On the *Tenochtitlan* Cover Art

What is being; what is a thing, a delineated, identifiable, discernible thing? Consider the aerial view, the grid, the net, and coordinates. But then orient from being perpendicular to it instead. Be grounded, not in flight but as you are every day in the third dimension. The intersection between these views converges as do all roads lead to Tenochtitlan. However, this place is a layer soon to be reconfigured but which is also not Tenochtitlan but Teotihuacan, the ancient city atop which the former was built. The plane of memory and artifact inhabit the space of understanding, informing the semantic contact between the immediate present and the past. To inhabit this conclusion is to be in AD 300 with its 100,000 citizens, but also to see the coming of Cortés in the 1520's, the second death of the one named Tenochtitlan and the coming of Mexico. To understand this complete object is to inhabit a centre in time that is between the ancient city and the present — as Tenochtitlan looking back at Teotihuacan and forward toward Mexico; but the thinking of all of this is a plane of conception cast over the first-person perspective. Only the mind can fold the horizontal and the aerial together, which is to apply time to space where memory collects the two into a bank and reads the present through it. But that was also the intention of the *Tenocha* or *Mexica* (Aztecs): to recover the old city which they likely did in the 1300's rediscovering their past in order to build an empire, only to be discovered by Cortés 200 years later. This would be the aerial (territory) intercepting the horizontal (narrative), one force of a highly influential collection of evolving factors (a city) being interrupted by an army and the violent integration between them that eventuates the imposition of the building of a new city unlike the original Teotihuacan where at one point "instead of building palaces and elite quarters, the citizens embarked on a remarkable project of urban renewal, supplying high quality apartments for nearly all the city's population, regardless of wealth or status."[1] And so resistance becomes interesting. How does an egalitarian society resist a conquered/conquering one? It can only be a contest on the plane of the memory bank, resulting in a loss of cultural continuity for the conquered unless they ally with their conquerer against their enemy which the Tlaxcala, according to Graeber and Wengrow, did with Cortés. So, whatever centres of gravity persist over time, forming a narrative continuity around/through which things take place, their very existence depends on the enactment of a way of life. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, "families have always warded off the demonic Alliance gnawing at them, in order to regulate alliances among themselves as they see fit."[2] The new tool is the common bond of alienation, the inverse of belonging as a chosen ground based on difference rather than familiarity.

FAM 2025

---

[1] David Graeber and David Wengrow, *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity* (Toronto: Penguin, 2021), 341

[2] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateau's: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 248.