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Abstract

Since Martin Heidegger developed the notion of dwelling as a fundamental ontological concept that is based on the basic character of human being, this idea of dwelling has inspired a number of architectural theorists in relation to the question of how we should build. However, it has been argued that such interpretations have often been flawed, and I think that in reality Heidegger's conception of dwelling is too intangible to really comment on the act of building. This thesis will therefore explore inhabitation from a different angle – from an angle that investigates how we experience architecture, how architecture means something us and how architecture also changes us – in order to ask how we can come to an understanding of the experience of inhabitation from which it is possible to comment on the act of building. I will therefore not investigate inhabitation from a Heideggerian perspective – asking what it *means* to dwell – but rather approach inhabitation from a more phenomenological and hermeneutic perspective. I will argue that the experience of inhabitation depends upon the interaction between people and architecture; it is a melodic experience in which the possibilities for meaningful action that the architecture offers correspond with people's intention of action, while at the same time the architecture amplifies experience through functioning as a medium. From this conception, I will argue that inhabitation must become an answer to building – not in the sense that existing models of inhabitation are reproduced, but rather that an understanding of the experience of inhabitation becomes guiding in the design process.

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Introduction

Martin Heidegger's essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' (1954) has been one of the most significant philosophical texts on architectural thinking throughout the second half of 20th and early 21st century. In this text, he develops an understanding of the notions of dwelling and building that is based on the basic character of human being. He states: ''The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is Buan, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell'' (Heidegger, 1997, p. 101). Jeff Malpas makes clear that to dwell means to exist – existing in a sense that is closely tied to the ideas of 'belonging,' 'identity' and especially 'authenticity' (Malpas, 2014, p. 2). Although both the concepts of dwelling and building pertain to a question that is much broader than architecture alone, Heidegger must have been aware of their significance for the architectural practice, as the essay had originally been a lecture addressed to a symposium of architects and others on the general topic of 'Man and Space' (Malpas, 2014, p. 1). From this moment, the idea of dwelling – or inhabiting – had inspired a number of architectural theorists for whom this idea would become a fundamental ontological concept that pertains to the question of how we should build. After all, Heidegger emphasizes how building is consequent on dwelling, as he characterizes building as a distinctive letting-dwell (Heidegger, 1997, p. 108).

However, as Malpas asserts, within architectural theory the notion of dwelling has often been misunderstood, as a result of which it has become a sort of devalued currency (Malpas, 2014, p. 2). For him, it is no surprise that dwelling is prone to be misunderstood due to the way that it is presented in 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking'. Nevertheless, he argues that a critical engagement with dwelling requires an understanding of both Heidegger's earlier and later thinking and requires a rethinking of the concepts that are connected with it – so belonging, identity and authenticity (Malpas, 2014, p. 2). I agree that, through the way in which the concept of dwelling is presented in the essay itself, it would be difficult for architects to find a way to faithfully incorporate dwelling in their theory of building. However, even with Malpas' rethinking of dwelling that takes the broader Heideggerian context into account, I still believe that the idea of dwelling remains difficult to incorporate as a guiding concept in the act of building. Let me explain what I mean. As Malpas makes clear, Heidegger's notions of dwelling and building are deeply connected to the concept of *place*, which he finds especially relevant for architects today as much contemporary architecture to

him seems rather autonomous to their architectural surroundings (Malpas, 2014, p. 4). However, even when architects take on an Heideggerian approach to architecture – such as the renowned architect Norberg-Schulz – Malpas often finds this notion of place misunderstood. For Norberg-Schulz, our dwelling in place is able to grant us an identity and a meaning that we would otherwise lack – *'we find ourselves in place, and to dwell is to have found oneself, to have found a proper sense of oneself, to have found a sense of belonging'* (4). However, according to Malpas place cannot be regarded as having a fixed identity, as this would lead to our own identity taking on a sense of determinacy (Malpas, 2014, p. 5). In Malpas' reading, Heidegger proposes a more critical, questioning attitude to dwelling and place, and so building must not be determined by any tradition, history, or existing mode of life. The act of building must always be a responsive engagement to place, but in a way that questions that place. Therefore, responsiveness cannot be determined by any rules or architectural tenets in advance (Malpas, 2014, p. 15).

