of the state of exception; if there is a shift in politics and collective life, it is still in process.[21]

Collective life locked out of the *piazza* has entered the bedroom via the screen, where we are collectively living privately. The effect of the virus has been to normalise the screen as the site for public concourse.[22] What had been primarily a platform for private life has become the paradigm for conducting public life. And never has the state intruded more directly on the regulation of family life, public regulation of private body, conflating the traditional category distinctions between state and family, public policy and private life, politics and economics.[23]

The virus has led to close public scrutiny of how we congregate and lockdown seems to have unlocked a public distrust of the social life that takes the form of gatherings. Anyone who has read Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents* will wonder to what extent we have a psychical investment in lockdown and distancing. When they are too close to us, bodies are smelly dirty things, and the pandemic has reasserted our underground antipathy to the body, and underscored the degree to which urbanism depends upon overcoming this aversion to the animality that is our nature. Lockdown measures including social distancing and quarantine, have emptied our cities and undermined the characteristics that make urban life so compelling: what Biehle described as the accidental proximity of strangers. The site of our gatherings has shifted from the space of the city to the screen. This shift is changing the grammars of collective life, practices of solidarity, relations to the environment (built, natural, digital, imagined), and the collective ethos of a civil future world.

Digital Public – Public Space
We do not yet know what the relation is between the architectural space of the city (its boulevards, piazzas, assembly chambers, coffee houses, failed estates, peripheral wastelands, public toilets and shooting alleys) and the digital space of the internet, or its consequence for political action. There is as yet no architecture-digital complex, where architecture and digital media together constitute a new form of what Arendt called *the space of appearance*. These papers suggest directions. Guzzardo's media activism aims to take the digital out of the bedroom and put it in the street where it can rejoin public life with an overtly political agency. Ziada, Bar, and Capener discuss digital-human hybrids that assemble individuals into new collective forms with their own agency. Digital environments make little distinction between the public life of politics and the private expression of opinion. Private forms (Instagrams, Tweets) are used constantly by public figures. We have doubts about the capacity

of digital platforms to replace the *polis* as the space of appearance, the space where people assemble to exercise their power and are held publicly accountable for it. Lefebvre's concepts of the *production of space* and *urban society* ask us to recognise that space is already an architecture-social hybrid; we now need to explore the possibilities of a digital-architectural-social hybrid so that we can build a form that has ethical and political efficacy. These papers understand digital crowds and inter-subjects in compelling ways, which is the first step to proposing a politically effective hybrid that brings people together to make effective and sustainable decisions about their environment, in particular where those decisions directly affect their forms of life, lives, and lifestyles.

The Environment

If there is an urgent context to which these articles should be directed, it is not Covid-19, but the damage we are doing to the environment. If Covid is our current condition, climate change is our most pressing existential threat. The fact that environmental damage is one of the principle effects of the damage of capitalist market thinking to collective life, makes it all the more urgent. We propose here the beginnings of an approach through architecture and collective life. The degradation of the environment stymies the conventional political categories of public and private, of public debate about policy and the private life of the family. It is with respect to the environment that the category distinction individual-collective exposes the caesura that private-public has papered over. We hope that rotating our thinking from public-private to individual-collective will help to unlock thinking on our individual and collective relations to the environment. For one thing, the environment does not fit the conventional political model of conflict between special interest groups in the public realm, some for, some against. At the level of the individual, we are all complicit in *against* because it relates to our consumer form of life. We have been individually at it for at least three generations. For another, the levels of denial and delay have the hallmarks of pathology. By damaging the environment we are damaging ourselves: it is an epidemic of self-harm. We keep trying to stop, and failing. It is pathology and not bad practice. The fact that it is accelerating despite the occasional good works; the fact that it is the new normal, the fact that it seems to return in a new form under a new name to staged expressions of surprise/outrage several times a year, when it is always the same problem, are part of the pathology.[24] The response to bad practice is regulation. The response to pathology is critique, analysis, therapy. The damage is the effect of the pathologies of individuals but the therapy needs to be collective. Environmental damage requires a collective solution that bears on the lifestyles of individuals.

