

Engaging in complex spaces: drawing on two Deleuze-inspired voices.

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6<sup>th</sup> Deleuze Studies International Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, 2013.

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### **Abstract**

In this paper I will ask, “How might Deleuze’s ontological concepts help us engage in, ‘complex spaces’?” I will respond to this question by focusing on the efforts made by two Deleuze-inspired theorists: Mark Halsey and Jean Hillier.

For Halsey, Deleuze’s philosophy can help us understand how non-material texts, or ‘naming machines’, affect the assemblages that form a ‘complex space’. Rather than judging a naming machine as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, he argues, a Deleuze-inspired approach would ask, “Which becomings are encouraged and, which becomings are blocked by these machines?” Drawing on his study of the Goolengook forest in Australia, Halsey suggests that this alternative approach to assessment provides criminologists with a better basis for engagement.

Like Halsey, Hillier is interested in how we can intervene within the complex and uncertain world we see around us. Rather than focusing on one geographical area, Hillier is interested in taking Deleuze’s philosophy ‘beyond the abstract to a useful, practical basis for spatial management’. To do this, Hillier believes spatial planners must understand and create the conditions from which possible plans might emerge. Or in other words, how planners understand and create a figure of the plane of immanence, or plan(e) of immanence.

In this paper, I will consider how these two Deleuze-inspired theorists draw on and re-create Deleuze’s concepts to form two different theoretical frameworks each suited to their respective fields of study. I will go on to identify, what I believe to be, strengths and limitations in their proposals. In my conclusion, I will argue that, by bringing these two frameworks together, we can reveal opportunities for overcoming these limitations, and a strong base for others to consider how Deleuze’s ontological concepts might help us engage in complex spaces.

## 1 Introduction:

*“How might Deleuze’s ontological concepts help us engage in, ‘complex spaces’?”*

In the 1990’s many planning theorists and urban design practitioners drew on network theory to help guide new methods for understanding, as well as engaging in complex spaces and problems. This was particularly influential to ‘communicative planners’ like Judith Innes and David Booher as well as Patsy Healey (Innes and Booher, 1999; 1999a; 2010; Booher and Innes, 2002; Healey, 1996; 1999). Innes and Booher’s theories and methods for ‘consensus building’ make explicit references to network theory (Booher and Innes, 2002). Patsy Healey’s early work on communicative planning also develops this link between planning and networks. More recently Healey describes a relational geography formed as a complex collection of overlapping, ‘loosely-coupled webs’ formed from ‘nodes, links and loose threads’ (Healey, 2007: 222).

In recent years this link between complexity science and planning has been the focus for a small but growing body of work in planning theory and geography. Like communicative planners, many of these theorists argue that planning theory and practice should look for ways to ‘work *with* (the complexity sciences) to suggest new practices and tools to increase the effectiveness of spatial planning.’ (de Roo et al, 2012: 20). A number of key figures in this field have suggested that planning should not be confined to the organising principles of a single image like *the network*, but, instead, embrace a broader ontological framework like the one offered by the philosopher, Gilles Deleuze (Sheller 2004; Hillier, 2007; Van Wazemael; 2012).

Such theorists have used Deleuze’s ontology as the basis for challenging normative distinctions between the human and the non-human (Van Wazemael, 2012), as well as normative practices of plan-making (Hillier, 2007; 2011). For these critiques to be successful Deleuze-inspired theorists must reconstruct new, useful tools for practice (Forester, 2007). Whilst some of these studies provide us with an outline for this reconstructive process (see Hillier, 2007; 2011), more work and focus is needed to identify and resolve some of the gaps in these proposals.

This paper is intended as part of this reconstructive process. I will do this by outlining and analysing two Deleuze-inspired theoretical frameworks designed as the basis for engaging in complex spaces: Mark Halsey’s proposals for engaging in ‘textual violence’ and Jean Hillier’s proposals for strategic planning. I will identify the principle gaps in these proposals and argue that some of these gaps can

be resolved by bringing these Deleuze-inspired studies together. In doing so, this paper will make two contributions to the field:

1. The first contribution is specific to the two studies. I intend to set out an outline for new research that will help develop these frameworks into practical tools.
2. The second contribution is aimed at the Deleuzian community more broadly. This paper will show why developing a theoretical framework for engaging in complex spaces demands that theorists (re)create Deleuze philosophical concepts in very specific ways. To do this successfully, I posit, such theorists should not focus their attention on Deleuze's texts alone, but also on the way these concepts have been (re)created by others interested in related areas of enquiry.

### **Why these two studies?**

I have selected these two studies amongst a growing body of Deleuze-inspired literature across the spatial disciplines according to three criteria:

*Engagement:* Firstly, both studies are intended to make Deleuze's philosophy useful to *engaging* in complex spaces rather than analysing and understanding complex spaces alone, which is the principle focus of this paper.

*Ontological concepts:* Over the last few years, concepts like *the assemblage*, *the rhizome*, *the fold*, and *becomings* have appeared in a range of spatial studies. Some of these concepts are used in isolation, or as metaphors with little attempt to draw on Deleuze's broader ontological framework. In doing so, such studies fail to consider what these concepts *do* and, as such, fail to make use of Deleuze's core arguments (Hillier and Abrahams, 2013).