I find myself very sympathetic to this reading of Heidegger – a way of building that is both responsive and questioning to place. However, I also believe that this reading can still be interpreted in many ways when it comes to the actual building of architecture. After all, here it is also possible to defend an architecture that is purposefully antagonistic to its surroundings, precisely as a way of questioning and responding to it. I do not wish to say that such an architecture is necessarily bad, but rather that Malpas' reading of dwelling is still too intangible to really comment on the act of building. Moreover, I think that Heidegger's account of dwelling is too passive to determine how inhabitation is experienced on an individual level. I therefore propose to explore inhabitation from a different angle – from an angle that investigates how we experience architecture, how architecture means something us and how architecture also changes us. I will therefore not investigate inhabitation from a Heideggerian perspective – asking what it *means* to dwell – but rather approach inhabitation from a more phenomenological and hermeneutic perspective, in order to ask how we can come to an understanding of inhabitation that is based on our experience of architecture. I will remain faithful to the Heideggerian principle that building must be responsive to inhabitation, which means that I will explore how we can understand the act of building from this transformed conception of inhabitation. The goal of this thesis is therefore to present a revised conception of the experience of inhabitation, from which it is possible to comment on the act of building. I will explore these concepts particularly as they relate to architecture, because I

believe that an understanding of inhabiting architecture specifically has implications for the task of building architecture.

My research question will be as follows: *'How can we understand the act of building in terms of a conception of inhabitation that is based on the experience of architecture?'*

First of all, why will I rethink inhabitation from an understanding of the *experience* of architecture? To me experience is the root of any kind of understanding of architecture. People can regard the architectural practise as a form of engineering, science, art, or a combination of them all. I too see architecture as in some way combining all these practises; however, to me the experience of architecture stands at the basis of them all. For example, there are those who will argue for architecture as a science because there are certain forms, ratio's, rhythms, and orders that people will likely prefer over others – people tend to privilege organic forms over sharp forms and tend to privilege variety in unity over overall chaos. However, it only becomes possible to argue for the scientific approach to architecture when the experience of human beings is central to the analysis; and simultaneously I think that when we privilege people's experience, it becomes clear that architecture is more than merely creating forms that people enjoy.

Thus, this thesis will put forward an account of inhabitation that is centred around the way that people experience and attribute meaning to architecture, from which it will be possible to comment on the act of building. My argument will be fourfold, and therefore this thesis will be divided into four chapters. In the first chapter I will explain what exactly I mean with the term architecture and what architecture is to experience; this chapter will therefore elucidate some of the main concepts that will be present throughout the thesis. I will approach architecture through the central concepts of *téchne* and *mimesis* – terms that will be explained in this chapter – in order to later argue why a comprehensive account of architecture also involves its relation to experience. I will show that architecture elevates the experience of the actions that take place in and with the building when it functions as a medium, which signifies a more active and attentive interaction between people and their environment. In the second chapter I will discuss how inhabitation manifests itself in relation to architecture. I will argue that the experience of inhabitation depends upon the interaction between people and architecture; it is a melodic experience in which the possibilities for meaningful action that the architecture offers correspond with people's intention of action, while at the same time the architecture amplifies the experience through functioning as a medium. I will explore the way in which we understand the possibilities that architecture offers us through Paul Ricoeur's

central concepts of *prefiguration*, *configuration* and *refiguration* – which will also be explained later. This pertains to the third chapter as refiguration refers to the way in which our understanding of architecture is transformed through interaction with architecture. This is a matter which is crucial to understand inhabitation and building, because if we understand the way in which the experience of inhabitation changes, this has implications for the way we can think about building. In the last chapter I will consider on the act of building itself. I will argue that inhabitation is an answer to building – not in the sense that existing models of inhabitation are reproduced, but rather that an understanding of the experience of inhabitation becomes guiding in the design process.