The ethical imperative for architecture is explore ways to bring people together into new grammars so that they can make sensible decisions about the damage that our forms of life are doing to the environment. Because the damage is an effect of our forms of life, it is an architectural problem, not only a problem for environmental science and technology. We do not lack green knowledge, but a capacity for collective green realism. The pathological turning away from the reality

of bad practice is a collective social formation which thinking on collective life should be able to unpick. With green realism green action will follow. We have reached an impasse in our environmental thinking that we need to critically analyse our way out of. It seems that we need to rein in our rapacious lifestyles, which we will never do voluntarily as individuals. No one will do it unless everyone does it. If there is a caesura in our thought, it is here. Any concourse on the environment must range across individual behaviour and state policy, i.e., household management and politics. If Covid-19 is part of this picture, it is simply to make the idea of concourse more poignant and to underscore the fact that architecture must work with the data rich media world. Architecture must do what it has always done: think, explore and implement new grammars for collective life, and forms of space for concourse and action. To reiterate a point, we do not need more new green technologies, we need a better understanding of our consuming nature.

Conclusion

The aim of this introduction – which is a subset of the aim of the Humanities – is to put discourses in dialogue with each other. It is a recurring theme in these articles that we have to rethink the individual condition of the subject in light of the agency and efficacy of collective social formations. We are hybrid with the symbolic environments we construct, and these include the linguistic, digital, spatial and material environments of our cities. This condition is everywhere evident, but never recognised. The message of these papers is that it is simply not possible to articulate the individual or the collective without the other. It is not clear how identity politics will change if we were to identify this condition and keep it planted in the general intellect. Indeed it is in the service of the ego to maintain our separateness from other and from environment. Ego nothwithstanding, the human subject cannot coherently articulate the condition of being individual, with the attributes of consciousness and agency, outwith the collective world that constitutes its other. We will reprise a couple of hybrids here.

In "Hotspots and Touchstones", Rendell argues that we cannot articulate an ethical position – essentially a course of good action – without reference to the ethical codes of others; an other's thought is your touchstone for right action. It is acknowledged in Boano's article where he argues that we have to think ethics with existence. In "The Digital Crowd", Ziada argues that Instagram and other algorithmic media used by protestors have become an integral part of a single de-individualised agency and that it is changing the public spaces of the city. Kunze argues that the field of the Other has a particular spatiality: is not outside the subject but the other side of the subject. This intersubjective field has the topological properties of a surface, not an enclosure. This field takes as many forms as there are forms of human work and labour that put artefacts into the world, be they material or digital. We can no longer read histories of public housing programs – we are thinking of Biehle's, Migotto's and Stoane's papers – and *not* see them as templates for collective life, the relation of bedrooms to street facades to avenues to national highway networks. It is acknowledged in

the community activism in McVicar, where people build the communal relations between individuals, by building public works that will outlive them. It is acknowledged in McEwan's article on analogical city in which the city is the figure in the shared imaginary.

Any critique of collective life is playing a long game. With Covid-19 and climate change, we have two routes: temporary adaption and fundamental change. With Covid-19 we can adapt: more distance, more ZOOM, protective screens, new ways to work, shorter hours, a new Neufert (the science of biometric adapting). Or we can treat it as our greatest challenge to date, the first mass step in going digital and next stage in the 100,000 year evolution of human suffering. Likewise with climate change, we have a choice. We can adapt: more water conservancy, more storm drainage, more brown rice, more parasols, less meat, more walking. Our biggest strength and weakness is that we are the most adaptable species. We have the capacity to be comfortable in environments that drive other species away. Or we can use these papers to shine a critical light on the grammars that shape collective life. Arguably we do not recognise the problems because the problems are our forms of life. Our forms of life are everywhere all around us; both the most and the least tangible, least visible artefacts. We need a critical understanding of collective life that has the efficacy to construct new platforms for effective action that are adequate to the task. If the city is the primary spatial artefact that we build in order to live well, this task is tantamount to rebuilding our cities. The city is the material form and agent of collective life, not simply an effect of collective life. The problem confronting us is not only about rethinking places of assembly so that we can come together in new hybrid spatial-digital spaces of appearance, it is also about how cities are organised so that we can replace the grammars of consumption with the infrastructures of desire.

