I, Alan Alaniz, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

It is entitled:
Machining the American West

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This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.
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Machining the American West

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Committee Chair: Aarati Kanekar, Ph.D.
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Abstract
Interpreting architecture through a machinic lens reveals its capacity for opening new frames of reference from our existing environment – constructing conceptions of place, culture and identity out of empty space. Within this framework, architecture ceases to simply be a product of actions and desires but instead is regarded as an active contributor to our understanding of our surroundings and ultimately ourselves. The architectural and mechanical elements presented in this thesis, set forth new forms of engagement between disparate bodies and ideas. Through this process, entire histories are disassembled and reassembled, to reveal their inner workings and construct new assemblages of thought and space. This thesis utilizes Lévi-Strauss’ bricolage concepts alongside Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage theory to create a unified methodological lens, capable of evaluating and constructing our prior understanding of history and our relationships to it. Ultimately, these frameworks expand to create a comprehensive concept effective in the use of architectural design. This project addresses the American West as both site and idea. Employing a design process imbued with the methodology of bricolage reveals the engrained heterogeneous composition of a space steeped in national myth, but continually in flux. In order to explicate the multidimensionality of the West this project utilizes the design of three individual, autonomous machines and a central “hive” structure, which functions as a depository for the information collected by these creations. Methodologically, these machines and architecture are designed through a process of bricolage, but more specifically kitbashing, which is a practice whereby commercial model components are altered and combined to create new formations, disassociated from their original intent. This process highlights the potential for designing with “whatever is at hand,” and making do the available material or instruments. The architecture presented in this thesis mirrors the combinatory nature of the American West through a process of enframing bricolaged histories through the lens bricolaged machines. By interpreting architecture through this framework, this thesis begins to approach works based on their inter-relational properties and their potential for bridging new connections between bodies, things, the spaces they inhabit, and the social organizations that order them.
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Introduction

Interpreting architecture through a machinic lens reveals its capacity for opening new frames of reference from our existing environment—constructing conceptions of place, culture, and identity out of empty space. Within this framework, architecture ceases to simply be a product of actions and desires but instead is regarded as an active contributor to our understanding of our surroundings and ultimately ourselves. The architectural and mechanical elements presented in this thesis, set forth new forms of engagement between disparate bodies and ideas. Through this process, entire histories are disassembled and reassembled, to reveal their inner workings and construct new assemblages of thought and space. The starting point of this process is the fundamental understanding that our socio-cultural environment is the product of a network of forces and desires of individual, heterogeneous elements, human and non-human, as well as material and immaterial in nature. These multiple forces continually push, pull, and reshape our lived world across time, postulating the potential for one space to accommodate multiple places.

This thesis utilizes Lévi-Strauss’ bricolage concepts alongside Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage theory to create a unified methodological lens, capable of evaluating and constructing our prior understanding of history and our relationships to it. Ultimately, these frameworks expand to create a comprehensive concept effective in the use of architectural design.

This project addresses the American West as both site and idea. Employing a design process imbued with the methodology of bricolage reveals the engrained heterogeneous composition of a space steeped in national myth, but continually in flux. This dynamism inherent in the American West is expanded upon in the chapter entitled, Westness, which analyzes the region through four distinct vignettes: Myth and History of the West, Griddedness of the West, Transience of the West, and Palimpsests of the West. These vignettes engage with one another to tell the multidimensional story of a region whose histories are the result of the constant struggle between various forms of “control” and “chaos.”

In order to explicate the multidimensionality of the West this project utilizes the design of three individual, autonomous machines and a central “hive” structure, which functions as a depository for the information collected by these creations. Methodologically, these machines and architecture are designed through a process of bricolage, but more specifically kitbashing, which is a practice whereby commercial model components are altered and combined to create new formations, disassociated from their original intent. This process highlights the potential for designing with “whatever is at hand,” and making do with the available material or instruments. These creations will function as the archival apparatus of the “Western” experience, tasked with the continual updating, reconstruction, and redistribution of ideas and understandings of a particularly recombinant region.

The architecture presented in this thesis mirrors the combinatory nature of the American West through a process of enframing bricolaged histories through the lens bricolaged machines. By interpreting architecture through this framework, this thesis begins to approach works based on their inter-relational properties and their potential for bridging new connections between bodies, things, the spaces they inhabit, and the social organizations that order them.
IMPORTANT!

PLEASE READ!

