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Make and, by Making, Make Yourself:

Norms, Values and Architectural Technicities

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How can one provide an account of architectural norms and values? For philosopher Gilbert Simondon, technology — or, in his terms, *technicity* — is responsible for axiology (and not the other way around). Therefore, he immediately connects norms and values with the technology that produces them and supports them. As such, Simondon acknowledges the importance of what he coins as *auto-normativity*: norms and values are derived from a technological act that valorises itself in an autogenous fashion. In this sense, architectural technicities, norms and values are not only co-determinable; they are fundamentally contingent.

In this paper I will examine how architecture — understood as a technology of environmental manipulations — produces our *sense* of time and intentionality. To do so, besides Simondon, I will also turn to philosopher Raymond Ruyer. For Ruyer, any invention of forms, either through the power of technicities or biological evolution, involves the resolution of a disparate tension between norms and values, or what he calls *directing essences*. Ruyer will claim that it is a *mnemonic theme* that determines their directionality. I will conclude this paper by claiming that while this mnemonic theme is technologically produced in the present, it is *informed* by a pre-individual potential that is coming from the future, while having the capacity to rearrange the past by radically altering our axiological system. In other words, I will claim that organic, individual and technological mnemonic themes share fluid borders and it is precisely this fluidity that architecture takes advantage in order to produce itself — and a world.

Keywords

Architecture, Axiology, Finalism