

Architectural Distancing from the Exit strategy: the Habitability of Extreme Worlds Versus the Extreme Habitability of Worlds

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Aiming to secure the survival of humankind, several contemporary architects and scholars in the humanities have a shared interest in multiplying perspectives, defining separately and as a whole terms pertaining to a life and death complex. These expand the understanding of world, habitability and extreme, shifting the Earth-Moon relation from Exit to Distance.

• Abstract

“If space-junk is the human debris that litters the universe, Junk-space is the residue mankind leaves on the planet.”

Rem Koolhaas, *Junkspace* [1]

Architecture protects the human, enabling his inhabitation of worlds. Yet it has throughout the 20th century sought to propose extreme environments of habitability. Thus humankind would not always need protection from extreme worlds. These life-threats are furthermore sought out as surroundings for architecture. *Extreme habitable worlds* refers to countless hazardous behaviours, or life threatening realms in which humans develop new habits, learn to inhabit, dwell, and create new worlds.

Contemplating the Moon as an extension of, part of a world built by humankind, the Earth and Moon separation is not in effect. One reflects the other and reversely: the two worlds influence each other. What is known of the Earth will leak onto the Moon and the latter's extremities will enable a reconsideration of life on our planet. Worlds begin and end with humankind.

Environments have transformed the human and it can be anticipated that it will alter him further. Extreme and technological environments of the anthropocene have already mutated our species. While the *Exit strategy* has been used to qualify incentives of growth and land appropriation [1], it is used by feminist theory and ecology to blame its modus operandi [2], disqualifying the merit of outer space exploration.

The notion of *Exit* is intrinsic to the idea of separation, a process of splitting and fragmenting. A contrary perspective of co-emergence of the world, of matter and of individuals [3], parallel to the notions of ecology and landscape, anchors humankind within worlds that can never be escaped. Immersion within worlds is a prerequisite to architecture and the emergence of life. It names a move inside and between ubiquitous, overlapping and neighbouring worlds as *Distance*.

Distancing calls for extension, variation, and mutation rather than break and split. A number of architects have developed practices in accord with these beliefs, among which Rem Koolhaas [1] in his description of *Junkspace* as the production of inescapable yet dematerializing human environments, Greg Lynn's fictitious non-horizon, non-gravitational, non-grounded *New City* movie set [4], Lebbeus Woods's post-war strategies [5], Arakawa & Gins *Architectural Body* [6] or Lars Spuybroek's description of Frei Otto's co-emergent agencies of matter [7].

In this perspective, can be re-examined separately and in combination the notions of world, habitability and extremism.

1. Inescapable world(s).

Philosophy considers the inescapable predicament of worlds existing in co-emergence, as parallel systems of correlations that define modes of survival or destruction, in tension and evolving flux of causality [8]. Architecture is a link between occurring worlds [9], alive when it's purpose evolves, never rigid, univocal, or univalent [10], in bumptious inter-intra action with other species [11]. Habitable worlds are extensions of man, which amass, interlock, precede and follow his presence on Earth or the Moon.

- Habitability reliability.

Architects have defined various manners of inhabitation or human-environment connections: a co-emergence of body and world, a *Landscape for One* [6] or a capacity to engage in the unforeseen [7]. What sticks, resists, is reproduced or extended into the explored territory, on Earth or the Moon, creating new parallel and converging worlds. It is in the inhabitation of the gap between dimensions unknown, in the connections, that new environments for life appear.

- Extreme condition for survival.

Extreme occurs when forces surrounding the human are at a breaking point in flow and rhythm. The punctual disturbance within a rich ethnographic context [12] can contribute to the emergence, liveliness and complexity of the habitable world. Humans are under pressure of relentless unvaried conditions of

environments [13]. Active vagueness, the coalescence of opposing agencies releases this pressure [7]. The tension between a hostile lunar environment and the human is a fertile ground to enact an attraction of opposites, as principle of life [10].



Figure 1: Greg Lynn, New City, 2008

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Short Summary

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