Hereinafter, between pages 10–45, the three main body threads of this book (Analytical Framework, Westness, and Precedent Analysis) will all inhabit the same page, simultaneously.

If so desired, you may read this book page by page, shifting between threads as you go along. However, to follow this book linearly you must read each box of text according to formatting and typeface.

Below is a sample of each thread style and the order to follow:

**ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

The framework of this thesis relies on the fundamental understanding that our socio-cultural...

**WESTNESS**

For the past half-century, the exploits of fur trapping pioneers and cattle rustling cowboys have fully saturated our literary and visual...

**PRECEDENT ANALYSIS**

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INTRODUCTION OF FRAMEWORK

The framework of this thesis relies on the fundamental understanding that our socio-cultural environment is the product of a network of forces and desires of individual, heterogeneous elements, human and non-human, as well as material and immaterial in nature. These networks and flows of interconnectivity make up what Deleuze and Guattari termed assemblages, or agencements. The form of assemblages can vary from everyday, mundane objects to complex systems of governance or thought, which become dynamically altered through...

MYTH & HISTORY OF THE WEST

For the past half-century, the exploits of fur trapping pioneers and cattle rustling cowboys have fully saturated our literary and visual cultures, articulating a distinct and seemingly tangible interpretation of “Westness,” primed for easy export and even easier digestion. Although, these individuals may have been...

ARCHITECTURE AS MACHINE

Architecture’s modern engagement with the machine can be traced back to the 1924 publication of *Vers Une Architecture*, in which Le Corbusier first discussed the concept of societal modernity and architecture’s need to adapt to this established social order. In this work, he places the architect squarely into the discourse at the center of utilitarian and functionalist forces, embodied by the works of engineers and market...
their utilization. As these utilizations shift to conform to the required task at hand, the assemblages undergo, a process of territorialization, whereby exterior forces expropriate or appropriate their prior configuration, re-envisioning and re-enmeshing them to other bodies and/or forms of assemblage. 1 Deleuze and Guattari detailed these relationships in their seminal 1987 work, A Thousand Plateaus:

1

The practice of distilling and crafting a cohesive and unidimensional narrative, out of a complex array of experiences, dates back to the eighteenth-century European settlement of eastern North America. As asserted by Richard Slotkin, “The poets of the early years of the republic… attempted to fabricate an “American epic”… the beginning of a national mythology, providing a context for all works to come after…. put together on the ground, like the governments of frontier communities or the national Constitution…” Though the desire for a uniquely American origin story dates back to the pre-republican era, the culture would not find its fount of inspiration till the Jacksonian period. It is during this time, that the American Frontier experience became fully mythologized and consecrated. 1

With the canonization of nineteenth century frontiersmen, such as Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, the American mythos finds its heroes to accompany its antagonist (for this role the wilderness and Native American become interchangeable) and its grand stage, America’s forces. In elevating the products of industrialization to a position of admiration, Le Corbusier distills the ethics of the time to those of utility and economics. By the year of Vers Une Architecture’s publication, the Machine Age had reached its apex, instilling commercialized ideals and values of production across multiple aspects of everyday life.

In perceiving and understanding our surrounding world, the adoption and subsequent institutionalization of constructs of resource and production resulted in what Robert McCarter called “technological thinking.” McCarter asserts, “…technological thinking was in fact increasingly dominant in the definition of the modern world—and in the definition of architecture as it was to exist in that world.” By juxtaposing architecture to a technologized backdrop of automobiles, cruise liners, and grain silos, Le Corbusier forced us to ask the question, “How does architecture relate to a world determined by technological thinking and reflect on society’s relationship to its technologies?”

This question remains paramount to architects today, and is a key influence on the work and writing of Wes Jones and his practice. Referencing the writing of Martin Heidegger, Jones considers the relationship between human, nature, and the built environment to be the point of departure for his work.

[Jones Partners Architecture] understands a world with three principal constituents: humans, nature, and the objects humans make that they place there in the world between them and
nature. All that stuff—all the possible products of intentionality, everything made, thought, performed—is called machines, or more generally “technology.” The world as humans experience it is given to them by technology.

Whenever a territorial assemblage is taken up by a movement that deterritorializes it (whether under so-called natural or artificial conditions), we say that a machine is released. That in fact is the distinction we would like to propose between machine and assemblage: a machine is like a set of cutting edges that insert themselves into the assemblage undergoing deterritorialization, and draw variations and mutations of it… Effects of this kind can be very diverse but are never symbolic or imaginary; they always have a real value of passage or relay.