Whilst there is little consensus about *the* Deleuze's ontology is, there is some broad agreement that Deleuze's approach to the real is not limited to the actual world we see around us (DeLanda, 2002; Hillier and Abrahams; 2013). DeLanda captures this in his description of an ontology formed from an actual realm, a virtual realm and the intense processes of actualisation (becomings) (DeLanda, 2002). Whilst they differ in their stance, Halsey and Hillier both explore and (re)create concepts across these realms, such as the *assemblage*, *machines*, *becomings*, *plane of immanence* etc. As such, both studies provide us with strong and thorough attempts to make Deleuze's philosophy useful to their respective fields.

*Representative:* Thirdly, these two studies belong to two different fields of knowledge. Mark Halsey is an ecological geographer and criminologist, and Jean Hillier is a planning theorist and strategic planner. Both studies and their unique reading and (re) creation of Deleuze's philosophy have gained support within their respective field and within broader, Deleuzian scholarship.

### *Structure of the paper*

In the following I will explore and analyse these two studies in turn. I will show how Deleuze's concepts are translated and re-created to meet the unique demands of engagement in their respective fields of interest. I will attempt to capture the resulting theoretical frameworks in tabular form and use this to identify and discuss benefits and gaps in each. In the final section of this paper I will ask whether an 'encounter' between these two studies might produce new directions: an 'outline of a becoming' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002: 2) that does not belong to either of them, but 'works between the two' (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002: 13).

## 2 Halsey's Deleuze-inspired voice: analysing and engaging in 'violence'

### *Introduction to Halsey*

Halsey's study focuses on the importance of policy concepts (naming) and their 'violent' effects on the geographical area of the Googengook forest in Southern Australia. For Halsey, Deleuze's philosophy can help us understand how non-material texts affect the material world and their *becomings*. Such an approach, he argues, may help criminologists intervene in complex situations.

Since its publication, Halsey's call for an alternative approach to environmental criminology has been met with broad support (Brisman, 2008). For Gibbs et al, Halsey's work should be seen as part of a 'framework (that) will ultimately advance knowledge and practice regarding environmental crimes and risks' (Gibbs et al, 2010: 17). For Gough, this framework should be directed towards efforts to correct the violence of 'naming nature', (Gough, 2008). Gough describes these corrective measures as ways of 'unnaming nature' pursued by exploring a new becoming: 'becoming pedagogical' (Gough, 2008).

Whilst Gough uses Halsey's Deleuze-inspired proposals as a starting point for further development, others have drawn on Halsey's study to reveal a broader shift in ecological thinking. Fancy argues that Halsey's study demonstrates the benefits offered by a Deleuzian understanding of ecology (Fancy, 2011). This approach, he notes, draws on a line of thinking running through Deleuze's work, related to geology and performance, which Fancy articulates as 'geoperformance' (Fancy, 2011).

### *Halsey's core concepts*

***Assemblages, naming machines and violence.*** As in Bonta and Protevi's 'geophilosophy', Halsey suggests that spaces such as the Goolengook forest can be understood as collections of assemblages, or what Bonta and Protevi termed, 'complex spaces' (Bonta and Protevi, 2004). However, rather than focusing on the operational demands of these assemblages, Halsey is mostly interested in the way they are affected by machines. Halsey argues that,

'..the formation of bodies [or assemblages] (a mineral body, a forest body, a recreational body) cannot be divorced from the enunciations (or process of naming) that brings them into being' (Halsey, 2006: 97).

This quote clearly shows Halsey's belief that the 'process of naming' sets out the conditions through which assemblages are created. Similar arguments can be seen in the work of other spatial theorists (see Robbins et al, 2010 for example). Throughout his study, Halsey describes these conditions as a kind of 'violence' because they determine how an assemblage selects what will and will not be made 'visible' or operational (Halsey, 2006).

For other Deleuzian theorists like Mark Bonta, Halsey's argument that assemblages are created through the violence of naming machines is problematic because it 'gives the false impression that, in the Deleuzian world, nothing is beyond or prior to the text' (Bonta, 2008: 576). This is not the case. Deleuze's study of geology with Felix Guattari, for example, presents a complex space formed from assemblages created in the absence of human language (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 44-82).

It seems, therefore, that Halsey's suggestion that assemblages are created through the 'processes of naming' is problematic. I propose, therefore, that Halsey's study should be re-qualified, such that the process of naming and the 'violence' it causes helps us understand the role humans play in forming a complex space.

**Analysis.** Halsey uses these two concepts, assemblage and machine, to explain how and why this environment changes over time. This can be seen in an example from his longitudinal study.

An important change in Halsey's study area begins with a letter written by the Division of Forest Management in 1972. This letter declares the subdivision of the Orbost Forest District into a series of 'Forest management blocks'. For Halsey, this letter initiates a number of *naming machines* such as 'forest block 21' and 'forest block 22'.

By dividing the land into numbered blocks, Halsey shows how these newly created machines ignored or/and removed topological features, the presence and interaction of different biological assemblages and the 'multiple histories' that has helped mould the land in different ways (Halsey, 2006: 159). Halsey also describes the way these blocks created the conditions for a new structure to emerge based on the activities and demands of the logging industry. By doing so, the land within any given forest block could be understood in reference to the operational demands of one, dominant assemblage.

Not only did these forest block machines limit which assemblages could operate in these spaces, they also created and affected other assemblages operating at different scales and in different

environments. Looking across the history of the Goolengook, we identify a number of such examples.

In 1986, we can see how the forest block machine conceived at the scale of the district is reproduced at a much larger scale. The Victorian Timber Industry Strategy divided the State of Victoria into 15 Forest Management Areas (FMA), each containing a number of Forest Management Blocks. These FMA's are discussed according to their ability to supply annual volumes of graded saw logs (Halsey, 2006: 172).