In order to make these arguments, I will draw upon three main philosophers that will provide the central framework for the thesis, although I will also employ other philosophers to flesh out my argument. These three philosophers are John Dewey, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Ricoeur, whom I still find to be generally compatible with Heidegger's philosophy, but through whom I can also develop this important aspect of experience more effectively. I will draw on Dewey's work *Art as Experience* (1934) to bring about my conception of architecture in relation to experience. Merleau-Ponty's work *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) is important for understanding the way we relate to the world around us and how we attribute meaning to this world, which I will connect to architecture specifically. For Merleau-Ponty we act in and understand the world in one movement, and it is exactly the possibility of configurating this integrated action and meaning that Ricoeur develops in his *Time and Narrative* (1983) and later links to architecture in his essay 'Architecture and Narrativity'. Ricoeur's works are important comprehending the way in which we understand architecture and how architecture transforms this understanding, as we are – in his words – *refigurated* through our interaction with architecture. Mainly with the help of these three philosophers I will establish an understanding of the experience of inhabitation, from which I will comment on the act of building.

Chapter 1: The Experience of Architecture

First of all, what do I mean with the term architecture and what exactly is architecture to experience? In this chapter I will first approach architecture through the central concept of *téchne,* in order to later argue why a comprehensive account of architecture also involves its relation to experience. So, what is the relation of *téchne* to architecture? *Téchne* belongs to the Greek word *tékton*, which survives in our word 'architect.' The Greek *arkhitékton* literally means 'master builder, director of works', from *arkhi-* 'chief' and *tékton* 'builder, carpenter'. As Wolfgang Schadewaldt explains, *téchne* is a broad term that designates the art or skill of the master builder, and more generally the art of every kind of production (Schadewaldt, 2014, p. 28). He argues that the Greek concept of technique is characterized by its twofold relationship to both theoretical knowledge and to the processes of nature – *phýsis*. First of all, *téchne* is a knowledge and ability which is directed towards producing and constructing, and which occupies an intermediate place between mere experience or know-how – *emperiría* – and theoretical knowledge – *epistéme*. After all, *téchne* not only knows 'that' something is the case, which comes about through experience, but also 'why' something is the case, and therefore approaches theoretical knowledge. As Schadewaldt explains:

> Thus *téchne* is expressly defined as a knowledge and ability which has come about by habit, i.e. has passed into flesh and blood, and which is directed to a producing, but in connection with a clear course of reasoning concerning the thing itself, which the man of mere experience does not have in view (Schadewaldt, 2014, p. 29).

Moreover, *téchne* is related to the processed of nature. As Aristotle argues: ''Indeed, as a general proposition, the arts either, on the basis of Nature, carry things further than Nature can, or they imitate Nature'' (Aristotle, 1934, p. 173). *Téchne* imitates nature and/or adds something to nature what it alone cannot do. Architecture is always both, as will become clear throughout this chapter. It always adds something to nature – as buildings never arise on their own – and always imitates nature in some way. However, first it must be noted that Aristotle did not mean nature in its most literal sense – designating a realm of objects – but rather meant nature as signifying a process of coming-to-be or originating. As Schadewaldt explains:

> Again it is characteristic of the coming-to-be process of growth that out of something already formed it always tends toward some new form and shape. This entire coming-to-be and directing activity of *phýsis* comes about by its own agency, so that the source

> of that movement which is this coming-to-be lies in the thing itself which comes-to-be (Schadewaldt, 2014, p. 26).

In both *téchne* and *phýsis*, something comes-to-be out of something that is already formed. However, in contrast to nature, the processes of coming-to-be and production in technique do not arise by their own agency, but are instead initiated by people. In technics, the production processes take place in a manner directly analogous to the processes of coming-to-be in *phýsis*, while at the same time *téchne* perfects that which nature by itself cannot achieve (Schadewaldt, 2014, p. 30). Technology can therefore not be regarded separately from nature. Rather, we can regard it as a *bending* of nature in order to serve human purposes; we add to nature by bending the way in which it comes-to-be.