Wes Jones’ characterization of this relationship provides insight into one of his practices most western expanses. The exploits of frontiersmen and bands of pioneering families pitted American “civility” against the “savagery” of the land and its native inhabitants. Combined with the promise of wealth and compliant government legislation Eastern Americans were propelled through the Cumberland Gap, spilling out onto the Ohio Valley, the Great Plains, towards California’s coast. The retelling of these experiences have now become the concrete history of the frontier.
influential projects, the Astronauts Memorial, and how it engages with the greater context of history, memorialization of technological achievements and the human connections needed to realize them.

Removed from the sites of genuine space exploration and engineering, the Astronauts Memorial is located within NASA’s Kennedy Space Center Visitor’s Complex. The complex functions as the engaging, welcoming face of the space program, showcasing Disney-esque promenades and displays directly adjacent to the monumental husks of formerly functional space rockets and shuttles. The Memorial is nestled within a picturesque landscape north of the Visitor’s Complex, creating a sense of proto-subjectivity between the affective object and the beings that engage with it. This thesis benefits from this expanded definition, as the architectural and mechanical elements presented, function to present new forms of engagement between disparate bodies and ideas. Through this process, entire histories, cultures, and identities are disassembled and reassembled, to reveal their inner workings and construct new formations.

Machines in this sense not only has been interpreted as technological objects, but also has been expanded to include any element capable of producing a relationship of alterity — creating a sense of proto-subjectivity between the affective object and the beings that engage with it. This thesis benefits from this expanded definition, as the architectural and mechanical elements presented, function to present new forms of engagement between disparate bodies and ideas. Through this process, entire histories, cultures, and identities are disassembled and reassembled, to reveal their inner workings and construct new formations.

By 1890, the U.S. Census Bureau had published a bulletin stating that the frontier line as it was quantitatively known could no longer be ascertained, and thus no longer required inclusion in its reportage. At the time of its published, this event garnered little attention. However, to historian Frederick Jackson Turner this report served as monumental shift in how American’s came to view themselves and their experiences in the American West. Though Turner’s essay, The Significance of the Frontier to American History (1893) the West came to be seen as a crucible where “rainbows of men-Chinese, Indian chiefs, Africans, General Miles, younger sons, Austrian nobility, wide females in pink” were unified into a cohesive American whole. These sentiments came to be understood as The Frontier Thesis, which provided a succinct meta-narrative for the creation and establishment of America’s national identity.

As novelist Owen Wister wrote, “Our continent drained prismatically through Omaha once.” In this telling of history, the diversity of the Western experience, the intermixing, jostling, and diasporic movement reached its point of homeostasis around the turn of the twentieth century, allowing for the chapter to be closed and historicized. These efforts to close the frontier and crystallize its events, demarcating its beginning...
of these structures, detached from the pride and grandeur of America’s space exploration. Once situated in this landscape, visitors proceed up a 125 ft. ramp to the memorial’s podium. Here a 62 ft. high polished granite monolith reflects back the moving sky above, punctuated by the shining names of 21 test pilots and end, serve to exclude whole swaths of individuals and narratives from the collective imagining of history, myth, and ultimately culture. By offering an interpretation where the West acted as a prism “back then,” we become complicit in the active exclusion of populations, who are still engaged in the dynamic construction of today’s Western experience.

**ASSEMBLAGE THINKING**

Since its adoption by Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage evolved into a complete social theory, capable of interrogating the complex relationships that form our material and immaterial spheres. As interpreted by architectural critic, Kim Dovey, assemblage is defined
astronauts who lost their lives in the development and implementation of the United States’ space program. In its original conception, the memorial’s granite wall was meant to track and tilt to the southern sun, intensifying its sunlight through rear-mounted mirrors to illuminate the names of the fallen astronauts. Jones stated that the aim of the memorial was to reflect upon the efforts of these astronauts and the capabilities of a human/technological mega-machine:

To frame nature does not mean to capture it, point at it, to represent it, or even to symbolize some aspect of it; to frame it is to gather it into an engaging relationship with the observer, “to tease it into unhiddenness,” so that nature reveals its own story in a way that captures or points back at the observer. A framed portion of the sky, and the efforts expended to “gather” it mirrors the efforts of those astronauts who gave their lives to understand it. Here technology is not only the means of revealing but an integral part of the equation revealed—an equation which places man into nature. Technology holds the mirror in which we can see this relationship.³