Four years later, the 1990 Forests (Timber Harvesting) Act extended this further by charting the total, sustainable volume of logs that could be supplied over a 15-year period. It also introduced a requirement for the relevant Minister to undertake a five-year review of sustainable yield calculations (Halsey, 2006: 181-182).

This example reveals a number of machines operating within a complex space. It shows how these machines led to the creation of other, complementary or conflicting machines and how they each affect the way different assemblages develop over time. For the most part, this analytical aspect of Halsey's study is successful. The problems with this framework arise when Halsey moves from analysis to engagement.

***From analyse to engagement: tolerable and intolerable violence.*** Halsey's proposals for engaging in complex spaces centre on the way we judge these 'naming machines'. Whilst he acknowledges the 'violence' caused by them, he believes that we should not think of this violence as inherently good or bad (Halsey, 2006: 92). Rather, we should judge machines by asking 'what becomings are either facilitated or cast aside in such scenarios?' (Halsey, 2006: 63). Machines that allow an assemblage to explore and develop a wide range of potentials would thus be judged positively, whilst machines that significantly limit these potentials would be judged negatively. This alternative way of judging environmental harm, or 'violence', avoids the use of essential ideals such as 'integrity and beauty', 'human nature' or 'environmental justice'.

To form these judgements, Halsey argues we must 'decide upon the thresholds at which a certain type of [lexical] violence will be permitted [or tolerated], rather than upon how to eradicate the violence of naming *per se*' (Halsey, 2006: 234). For Halsey, tolerable violence occurs when a machine creates conditions that allow assemblages to change in their own way and to pursue new relations with other entities and assemblages (active). Intolerable violence occurs when a machine

creates a set of conditions that determine how assemblages will develop (reactive). (Halsey, 2006: 247).

To illustrate how this distinction might form a basis for judgement, Halsey returns to the machine outlined above, the naming of the forest into forest blocks. For Halsey, this machine illustrates an instance of extreme or ‘monumental’ violence because it ‘strictly limits the velocities (directions) [the Googengook assemblage] can chart’ (Halsey, 2006: 234).

However, whilst this example is useful, it represents an extreme case. Halsey does not discuss other, less significant acts of violence. Yet, such cases are necessary if we are to understand where and how to locate the threshold between tolerable and intolerable violence in this or any other complex space.

This leads me onto, what I believe to be, the principle gap in Halsey’s theoretical framework. As noted above, Halsey argues that a naming machine cannot be judged as inherently good or bad, but must be judged according to the becomings (potentials) it encourages or blocks. However, this principle is not developed further and we are left with two other problems.

The first of which concerns the identification of becomings. After all, Halsey suggests that we judge becomings, or potentials, that have been actualised, those that still might be actualised, and those that were blocked or removed. Whilst we might be able to trace the former in the assemblages we see around us (in the actual), the same cannot be said for the others. Halsey offers little indication as to how we should identify these ‘pre-actual’ becomings.

The second problem concerns assessment. Once identified, Halsey provides us with little indication as to whether we should assess becomings on quantitative or qualitative grounds. If we pursue the former, then a machine would be judged as positive if it encourages more becomings than it blocks. However, this may lead us to questionable conclusions. We can imagine a scenario in which a machine that encourages many racist, sexist and socially repressive becomings is judged in the same way as a machine that encourage many sustainable, egalitarian and socially cohesive becomings.

If we resolve this dilemma by pursuing a qualitative assessment, then we would judge a machine according to the desirability of the becomings it encourages or blocks. However, the problem here



is that we must then decide what is or is not deemed to be desirable, thus returning us to the problem of judgement.

I believe that this problem is owing to the way Halsey (re)creates Deleuze's concepts to form his own theoretical framework. To illustrate my argument, I would like to start by capturing Halsey's framework in tabular form below (Table 1):

Table 1: Mark Halsey's theoretical framework (Halsey, 2006)

Deleuzian concepts	Halsey's concepts
<b>Assemblage:</b> A combination of human and non-human entities.	
<b>Machine:</b> A machine is a collection of forces acting on a number of assemblages. This leads them to structure and re-structure themselves in very particular ways	<b>Naming machine:</b> A naming machine determines how assemblages operate, whether it will develop into the future, and whether other assemblages will be created.
	<b>Violence:</b> Violence is the effects naming machines have on assemblages.
<b>Becomings:</b> Becomings are the potentials for an assemblage to develop in different ways.	<b>In/tolerable violence:</b> Tolerable violence occurs when a machine allows the assemblage to pursue a wide range of becomings. Intolerable violence occurs when a machine significantly reduces those becomings.
<b>Becoming (blocks):</b> The Goolengook assemblage can be understood according to blocks of becoming.	

The left-hand-side column lists four of Deleuze's key, ontological concepts and the way Halsey interprets these concepts to make them useful to his study. Running from top to bottom of the column, these concepts are positioned across the three ontological realms that form Deleuze's understanding of the real: the assemblages and the machine as part of the actual, and becomings / blocks of becomings as part of the virtual (or, more precisely, part of the processes of actualisation) (DeLanda, 2002).

The second column to the right-hand-side, identifies the concepts that Halsey creates to meet the specific demands of his project. As the table suggests, Halsey develops the concepts of the *machine* to form the concept of *naming machines* and uses this as the basis for developing the concepts of *violence* and *in/tolerable violence*.