However, as Aristotle asserted, technics do not only add to nature but also imitate it. What does this mean? As John Dewey explains in his book *Art as Experience*, some theorists divide the arts into the categories of representative and non-representative, 'a division within which architecture and music are now assigned to the latter genus' (Dewey, 2005, p. 229/230). Dewey explains that Aristotle was able to avoid the dualism of this division by taking the concept of imitation – or *mimesis* – more generously; not signifying representation in the sense that a painting of a shoe 'represents' an actual shoe, but rather indicating *expression*. In this way, Aristotle was able to declare music as the *most* representative of all the arts; not because music is a literal representation of nature, so imitating the twittering of birds, lowing of cows and gurgling of brooks, but because music is able to express the emotional impressions that are produced by the processes of *life* (Dewey, 2005, p. 230). Richard Eldridge, in his discussion on Aristotle's conception of *mimesis*, develops this argument:

> Works of pure instrumental music do not normally visually or audibly *depict* particular sensible objects, scenes, or even emotions, but they do invite us to think about *action*, in particular about abstract patterns of resistance, development, multiple attention, and closure that are present in actions, and they invite us to these thoughts in and through perceptual experience of the musical work itself (Eldridge, 2014, p. 29).

Eldridge explains that all that is required for this wide sense of *mimesis* is presentation of a subject matter as a focus for *thought*, fused to perceptual experience of the work (Eldridge, 2014, p. 29). I will argue that it is exactly because of this broad conception of *mimesis* – indicating expression of the processes of life – that experience becomes crucial for

understanding architecture. However, in order to make this argument we must first explore two central concepts to this argument: experience and expression.

Let us start with experience. As Dewey explains, experience is a matter of interaction between people – or organisms in general – and their environment; an environment which is human as well as physical, and which includes the materials of tradition and institutions as well as local surroundings (Dewey, 2005, p. 256). At the same time, there is no experience in which the human contribution is not a factor in determining what actually happens. ‘’The organism is a force, not a transparency’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 256). And as every experience is constituted by interaction between ‘subject’ and ‘object,’ between a self and its world, it is therefore never merely physical nor merely mental. On the one hand, experience is continuous; ‘’life goes on in an environment; not merely *in* it but because of it, through interaction with it’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 12). Experience occurs continuously, because this interaction between people and their environment is involved in the very process of living. Simultaneously, experience is not a matter of mere flux; we can distinguish *an* experience when the change is cumulative and therefore the material experienced runs its course to fulfilment (Dewey, 2005, p. 36). ‘’A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution; a game is played through’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 37). As such, there is a rhythmic ebb and flow to experience – sometimes flat and other times heightened. For Dewey, art is a quality that permeates such intensified experience, and the goal of his book is to restore this continuity between the intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events and doings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. He gives the analogy of the mountain peak: ‘’Mountain peaks do not float unsupported; they do not even just rest upon the earth. They are the earth in one of its manifest operations’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 2). Art amplifies experience – it signifies an experience in which people are in a deeper intercourse with their environment:

> Experience in the degree in which it *is* experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one’s own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events (Dewey, 2005, p. 18).

We have seen earlier how the Greek conception of *téchne* cannot be seen as separate from *phýsis* – the coming-to-be processes of nature and life – but rather must be regarded as a transformation of *phýsis*, in order to bring about what it cannot achieve by itself. We can recognize a similar approach to the role of art to experience in Dewey’s thinking. For him, the

existence of art demonstrates how people use the materials and energies of nature with the intend to expand their own lives (Dewey, 2005, p. 26). Art is not nature; rather, art is nature transformed by entering into new relationships where it evokes a new kind of response in experience (Dewey, 2005, p. 82).