GRIDDEDNESS OF THE WEST

The grid permeates across the Western landscape, acting as both a tool of conquest as well as a substrate of entropy. As William L. Fox writes, “The grid exercises authority over space by applying a ruler to it in all senses of the word. It stretches out a straight edge across unenclosed space and automatically extends a map to the romantic horizon.” With the 1785 Land Ordinance the “infinite” expanses of the American West were carved into neat 330 foot squares to be sold to and settled by Eastern Americans. Armed with railroads, telegraph wires, and Conestoga wagons, settlers invaded the landscape tasked with building a nation. Through this movement, Americans encountered virgin landscapes, each with new bounty to offer. Forests became timber; prairie became farmland; animals became meat.

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as, “a whole that is formed from the interconnectivity and flows between constituent parts – a socio-spatial cluster of interconnections wherein the identities and functions of both parts and wholes emerge from the flows between them.” In spatial terms, assemblage theory allows us to question the relationships that construct our understanding of our surrounding context and how we interact within it.

Whether it is within a site, historical, or socio-political context, assemblage thinking allows us to generate new relationships through the processes of design. Within the plane of architectural discourse, the methods proposed by assemblage thinking allow us to tease apart the relations of our (built/natural/cultural) environment, allowing us to interrogate
In this work, Jones grounds the technological achievement of space exploration to the individuals who devoted their lives in search of a means to realize it. In shifting the focus of space exploration from a technological lens to an anthropocentric lens, Jones humanizes the endeavor, compelling visitors to the memorial to engage with the status quo while simultaneously providing insight on what features to reject or reincorporate.

Here the architectural machine acts as “cutting edge” while simultaneously acting as joinery. In terms of this thesis and the “Western” themes it dwells upon, deterritorializing and reterritorializing aspects

Although, Thomas Jefferson’s 1785 Ordinance propagated the concept of the grid as a mechanism of containment and possession of nature, the grid itself can also be understood in Deleuzian terms as “frame” which acts as the external envelope of a series of sections... that join up by carrying out counterpoints.
of lines and colors... But the pictures is also traversed by a deframing power that opens it up onto a plane of composition or an infinite field of forces... diverse... irregular forms, sides that do not meet... all of which give the picture the power to leave the canvas."

Rather than defining the West as a series of neat squares on which American’s “constructed” America, Deleuze and Guattari offer an interpretation of the grid in which both internal and external forces continually push and pull at their extents, “opening, mixing, dismantling, and reassembling” themselves and their territories.

The perpetual struggle between “civilizing” and “calamitous” forces is a defining characteristic of Western mythology, seen throughout tropes such as the Cowboy vs. Indian, the practice of horse breaking a wild bronco, or the transformation of wild prairie into farmland. With this interpretation, the Western grid’s checkerboard geometries become emblematic of a distinctly American desire to order space into a discernible, digestible parcels to be commoditized and industrialized, and Nature’s aggressive fight to combat this process.

The grid’s duality of boundedness/unboundedness is also echoed in Rem Koolhaas’, Delirious New York, in which he illustrates the interplay between order and chaos found in New York’s city grid, which “defines a new balance between control and de-control in which the city can be at the same time... of the frontier myth, the concept of grid or its counteracting transience, provides a platform on which to build new narratives, encompassing the dynamism and complexity of a particular space.

A key component in understanding how assemblage theory functions, are the multi-scalar capabilities of the concept; as objects as finite and material as a coffee mug or as abstract...
Wes Jones’ Astronauts Memorial functioning as a mirroring device becomes one of the primary precedents for my own conception of the architectural machine and its role in how we interpret our surrounding world and histories. In his work, Jones imbues his architecture, and by and by as a democratic government can both be interpreted as assemblages in and of themselves, they are also connected to other, perhaps larger adjacent assemblages.