Deleuze's concept of *becoming* is an important part of Halsey's approach to judgement. However, as the table shows Halsey does not (re)create this concept to meet the specific demands of his field. For me, this provides us with some explanation as to why Halsey's study is unable to identify and measure becomings, and thus establish a practical basis for judgement.

The problem, is that Halsey is thus limited to the way Deleuze's uses this concept in his seminal texts. And as in my critique of Halsey's framework, such texts offer very few clues as to how we should identify or measure *becomings*. One of the most developed examples can be seen in his review of Freud's diagnosis for Little Hans (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Deleuze, 2007). Deleuze argues that Freud psychological judgements focus too heavily on a pre-conceived set of ideas and explanations. In doing so, his analysis of Little Hans does not account for his becomings: becoming-animal, becoming horse (Deleuze, 2007: 98). Neither does he allow for the assemblages that Hans has created from these becomings (Deleuze, 2007: 98). However, Deleuze does not expand on this in detail leaving us with only a partial image of Hans' potentials 'to become' and no way to assess them. Given that Deleuze intends this as a philosophical critique, it is not surprising that Deleuze does not develop this concept to meet these demands. However, the same cannot be said of Halsey's study of the Goolengook.

If Halsey is to offer a new, practical tool that can be used to engage in complex spaces, I believe that this gap must be resolved. Rather than using Deleuze's concept of becoming as it appears in his seminal texts, I argue that we must (re)create this concept in a way that allows practitioners to identify and assess the becomings that are encouraged or blocked by naming machines.

### **3 Hillier: a multiplanar theory for engagement**

#### ***Introduction to Hillier's work***

Like Halsey, Hillier is interested in how we can intervene within the complex and uncertain world we see around us. Rather than focusing on one geographical area, Hillier is interested in making Deleuze's philosophy useful to the way spatial planners make strategic and local plans for the future. To do this, Hillier believes planners must understand and create the conditions from which possible plans might emerge.

Hillier's study also shows a detailed a thorough understanding of Deleuze's ontological concepts (Hillier, 2007). These interpretations have attracted the attention of the broader Deleuzian

community. In 2012, for example, Hillier was invited to present these interpretations alongside other recognised Deleuzian scholars in the International Deleuze Studies Conference.

This interest has not been limited to the advancement of Deleuzian scholarship. Indeed, Hillier's Deleuze-inspired approach has been used to discuss broader shifts in planning. For Porter and Davoudi, Hillier's proposals are part of a small academic community looking outside traditional planning theory to 'develop more relational, fluid, and interpretive approaches to planning' (Porter and Davoudi, 2012: 331). Whilst for Searle and Bunker, Hillier's multiplanar theory is an important contribution to a developing 'Australian paradigm'. This paradigm is thought to bring together new theories and practices of strategic planning in metropolitan cities such as Sydney and Melbourne (Searle and Bunker, 2010). These approaches, they argue, share in common the idea that strategic plans must be created to allow for, but not predict, future changes and adaptations.

Since Hillier published her proposals for a 'multiplanar' theory in 2007, several attempts have been made to develop and 'test' these ideas in strategic planning practice. Nyseth et al's study of Tromsø in Norway provides us with the most developed attempt to date (Nyseth et al, 2009). In this study, the research team compared the approaches to strategic planning in practice with those offered in Hillier's proposals. Their findings suggest that some of the Deleuze-inspired concepts used by Hillier, particularly those associated with becomings, could be identified in existing planning methods (Nyseth et al, 2009).

Whilst Woods does not draw on Hillier's work directly, his Deleuze-inspired study of strategic planning for Melbourne Docklands introduces a number of similar concepts. Like Hillier his study develops a distinction between immanent and transcendental planning methods, and like Hillier, he argues that planners should adapt their methods to favour the former over the latter (Woods, 2009).

### ***Hillier's core concepts***

Whilst Halsey's theoretical framework starts from, and is mostly focused on the actual, Hillier develops her multiplanar theory around a number of concepts within Deleuze's virtual realm (DeLanda, 2002). This is not entirely unsurprising given that the role of planning is to create plans based on 'what might be', rather than what has already become.

***Plan(e)s.*** Hillier develops her theory around Deleuze's concept of *the plane* and how this concept might be useful to spatial planning. To do this, Hillier looks to the explanations offered by the

Deleuzian scholar, Brian Massumi. In his translation notes for *A Thousand Plateaus*, Massumi explains that the French term '*plan*' designates both a "plane" in the geometrical sense and a "plan" (Massumi, 2004: xvii-xviii). Whilst Deleuze and Guattari primarily use *plan* to mean "plane", there are times when both meanings are intended, such as during their discussion on the plane of transcendence<sup>1</sup>. In such instances Massumi makes this distinction by using the term, 'plan(e)'.

Rather than using the dual meaning for only one kind of plane, Hillier extends this to include both planes. Thus, for Hillier the plan(e) of immanence and the plan(e) of transcendence can be seen as geometric planes in a theoretical framework, and as plans more specifically (Hillier, 2007: 242).

***Plan(e) of immanence: a figure of the plane / strategic plan.*** By drawing on this dual meaning, Hillier begins to forge links between philosophical planes and spatial plans. To do this, Hillier must interpret and adapt some of Deleuze's explanations.