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Endnotes

1 Hannah Arendt, "Introduction into Politics" [1955], in *The Promise of Politics*, ed. by Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 93.

2 Badiou, "Thinking the Event," in *Philosophy in the Present* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity, 2009), 45.

3 Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson, *Semiotext(E) Foreign Agents Series* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 78.

4 The split, divided, barred subject is diffused throughout Lacan's text: see eye and gaze in Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* trans. Alan Sheridan. ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: Norton Press, 1981), 67-119; ego and unconscious in Jacques Lacan, "The Freudian Thing or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis" [1955], in *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York: W W Norton 2006), 334-63; enunciation and statement in Jacques Lacan, "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power" [1958], in *Ecrits*, 489-542. Lacan's split subject is a reading of Hegel's split spirit, for which see the excerpts from "The Preface" [paras 1-72] and "Introduction" [paras73-89] to Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* in Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

5 Donna Haraway is an early user of the term post-human, for which see Haraway, "Situated Knowledges" in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women.* Routledge, New York: 1991. We defer to Wikipedia. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posthuman) accessed 13 January 2021.

6 François Cusset, *How the World Swung to the Right: Fifty Years of Counterrevolutions*, trans. by Noura Wedell (Cambridge, Mass.: Semiotext(e); MIT Press, 2018), 160.

7 We are thinking here recent philosophical developments like the new object ontologies, for which see Graham Harman, "Speculative Realism" in *Collapse: philosophical research and development,* III (2007), 367-88. Or Harman, *The Quadruple Object* (Washington and Winchester: Zero Books, 2011).

8 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* [1958] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

9 For position within a syntactic world, see Mario Gandalsonas, 'From Structure to Subject: The Formation of an Architectural Language' in *Oppositions* (1979) 6-29. For Beckett's vibrating tympanic subject, see Samuel Beckett, "The Unnamable", in *Molloy; Malone Dies; the Unnamable* (London: 1966), 352 "…I don't feel a mouth on me, …, perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that what I am,… I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either,…" a sentence that runs for more than a page. For the *dividual*, see Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", *October,* 59 (1992), 3-7, in which Deleuze argues that the individual with an identity is the smallest indivisible unit of a society; Deleuze replaces it with a dividual that is a cluster of numeric codes in a digital matrix (DNA, bank card numbers, etc.). For Lacan's split subject, see endnote 4. Marx's social individual, a unity of opposites, Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* [1857-58], trans. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), 706. Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson, *Semiotext(E) Foreign Agents Series* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004). Jodi Dean, *The Communist Horizon* (London: Verso, 2012),

113; and for Dean's treatment of the crowd as drive and desire, *Crowds and Party* (London and New York: Verso, 2016), 214.

[10] Victor Fleming, Dir., *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM, 1939). The recuring image in Rossi's drawings of the hand of San Carlone, Arona, for which see Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1981) p4.

[11] Penny Lewis and Lorens Holm, eds, *Architecture and Collective Life* (London: Routledge, 2021). Forthcoming.

[12] See https://ahra2019.com/.

[13] Cf. Aldo Rossi, *Architecture of the City*. trans. Diane Ghirardo and Joan Ockman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), a text we have referred to a number of times in this essay. For anarchitecture, cf. one of the great catalogues of Matta-Clark's work: IVAM Centre Julio Gonzalez, ed., *Gordon Matta-Clark* (Valencia: IVAM Centre Julio Gonzalez, Valencia).

[14] *Vitruvius: On Architecture, books I-V* (Cambridge: HUP, 1998) transl. Frank Granger, p.79.

[15] Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*. trans. Timothy Campbell (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2010). See the 'Introduction: nothing in common' pp.1-19. P.1 'Nothing seems more appropriate today than community: nothing more necessary, demanded, and heralded by a situation that joins in a unique epocal knot the failure of all communisms with the misery of new individualisms.' P.19 "How are we to break down the wall of the individual while at the same time saving the singular gift that the individual carries?

[16] Cf. Sigfried Giedion, *The Eternal Present: The Beginnings of Architecture: A Contribution on Constancy and Change* vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp 495-526. And Koolhaas argued that the Manhattan grid functions as the prop for capitalist fantasy for which see Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1978/1994) pp 236ff.