Quoting Manuel Delanda, Dovey notes, assemblages are “wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts.” Assemblages are not simply objects or a collection of objects, but the joinery used to connect

In the American West, the schizophrenia of the grid is amplified as “wide open spaces” seem to welcome the introduction of a cosmic order only to have this order disrupted and torn apart the dynamism of its inhabitants. In this sense, as the grid acts as a tool of deterritorialization/reterritorialization, it creates the catalyst for its own undermining, both in spatial as well as metaphorical terms.
large all technology, with the capability of expanding humanity’s worldview, illuminating a world that is potentially invisible to the ourselves and world around us, what understandings of histories, cultures and even personal identities may be machinically expanded?

constituent parts in a particular fashion. Deleuze and Guattari describe the assemblage as having a fourfold, or tetravalent, structure, from which a horizontal and vertical axis outline the formation of the assemblage. On the horizontal axis, the assemblage incorporates aspects of physicality and materiality (machinic assemblages, bodies and actions) as well as expression of ideas (assemblages of enunciation, acts and statements). This horizontal axis constitutes connections between physical entities as well as expressions of meaning through language or symbol, described by Dovey as “form versus content”. In the vertical axis, the assemblage comprises the movements between reterritorialization and deterritorialization, shifting the assigned boundaries and qualities of the assemblage. This axis, deals with appropriation and expropriation of these assemblages through methods of inscription/erasure/reinscription.

TRANSIENCE OF THE WEST

“Go West young man, and grow up with the country.” This counsel from an 1851 Indiana newspaperman came to define a primary tenet of the American West - the compulsion for itinerant movement across America’s landscapes in search of some form of fixity. At the time of its publishing, the advisement reflected the American doctrine of Manifest Destiny, which posited that by a divine providence the American people would stretch their empire from Atlantic to Pacific shores, and build a nation in the process. Throughout the 19th century, as each year passed, outposts blossomed into cities, farmland would overtake woodland and prairie, and the American frontier line would push further west. The mobile anxiety of the frontier later impregnated itself into the American cultural memory through images of “pioneer spirit” and Texas cattle drives, but more importantly with the idea that the West could be known (and consequently contained and tamed) by simply going over the next hill, driving to the next town, or traversing the next mountain range.

The Sisyphean task of settlement in the West (both physically and ideologically) resulted in a culture of constant flux that would later leave indelible impressions on the malleable history of the landscape as well as the multiple peoples and civilizations which were encountered. Through the phenomenon of mobility, the West has been transformed into a site of dialogic exchange and intersectional histories. The diasporic nature of this creates a sense of history that is distinctly “restless, [and] recombinant,” acting more as a construction of dynamic and fluid transactions and movements, than a singular, unidirectional relation to “soil, landscape, and rootedness.” Utilizing frameworks presented by Paul Gilroy, we can begin to see the West, as an unfinished project, continually reimagining its identities, communities, and boundaries.
The work of Peter Eisenman also engages with the works of Deleuze and Guattari, and in particular, Guattari’s *On Machines*. In his project, *Bibliotheque de L’Huel* in Geneva, Switzerland, Eisenman actively interpreted architecture through the framework of assemblage, this thesis begins to approach works based on their inter-relational properties and their potential for bridging new connections between bodies, things, the spaces they inhabit, and the social organizations that order.

In spatial terms, the American West can be demarcated by the Canadian and Mexican borders to its north and south and the Pacific Ocean and 100th meridian to its east and west; however, these geographic and territorial distinctions truly fail to encapsulate an idea of the West that has shaped transnational, cultural, and historical relationships for hundreds of years. These lands have been transformed both physically and metaphorically by the multitude of peoples.
employs his conception of Deleuze and Guattari’s machinic process, utilizing a system of diagrammatic overlays to influence formal characteristics of the building. Eisenman asserts, “the machinic process... begins with the idea that architecture does not necessarily either contain or legitimize an already given or embodied sign system.” This lack of legitimation allows the machinic architect to establish his own set of architectural tropes, through which the machinic process may be evaluated against. Specifically for the L’Huei project, Eisenman seeks to establish the trope of the architectural interstitial spacing, who have traversed these spaces in search of open land, furs, wealth, or simply home. This desire for fixity pushed (and still pushes) individuals across deserts, prairies, and cities resulting in a complex, multidimensional landscape capable of revealing an endless number of myths, realities, or something in between. Whether focusing on the experiences of American pioneers refashioning their lives on the open range, Native Americans coping with the introduction of a foreign people to their domain, or even the contemporary suburban family on vacation, an interpretation of the West as crossroads between desires, cultures, and perspectives enriches our understanding of the region into a dynamic, constantly evolving, fluid narrative.