Hillier introduces Deleuze's concept of the plane of immanence as a 'virtual realm of potentials' (Hillier, 2007: 244). Because it is virtual, Hillier argues, it will always remain 'inaccessible to actants such as spatial planners' (Hillier, 2007: 246). However, this should '...not stop us 'figuring it, or constructing images of it'' (Hillier, 2007: 246, Massumi, 1998). Rather than focusing on the virtual plane, Hillier focuses her attention on this 'figure'.

This position is supported by Bonta and Protevi's proposals for a 'geophilosophy' (Bonta and Protevi, 2004). Bonta and Protevi also form a distinction between two planes of immanence. They describe the first as a '(relative) plane' and the second as 'THE virtual plane' (Bonta and Protevi, 2004). Like Hillier, they distinguish these according to our ability to construct and understand them:

'...in general humans have the capacity to transform and re-smooth their landscapes by transmuting their spaces, drawing new 'planes of consistency' (immanence) for them...'  
(Bonta and Protevi, 2004: 173).

Whilst they are set in very different contexts and use different terms, this comment seems to offer some support to the links Hillier draws between a figure of the plane of immanence and a strategic plan (Hillier, 2007: 249).

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<sup>1</sup> Or 'plane of organisation', which is taken to be approximately synonymous (Hillier, 2007: 242; Delanda, 2002)

***Becomings and speculative potentials.*** Hillier develops this figure of the plane of immanence (strategic plan) by focusing her attention on the becomings that forms it. A plan(e) of immanence, she notes, is as a, ‘transvaluative, collective speculation about what might be’ (Hillier, 2007: 243). In this, Hillier confirms Deleuze and Guattari’s point that the plane of immanence is made up of potentials. In other words, it is formed from potentials *to become* something/s rather than a collection of things that have already been actualised *into* something (entities).

This description is made all the more interesting by the two terms she adds to this definition: ‘collective speculation’ and the ‘transvaluative’. For Hillier, a figure of the plane is formed from a set of potentials imagined by a group of ‘actants’ working together (Hillier, 2007). These actants may include local residents, planning consultants, master-planners, architects, builders and policymakers.

Hillier’s phrase also suggests *how* these people might construct this figure. By referring to ‘transvaluative’ potentials, Hillier distinguishes this figuring from other forms of brainstorming or collaborative work. This term implies that the group of actants must imagine potentials without relating them to existing or assumed principles. Instead, they should make their judgements according to ‘the forces that intersect it and the things it can do’ (Hillier, 2007: 243; Kauffman, 1998; Hillier, 2011). Building on Kauffman’s description, Hillier, describes these forces as the relationships between potentials and the way these potentials might transform established relationships (Hillier, 2011: 508)

***Empty signifiers.*** However, this raises an important point concerning *how* we should speculate, or what we should speculate about. In her final description for the figure of the plane of immanence, Hillier states that,

‘Several (or perhaps one collectively preferred) trajectories or ‘visions’ of the long-term future, including concepts towards which actants desire to move such as sustainability (plan(e)s of consistency or immanence)’

(Hillier, 2007: 249)

For Hillier, these empty signifier concepts provide us with a focus point for ‘speculating becomings’. Thus, actants would consider the entities that surround them and consider what potential these entities have to become ‘sustainable’, or ‘more socially cohesive’ etc.

Hillier's proposal to include concepts like 'sustainability' into her theory is drawn from her work with Michael Gunder and their Lacanian / Zizekian analysis of spatial planning (Gunder and Hillier, 2004; 2007; 2009). In their most recent publication they identify ten concepts seen across planning theories and practices that have,

'...given up explicit, concise, significance to secure multifarious points of view, chains of significations constituting conflicting narratives, or unique interpretations pertaining to particular situations, all under one common label'

(Gunder and Hillier, 2009: 17)

Such open-ended concepts are described using the Lacanian term, 'master (or empty) signifier'. As in Lacan's analysis of the individual, Gunder and Hillier argue that planning theories and practices are formed from a combination of terms used to construct an identity. Thus, a spatial policy document, for example, may draw on concepts like 'sustainability', 'certainty', 'growth' and 'globalisation' to help identify what the policy is and how it relates to other policies and debates in the field. Yet, the meaning of these concepts and the relationships between concepts are never explicit. They are always open to different interpretations or points of view. Drawing on Laclau, Gunder and Hillier refer to these concepts as 'empty' or 'floating' concepts (Laclau, 1996; 2003; 2005).

Whilst Hillier does not make the connection, this role played by 'empty signifiers' is not unlike the role played by universal singularities within Deleuze's seminal texts (DeLanda, 2002). Like empty signifiers, universal singularities provide a direction, for becomings as they develop from the virtual towards the actual, or, in Hillier's framework, as they move from the plane of immanence to the figure of the plane of immanence and towards the actual (DeLanda, 2002: 14).

***Emergence: the un-speculated potentials.*** Deleuze describes the plane of immanence as a 'transcendental field' (Deleuze, 2001: 25): a virtual realm *beyond* our sensory observations (hence 'transcendental empiricism' Bryant, 2008). Thus, whilst we may be able to overcome some of these limitations by speculating potentials for the future, Hillier reminds us that the resulting figure is inevitably partial:

'(A plane of immanence) is a plane of foresight; of trajectory, of creative transformation, of what *might* be. Chance is important, however. We should not forget the potential for unforeseen lines of flight to emerge...' (Hillier, 2007: 245)

Hillier develops this idea of emergence through un-speculated potentials when she notes that ‘there is thus much scope for things to not turn out as planned; for something to emerge in the gap between plan and built form, between virtual and actual.’ (Hillier and Abrahams, 2013: 33). In doing so, Hillier warns us that we must see strategic plans as temporal; open to revision both at different periods in time and at different scales of plan-making (Hillier, 2011).