[17] Wikipedia defines the intelligentsia as, "a status class of educated people engaged in the complex mental labours that critique, guide, and lead in shaping the culture and politics of their society". See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligentsia#:~:text=The%20intelligentsia%20(%2F%C9%AAn%CB%8C,and%20politics%20of%20their%20society. Accessed today.

[18] There is a substantial line of critique of capitalism by psychoanalytic discourse (Slavoj Žižek *Incontinence of the Void* (2017); Tomsic, *The Capitalist Unconscious* (2015)), one of the most trenchant being Pierre Bruno, *Lacan and Marx: The Invention of the Symptom*. trans. John Holland, *Cfar Library* (London: Routledge, 2020). Cf. 'Translator's Preface', pp.vii-xix, in particular the section beginning p.xi. on the discourse of the capitalist.

[19] We refer to proclamations of the end of theory that come from within as well as outwith the discourse of architecture. See the survey of positions on theory and criticality by George Baird, 'Criticality and it's Discontents' in *Harvard Design Magazine 21: Rising Ambitions, Expanding Terrain: Realism and Utopianism* (2004). And Michael Speaks, 'Design Intelligence and the New Economy' in *Architectural Record* (January 2002) pp.72–79; and 'Design Intelligence: Part 1, Introduction' in *A+U* (December 2002) pp.10–18. See also Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (2003) the chapter 'The Rise and Fall of Theory'. Parallel claims appear in economics, as for instance Richard Bookstaber, *The End of Theory: financial crises, the failure of economics, and the sweep of human interaction* (PUP, 2017). The assertion that big data has torpedoed science and scientific theory seems to be an internet topic, in response to a position paper by Chris Anderson, 'The end of theory: the data deluge makes the scientific method obsolete' in *Wired* (06 23 2008)

(https://www.wired.com/2008/06/pb-theory/ accessed 07 January 2021) and was picked up by Mark Graham, 'Big data and the end of theory?' in *The Guardian* (Friday 09 March 2012).

[20] For thoughtful reflections on the pandemic see David Harvey, "Anti-Capitalist Politics in the Time of COVID-19," 2020, http://davidharvey.org/2020/03/anti-capitalist-politics-in-the-time-of-covid-19/; Alain Badiou, "On the Epidemic Situation," 2020, https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4608-on-the-epidemic-situation.

[21] Neoliberal orthodoxies – the privatisation and financialisation of everything, flexibility of labour, endless expansion, manic consumerism – have either been abandoned or collapsed. Airports, hotels, restaurants, cultural and sports events closed, cancelled or postponed. Massive state intervention implemented overnight with rent and mortgage holidays, pledges to pay the majority of wages of furloughed workers, moratorium on evictions, state-led coordination of manufacturing such as for PPE and ventilators. The question of a universal basic income was debated by the UK parliament and the US stimulus package payment of cheques to individual citizens.

[22] Skype was rolled out in 2003; Zoom in 2011. The press is full of accounts of the rise of the use of digital media during lock-down, too numerous to record here. A recent one, describing the ascendency of ZOOM: Tom Lamont, 'Are you ready for your close-up?' in *The Guardian Weekend 01 08 20*, pp. 12-19.

[23] In the *Politics*, Aristotle puts the head of state in opposition to the head of the family. Pier Vittorio Aureli transposes this opposition onto politics and economics in *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2011).

[24] Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* in 1962. Sir Frank Fraser Darling gave the Reith Lectures, *Wilderness and Plenty*, on BBC 4 in 1969. Greenpeace was founded in 1971. At about the same time, Rowan and Martin's *Laughin* did a skit in which road companies starting on the east and west coasts meet in the middle after having completely concreted over America. *An inconvenient Truth* (dir.) was released in 2006. In 2015, a team of RSPB researchers discovered that the beaches of one of the most remote islands in the South Pacific was covered in plastic debris. It made international news in 2017, for which see Ellen Hunt, '38 million pieces of plastic waste found on uninhabited South Pacific island' in *The Guardian* (Monday 15 May 2017).