them. Assemblage thinking allows for the analysis and reconfiguration of micro and macro entities simultaneously with the intention of understanding their dynamic nature and socio-spatial connections. Through the act of architectural design, we begin to interact with multiple scales of assemblages ranging from room, building, neighborhood, city, and nation, while simultaneously engaging assemblages of construction, representation, and capital. These visible and invisible forces have significant effects on the architecture that constitutes our built environment, but should never be taken as static or hierarchical. Instead, these forces should be seen as dynamic and flexible, and be continually interrogated, tested, and remolded. By understanding the flows and interconnectivity that make up the assemblages surrounding us, we become adept at determining and designing for the dynamic contexts of our built and natural environments.
with the intent of shifting away from architecture's traditional inclination towards forming. Eisenman's own machinic process first begins with an evaluation of site context, programmatic adjacencies, and typical circulation routes, all following a standard pattern of architectural coherence. Once this two-dimensional architectural diagram is created, Eisenman overlays a

PALIMPSESTS OF THE WEST
Due to its ever-changing nature, the American West may be interpreted in terms of a palimpsest, which is continually overwritten, erased, and torn apart by the various populations that cross it. Employing Roland Barthes' definition of textual palimpsest as a metaphor for the recombinant qualities of the

MACHINES AND THE MACHINIC
The conceptions of technology and machines utilized throughout this thesis primarily are drawn from a 1990 lecture given by Félix Guattari, entitled On Machines. Within this lecture, Guattari expands on the affective nature of machines by
Incorporating French philosopher, Pierre Levy’s essay, *Les Technologies de l’intelligence,* with the studies of biological theoretician, Francisco Varella. This work attempts to bridge the connection between the subject and the machine. Utilizing Levy’s expression, Guattari introduces the idea that conceiving of machines as interface will lead to a “break[ing] down [of] the ontological iron curtain between being and things.”

Interpreting Levy’s writing, Guattari asserts that technology must be reconceptualized as a form of interface, or “hypertext,” capable developing universes of reference through their use and engagement with human subjects. By conceiving technology as a means of reframing or reengaging outwards towards an entire machinic environment, Guattari begins to envision our relationship with machines in more flattering light compared to the work of previous philosophers, the likes of Heidegger or Mumford. By “looking forward to a kind of safety in the machine” rather than treating machine as “anathema” or “catastrophic,” Guattari opens a dialogue with the technological object while broadening philosophy’s prior emphasize on the concept of techne or essentialist analysis of the machine.

Western experience we may begin to see the landscape as, “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash… a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture.” With this in mind, Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of a contact zone “where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other” becomes an apt description of both the historical and contemporary Western landscape. These contact zones become meeting spaces for disparate cultures to interact, by violent as well as peaceful means. Simultaneously, these may also become meeting zones between man and the natural world, creating a dialogic relationship second, specifically non-architectural diagram, creating intersection and attraction points that distort the original diagram. In outlining his process, Eisenman has states that he has used “soliton waves, neural functioning, DNA structures, liquid crystals, and other [diagrams] from outside architecture…” with the expectation that these second diagrams would be capable of modifying the effect of the first diagram. The non-architectural diagram is employed a second time in the third-dimension to further prompt a “more arbitrary and aleatory nature” out of the architectural composition.

In Eisenman’s interjection of an iterative, diagrammatic operation into his design process, he aims to design space based on affectual capability rather than simply form. He defines his machinic process as: “Thus in
Along with Levy, the work of Francisco Varella highly influences Guattari’s conception of the machine and its relationships to alterity. Through Guattari, Varella posits a distinction between autopoietic machines – a designation reserved for living systems – and disparate peoples and the environment which they inhabit. Here the varied layers of history and perspective add further complexity to the spatial narrative of the American West, revealing contradictory visions of the same space. In interpreting the West as palimpsest, we become compelled to excavate these past exchanges and contradictions in these myriad spaces for there is “no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence.” Eisenman’s conception of
The machinic process relies heavily on an interpretation of On Machines, which asserts that the primary affect of the machine is its capacity to produce an infinite degree of “instances of becoming,” while never producing the same condition of becoming.10

The machinic process represented by Peter Eisenman in “Processes of the Interstitial” has received criticism from theorist, Adrian Parr, who is concerned by Eisenman’s strictly formalist employment of Deleuzian and Guattarian concepts. As Parr asserts, “architects have chosen to turn a blind eye to — capable of self-productive and continual reproduction of their own component parts, and allopoietic machines, which are only productive through use of components outside of themselves.11 Guattari then offers a view where autopoeitic and allopoietic machines are always adjacent to each other, composing a larger machinic assemblage, as described above. As Guattari asserts:

The autopoeitic and ‘hypertextual’ (jumping from one perspective to another) position of the machine thus possesses a pragmatic potential, which allows for a creative standpoint of machinic composition, occurring in the face of the ontological iron curtain which separates the subject on the one side from things on the other.12

Guattari’s amiable positioning towards the machine provides a viewpoint where technologies become part of the connective tissue between individual heterogeneous entities, creating the capacity for a complex network of individual elements functioning toward a shared objective or desire. The perspectives offered by Deleuze and Guattari throughout their work, allow an interpretation as well as an understanding of the contextual surrounding through terms of assemblage, while simultaneously wielding the power to affect these connections and entities, opening new realms for further assemblage and interconnection.

spaces of the West “are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body.”13

The multiplicity of the palimpsest offers the capability to simultaneously construct and interrogate the myths and realities of the American West retold throughout history. Though these contact zones originally manifested themselves in physical form as battlefields and trading posts, the larger narrative of the West has expanded these zones to the realm of memory and symbol. As asserted by Barthes:

“the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable... the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language.”14

As expressed by Barthes and Jean Baudrillard, the palimpsest may take various forms as it engages with heterogeneous subject matter.
This thesis seeks to utilize Claude Lévi-Strauss’ original mythopoetic ‘bricolage’ concepts as a lens to evaluate our understanding of the American West, while simultaneously expanding ‘bricolage’ to a comprehensive concept effective in the use of architectural as well as machinic design. Utilizing ‘bricolage’ and the role of the ‘bricoleur’ as a design methodology, allows for the insights gained through assemblage and machinic thinking to be employed to their fullest extents. As introduced by Claude Lévi-Strauss, the politics underpinning Deleuze’s work, preferring instead to isolate the scientific models that Deleuze leans on as the primary space in which the encounter between architecture and Deleuze takes place.”

An example of this dynamism is illustrated through the American myth as it has been constructed and propagated, opening up new channels of explication or even establishing new contact zone as palimpsestic symbols and signifiers permeate across various mediums. Baudrillard expressed this through his discussion of Monument Valley in Arizona and its geological, anthropological, and cinematic histories: “Monument Valley is the geology of the earth, the mausoleum of the Indians, and the camera...
of John Ford. It is erosion and it is extermination, but it is also the tracking shot, the movies. All three are mingled in the vision we have of it. And each phase subtly terminated the preceding one... With the arrival of the pioneer civilization an extremely slow process gave way to a much quicker one. But this process itself was overtaken fifty years later by the tracking shots of the cinema which speeded up the process... Thus this landscape has been witness to all the great events both of geology and anthropology, including some of the most recent.  

disengagement with the Deleuzian political sphere, this thesis seeks to actively enmesh itself in the political ramifications of assemblage and machinic thinking. This is achieved by interrogating the structures that make up assemblages of identity, history, and place; from the scale of an individual up to the national and further to the transnational. In considering the linkages between bodies, ideas, and the greater compositions they create, the machinic has the potential to unpackage/package/repackage static formations of the world around us, opening up unfamiliar universes of reference to be explored, charted, and settled.

[Strauss'] in The Savage Mind, 1962, the concept of *bricolage* and the *bricoleur* are used to describe the nature of intellectual and practical thought of prior civilizations. As Lévi-Strauss asserts *bricolage* is defined as:

Now, the characteristic feature of mythical thought, as of 'bricolage' on the practical plane, is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structure sets but by using the remains and debris of events: in French 'des bribes et des morceaux', or odds and ends in English, fossilized evidence of the history of an individual or a society … Mythical thought, that 'bricoleur', builds up structures by fitting together events, or rather the remains of events...  