***Plan(e) of transcendence.*** Hillier does not offer speculated and un-speculated becomings as the only factors influencing the actualisation of assemblages. As a counterpoint to the plan(e) of immanence, Hillier suggests that these assemblages are also created in reference to the plan(e) of transcendence. As with the plan(e) of immanence, Hillier describes the plan(e) of transcendence as both a geometrical plane in an ontological framework and as a plan from the field of spatial planning. If a strategic plan is an example of the former, she argues, ‘local plans, design briefs (and) detailed plans are typical planes of (transcendence)’ (Hillier, 2007: 247). Unlike strategic plans, these plans relate specifically to the way we organise, define and construct space.

For Hillier such plans, act as ‘masterplans’ or ‘blueprints... with certain goals for development’ and they set the standards through which subsequent decisions are judged (Hillier, 2007: 247; Hillier and Abrahams, 2013). Thus, a local plan will set goals for how many homes will be constructed in a given part of a town. It will also set the standards on how these houses will be built in terms of heights, use of materials, relationships to context, number of car parking spaces per house etc. And it will use these to influence the design of location specific plans and projects such as a masterplan or a building plan.

As with Halsey’s theoretical framework I would like to capture Hillier’s theoretical framework in tabular form (Table 2). The left-hand-side column identifies the ontological concepts drawn from and interpreted by Hillier in her proposed framework. Looking down the column we can see that how many of Hillier’s concepts are created within the virtual realms of Deleuze’s ontology. The extent of which reflects Hillier’s underlying message to ‘stretch beyond the horizon’ or, in other words, stretch beyond the actual world we see around us.

Table 2: Jean Hillier's theoretical framework (Hillier, 2007)

<b>Deleuzian concepts</b>	<b>Hillier's concepts</b>
<b>Assemblage:</b> An assemblage is an actualised group of potentials.	
<b>Plane of transcendence:</b> A plane of transcendence is a collection of blueprints used to explain complex relations	<b>Plan(e) of transcendence:</b> The plan(e) of transcendence is a blueprint for a given area or an area of design.
<b>Becomings:</b> A becoming is a virtual potential: the potential for an entity to develop in the future	<b>Un/speculated potentials:</b> Speculated potentials are potentials that can be imagined. Un-speculated potentials are potentials that remain beyond our imagination.
<b>Becoming (blocks):</b> Blocks of becoming are a collection of virtual potentials directing the way assemblages develop (actualisation).	<b>Empty signifiers:</b> Empty signifiers have no inherent meaning. They provide direction to our speculations about what 'might be'.
<b>Plane of immanence:</b> A plane of immanence is a chain of multiplicities (virtual diagrams).	<b>Plan(e) of immanence:</b> The plan(e) of immanence is the combination of all speculated potentials directed towards a series of empty signifiers already given within the field.
	<b>The strategic plan:</b> A strategic plan is an example of a figure of the plane of immanence.

The right-hand-side column shows concepts created by Hillier. As in Halsey's theoretical framework we can see how Hillier interprets, expands and (re)creates Deleuze's concepts to meet the unique demands of her field. This table also highlights, what Hillier suggests, as three influences leading to the creation of a planned or designed assemblage:

1. The first group is offered the greatest attention and centres around the strategic plan (plan(e) of immanence), formed from speculated potentials directed towards empty signifiers (or universal singularities).
2. The second group is the un-speculated potentials that emerge over time, and as the design process moves us across different kinds of plan and stages in the actualisation of a city or building, from strategic plans to masterplans, building plans and the built environment.
3. And the third, is the plan(e) of transcendence that determines how space should be structured (striated) through blueprints for a specific geographical location or for a specific area of design (such as established layouts for WC's, houses or cul-de-sacs).

Thus, Hillier suggests that, as we move from the strategic plan to the masterplan, the building plan, the window jamb detail, a sketch in a wet site hut and the built assemblages we see in the world



around us, we must work with these three groups of influences: speculated potentials, un-specified potentials and blueprints.

However, this leaves us with a series of difficult and mostly unresolved questions:

1. How does the masterplanner or architect sat at their desk and drawing board take Hillier's strategic plan (formed from speculated potentials) and use it as a practical basis for their proposed designs: to direct the processes of actualisation?
2. How should they combine these speculated potentials with the un-specified potentials that arise during the process of plan-making?
3. How should they negotiate these influences with the influence of regulations and blueprints?

Hillier's multiplanar theory is mostly focused on the creation of a strategic plan, rather than questions of design and actualisation. Of course, this is not unsurprising given that Hillier's work is situated within the field of strategic planning rather than urban and building design. However, if we are to make Deleuze's ontology useful to plan-making practices more broadly, then I believe we must 'stretch' Hillier's multiplanar theory in both directions: 'beyond *and* towards the horizon'. Or, in other words, we must direct our speculations towards the virtual, but we must equally consider how these speculations might be actualised through the many decisions we make in different areas of plan-making practice. This, I believe, highlights a gap in Hillier's framework and a direction for further enquiry.

#### **4 An encounter**

My review of these Deleuze-inspired studies has outlined two theoretical framework based on, what we might term, an 'encounter' between Deleuze's philosophy and a specific field (Goolengook forest/criminology and spatial planning). It also reveals the gaps that are produced by these encounters: gaps that may offer directions for further enquiry and development. With this in mind I would like to consider the benefits gained by introducing new encounters, not only between Deleuze and a field, but between different theoretical frameworks. In doing so, I hope to provide some direction for subsequent theorists in planning or/and ecological geography / criminology to develop these frameworks so that they may provide us with new, practical tools for engagement. More broadly, I hope to highlight why Deleuze-inspired theorists from a range of disciplines should not only explore encounters between Deleuze and their respective fields, but should also explore encounters with other similarly minded theorists.

In *Dialogues II*, Deleuze discusses his collaboration with Felix Guattari as an encounter between two different lines of thinking (Deleuze and Parnet, 2002). He suggests that, by bringing these together, they were able to ‘outline a becoming’ that did not belong to either of them ‘but between the two’. So what becoming might be outlined in an encounter between Halsey and Hillier? Or Hillier and Halsey?

### *An encounter between Halsey and Hillier*

Above I noted that Halsey’s framework is limited because, unlike the machine concept, he does not (re)create Deleuze’s concept of becomings to meet the unique demands of his study. As a result, Halsey is unable to explain how we identify and measure becomings needed to form judgements about naming machines and thus a tool for engagement.

An encounter with Hillier’s theoretical framework may outline the basis for a new way to (re)create this ‘becoming’ concept. As I noted above, Hillier suggests that Deleuze’s becomings must be adapted and recreated to form two connected concepts: speculated potentials and empty signifiers. The former may offer Halsey a means to identify an assemblage’s becomings whilst the latter might offer Halsey a qualitative way of measure these becomings (Table 3).

Table 3: A theoretical framework as an encounter between Halsey and Hillier

Deleuzian concepts	Halsey’s concepts	Hillier’s concepts
<b>Assemblage:</b> A combination of human and non-human entities.		
<b>Machine:</b> A machine is a collection of forces acting on a number of assemblages. This leads them to structure and re-structure themselves in very particular ways	<b>Naming machine:</b> A naming machine determines how assemblages operate, whether it will develop into the future, and whether other assemblages will be created.	
	<b>Violence:</b> Violence is the effects naming machines have on assemblages.	
<b>Becomings:</b> A becoming is a virtual potential: the potential for an entity to develop in the future		<b>Speculated potentials:</b> Speculated potentials are potentials that can be imagined.
		<b>Empty signifiers:</b> Empty signifiers have no inherent meaning. They provide direction to our speculations about what ‘might be’.

	<p><b>In/tolerable violence:</b> Tolerable violence occurs when a machine allows the assemblage to pursue a wide range of becomings. Intolerable violence occurs when a machine significantly reduces those becomings.</p>	
<p><b>Becoming (blocks):</b> The Goolengook assemblage can be understood according to blocks of becoming.</p>		

Table 3 shows how Halsey’s theoretical framework, (see Table 1), might be expanded to accommodate some of the concepts introduced by Hillier’s study. This table shows how two of the concepts from Hillier’s framework, *speculated potentials* and *empty signifiers* help resolve the two issues identified above. By (re)creating the abstract concept of *becomings* to the more practical concept, *speculated potentials*, Hillier offers Halsey a method for identifying becomings. And by introducing the concept of the *empty signifier*, Hillier provides Halsey with a direction for speculating these potentials and a qualitative way to judge the becomings that are encouraged or blocked by a naming machine.

So how might this expanded framework help us outline a new tool for practice? Halsey’s proposal for judgement may start by figuring a plane of immanence: by identifying empty signifiers given in one geological area and using these to frame speculations about what might become of these assemblages in the future. Halsey could then ask how a naming machine blocks or encourages these becomings. To return to the example drawn from Halsey’s study of the Goolengook forest, we may find that the ‘forest block’ naming machine blocks most of the speculated potentials for assemblages X and Y to become *sustainable*, but it encourages many speculated potentials for these same assemblages to become *economically productive*. As such, this encounter between Halsey and Hillier may offer more nuanced judgements about naming machines and different forms of violence in a complex space. The result of which could be more nuanced forms of engaging in these different forms of violence.

### *An encounter between Hillier and Halsey*

In my review of Hillier I outlined three questions that were not clearly answered in Hillier’s theoretical framework. These three questions concerned: the ways we might direct the actualisation of speculated potentials, how we might best accommodate un-specified potentials as they arise, and how we should negotiate the influence of pre-conceived blueprints during the design process.

An encounter with Halsey's framework and his focus on naming machines in particular may offer us some direction for answering the first of these questions.

Whilst Hillier talks about strategic plans as clusters of speculated potentials, the process of speculation requires actors to give names to the assemblages they speculate about. Equally, the resulting figure, or strategic plan, must give names to the assemblages they speculate might *come into being*. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that a strategic plan must contain naming machines. An encounter with Halsey would suggest that these naming machines are responsible, at least in part, for the way assemblages are formed and re-formed over time. In other words, for Halsey, it seems that these machines direct the way a masterplanner or architect takes speculated potentials from a strategic plan into an urban or building plan (Table 4).