By imbuing the design process with the methodology of Lévi-Strauss' *bricolage*, the design measures of this thesis inflect upon the engrained heterogeneous compositions of the American West. These design measure take the form of five individual machines and a central “machinic hive,” which have been designed by refashioning and recombining myriad elements to create new compositions, disassociated from any individual element’s prior function or context. This combinatory process functions to deterritorialize/reterritorialize the mechanistic object from its functional associations, reconstituting its fundamental organization into an embodied alterity. The relationships crafted by the machinic process engage the Western physical and cultural landscape, constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing the stories, artifacts, and identities of a region known for its palimpsestic overlays and cultural heterogeneity.
APPLICATION OF THEORY
The Transient Field is composed of an array of observatory apparatuses, which lie on Jefferson’s 1785 Ordinance Grid. Each node of the array is comprised of a surveillance mechanism attached to a large fabric envelope filled with helium. These apparatus serve to transmit the mobility of forces on the ground; these include migratory routes of the region’s fauna as well as the transitory nature of human inhabitants as they cross this landscape. The dialogue created between the gridded array and the entities, which cross their paths, reflect the mobile discourses of the American West and reveal that the spaces observed have continued to be traverse throughout the years.
The Palimpsestic-Herd operates as an information gathering and transmitting swarm machine, collectively made up of individual robots, whose capabilities include geospatial scanning and sonar mapping. As these herds navigate the Western landscape, they identify and geospatially locate items or locations of interest to add to the machinic archive. These cartographic actions empower the machine to take the historically hierarchical/striated space of the American West and apply a flattening/smoothing force. The act of legitimizing any and every individual aspect of the American West, places the history of 20th century tourist on par with that of a 19th century frontiersman, resulting in a multidimensional composition of layered desires and human experiences.
Located at the geographic center of the United States, this centralized location becomes the focal point for the overall Machinic West, acting as a repository for the myriad information collected by the various mechanical apparatuses. This hub acts as a "hive" for the various machines to deposit their collected data, repair themselves, and re-present the multidimensional history they have constructed.
It is here that the American West continues to be constructed into a complete heterogeneous, combinatory, assemblage. As the machines continue to reveal and restructure new aspects of the West’s socio-historical-cultural identity, the assemblage will continue to grow in complexity and scope. This process will be continually ongoing and never-ending. Rather than interpret the West as crucible where entities become melted down to form a cohesive whole, the Machinic Arc(HIVE) reveals the West as amalgam constituent parts, never completely melting down nor ever becoming cohesive.
Conclusion

When discussing the West in his book, *Blood Orchid* (1995), Charles Bowden states, "we hide behind the feel and the image of the taking, the days of the pioneers, the vestments of the cattle industry, the pageants of the Neolithic cultures we gutted, the image of the gun, the memory of the roar of our firepower when the trigger was pulled." These frameworks, argues, must be interrogated and refashioned, as "we need to look at ourselves, with love, with doubt, with clear eyes."
End Notes

Analytical Framework:
2. Ibid., 33.
3. Ibid., 333.
6. Ibid., 134.
8. Ibid., 88-89.
12. Ibid., 232-236.
13. Martin Heidegger’s engagement with the technological changed throughout his lifetime, from Being and Time’s (1927), “ready to hand” objects, acting as elucidatory forces for Dasein, to The Question Concerning Technology’s (1954), “technological enframing” of the world as utility. Likewise, Lewis Mumford’s The Myth of the Machine (1967), characterizes the consequence of utility, as humanity’s reduction to componentry for history’s megamachines, which include the Great Pyramids, the Roman Empire, and the Pentagon.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

Westness:
2. Ibid., 5.
3. US Census Bureau, 1890 Census Report.
8. Ibid., 190-91.
10. John Babson Lane Soule, Terre Haute Express, 1851. This phrase originated from an editorial written by J.B.L Soule, but was later popularized and credited to Horace Greeley.


Architectural Precedents:
Le Corbusier, Vers Une Architecture, (Paris: G. Crès et Cie, 1924)
6. Ibid., 59.
7. Ibid., 57.
8. Ibid., 59.
Analytical Framework:


Heidegger, Martin. “Engagement with the Technological Changed Throughout His Lifetime.” From *Being and Time* (1927), “ready to hand” objects, acting as elucidatory forces for Dasein, to *The Question Concerning Technology*’s (1954), “technological enframing” of the world as utility. Likewise, Lewis Mumford’s *The Myth of the Machine* (1967), characterizes the consequence of utility, as humanity’s reduction to componentry for history’s megamachines, which include the Great Pyramids, the Roman Empire, and the Pentagon.


Westness:


Soule, John Babsone Lane. *Terre Haute Express*, 1851. This phrase originated from an editorial written by J.B.L Soule, but was later popularized and credited to Horace Greeley.

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