Table 4: A theoretical framework as an encounter between Hillier and Halsey

<b>Deleuzian concepts</b>	<b>Hillier's concepts</b>	<b>Halsey's concepts</b>
<b>Assemblage:</b> An assemblage is an actualised group of potentials.		
<b>Machine:</b> A machine is a collection of forces acting on a number of assemblages. This leads them to structure and re-structure themselves in very particular ways	<b>Drawing / material machine:</b> Drawing or material machines determines how assemblages operate, whether it will develop into the future, and whether other assemblages will be created.	<b>Naming machine:</b> A naming machine determines how assemblages operate, whether it will develop into the future, and whether other assemblages will be created.
		<b>Violence:</b> Violence is the effects naming machines have on assemblages.
		<b>In/tolerable violence:</b> Tolerable violence occurs when a machine allows the assemblage to pursue a wide range of becomings. Intolerable violence occurs when a machine significantly reduces those becomings.
<b>Plane of transcendence:</b> A plane of transcendence is a collection of blueprints used to explain complex relations	<b>Plan(e) of transcendence:</b> The plan(e) of transcendence is a blueprint for a given area or an area of design.	
<b>Becomings:</b> A becoming is a virtual potential: the potential for an entity to develop in the future	<b>Un/speculated potentials:</b> Speculated potentials are potentials that can be imagined. Un-speculated potentials are potentials that remain beyond our imagination.	
<b>Becoming (blocks):</b> Blocks of becoming are a collection of virtual potentials directing the way assemblages develop (actualisation).	<b>Empty signifiers:</b> Empty signifiers have no inherent meaning. They provide direction to our speculations about what 'might be'.	
<b>Plane of immanence:</b> A plane of immanence is a chain of multiplicities (virtual diagrams).	<b>Plan(e) of immanence:</b> The plan(e) of immanence is the combination of all speculated potentials directed towards a series of empty signifiers already given within the field.	

	<p><b>The strategic plan:</b> A strategic plan is an example of a figure of the plane of immanence.</p>	
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If this is the case then we can judge these naming machines and what violent effects they have on subsequent areas of design. Or, in other words, which speculated potentials do naming machines encourage and which do they block. The results of this judgement would then allow planners to revise, emphasise or replace the naming machines used in strategic or place-specific plans.

So how might this expanded framework help us outline a new tool for practice? One way to achieve this would be to study the proposed urban or building plan and ask ourselves a series of questions: what *might become* of a complex space if the plan were to be actualised? How does this differ from the speculated potentials forming the strategic plan? Which naming machines might be responsible for these differences? And therefore, which becomings are encouraged or blocked by these naming machines as we move from strategic plan to urban or building plan? We may then use this judgement to direct our subsequent actions. In this case, it may be through introducing new naming machines into the strategic plan or, equally, by revising or reinforcing the naming machines already introduced into the strategic plan.

This same iterative process could apply to other, finer scales of plan-making ie as we move from urban masterplan to building plan, or building plan to specific details. To do this, we may expand Halsey's definition of the machine to accommodate Bonta's arguments that assemblages are also created in the absence of language. Rather than focusing on the violent effects of naming machines, we might do this by also considering the violent effects on non-textual machines such as *drawing machines*. In each instance, we might ask ourselves what speculated potentials are blocked or encouraged by this machine and use this to introduce new drawings, or to revise or reinforce existing drawing.

## 5 Conclusion: where next?

In this paper I have outlined and analysed two Deleuze-inspired theoretical frameworks created to help practitioners in their respective spatial disciplines engage in complex spaces. I have captured these theoretical frameworks in tabular form and used these tables to help identify a number of

gaps. Such gaps, I have argued, may prevent these frameworks from developing from outline tools to tools used in practice.

In Halsey's study of textual violence I noted Halsey's argument that naming machines should not be judged as good or bad, but, rather, they should be judged according to the becomings they encourage or block. This, I suggested, raises two unanswered questions: How do we identify becomings? And how do we assess the becomings we identify? In Hillier's study, I outlined Hillier's theoretical proposal for new ways of strategic planning. However, after analysing the theoretical framework I outlined three unanswered questions: How do we direct the actualisation of speculated potentials? How might we best accommodate un-specified potentials as they arise? How should we negotiate the influence of pre-conceived blueprints during the design process?

In the third section of this paper I have shown how 'an encounter' between these two studies might provide some answers to these questions, and some direction for developing these tools further. This highlights two important points and two proposals for future research:

Firstly, this study suggests that it is not sufficient for theorists interested in engaging in complex spaces to simply interpret Deleuze's concepts to suit their unique field. As my review of Halsey showed, doing so limits theorists to the way Deleuze uses these concepts. To overcome this, Deleuze-inspired theorists must be prepared to (re)create these concepts to make them useful to their particular line of enquiry.

Secondly, given that many of Deleuze concepts are not created in ways that facilitate engagement, theorists should not limit themselves to encounters with Deleuze alone. Rather they should also encounter other Deleuze-inspired theorists who share similar intentions. For me, this captures Deleuze's approach to pragmatism: a pragmatism seen in his encounter with biology, differential geometry, psychiatry, linguistics and art, but also through encounters between his conceptual framework, and those of Hume, Nietzsche, Bergson, Spinoza, Leibniz, Foucault and Bacon.

With this in mind, I would like to suggest two lines of development for future research:

1. Firstly, that future research in these two respective fields develop the two expanded frameworks above in greater detail, identifying other gaps and drawing on new encounters with other Deleuze-inspired theorists.

2. Secondly, and more broadly, I would also like to suggest that Deleuze-inspired theorists interested in engaging in complex spaces should come together to form a community where their respective frameworks can be summarised, discussed and exchanged. The resulting ‘toolbox’ or re-created concepts could offer the means to form new tools suitable for practice

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