Now what is the relation of experience to the second concept of expression? Dewey explains how works of art can communicate with us because they are expressive. Communication may not always be the intent of the artists, but it is the consequence of their work – 'which indeed lives only in communication when it operates in the experience of others' (Dewey, 2005, p. 108). This again emphasizes how the work of art is not complete without working in the experience of someone. However, not all communication is expression. There is a difference between statement and expression, which highlights the difference between ordinary representation – as might occur in language – and artistic representation. Dewey presents their difference through the example of a signboard; ''It directs one's course to a place, say a city. It does not in any way supply experience of that city even in a vicarious way. What it does do is to set forth some of the conditions that must be fulfilled in order to procure that experience'' (Dewey, 2005, p. 88). Expression requires a *medium*; statement – although it must occur through some channel – does not. So what is a medium exactly? According to Dewey, a ''medium signifies first of all an intermediary'' (Dewey, 2005, p. 204). However, not all intermediaries – or means – are media. There are on the one hand means that are external to that which is accomplished; for example how gasoline is a mere means to transportation, or how a signboard is a means to get to a city. If possible, the end would also gladly be reached without employment of the means. On the other hand, media refer to the kind of means that are already incorporated into the outcome:

> Means are, then, media when they are not just preparatory or preliminary […] A phonographic disk is a vehicle of an effect and nothing more. The music which issues from it is also a vehicle but is something more; it is a vehicle which becomes one with what it carries; it coalesces with what it conveys (Dewey, 2005, p. 207).

A medium remains immanent in the consequences it produces; means and end coalesce. The connection between medium and expression is therefore intrinsic. Every work of art possesses a medium through which it is expressive – which determines the particular language that it speaks – and each medium communicates in a way that could not be expressed as well, or as completely, in any other medium (Dewey, 2005, p. 110). ''Colors are the painting; tones are the music'' (Dewey, 2005, p. 205). But these tones only become music – and therefore

function as a medium – when they are ordered in a melody. The media of architecture are the wide range of (relatively) raw materials of nature that it adopts to its ends – wood, stone, steel, cement, glass, etc. (Dewey, 2005, p. 205). But these materials only become a medium when they are arranged in such a way that they come to express a new meaning. The technic of architecture bends and shapes these already formed materials in order to serve human purposes.

What is important to note is that a medium is always an intermediary that pertains to a subject. This means that whether something is experienced as a medium is also dependent on that subject. Dewey gives the example of the journey; ‘’Sometimes we journey to get somewhere else because we have business at the latter point and would gladly, were it possible, cut out the traveling. At other times we journey for the delight of moving about and seeing what we see’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 205). A medium is therefore only formed when there is, on behalf of the subject, a certain intention in experience to the specific arrangement of materials. ‘’In products that strike us as merely useful, our only concern is with something beyond the thing, and if we are not interested in that ulterior product, then we are indifferent to the product itself’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 183). For Dewey, it is an externality of means to ends that may even be regarded as a definition of the non-aesthetic. Aesthetic effects belong inherently to their medium. Of course, in some way the medium of architecture is always immanent to the actions that take place within – also a journey could never be made without the road that makes that journey possible. I argue that the difference between a building and architecture lies in the experience it brings about. We may use buildings because they facilitate a certain activity – because they are a means for us to reach an end, but no more than that. Architecture on the other hand enhances the experience of the actions that take place in and with the building, because its medium expresses meaning to us in such a way that it makes us participate more deeply with our environment. When we experience architecture, we experience the medium of the architecture as immanent to the actions that take place within. This is partly a subjective matter, because it requires our intention to be directed towards the architecture in some way – for some, even the most beautiful road is merely a means to get from point A to point B. However, it also cannot be denied that beautiful objects have the power to grab our attention, precisely because of their beauty. A beautiful road may not always be experienced as a medium, but it is in fact much more likely to be experienced as a medium than a road through, for example, an industrial terrain.

With this conception of *mimesis*, we may now ask in what way architecture expresses *phýsis*. As discussed before, architecture does not imitate nature in a literal sense. Dewey explains how architecture is not representative if we understand by that term the literal reproduction of natural forms for the sake of their reproduction – ‘’as some have supposed that cathedrals ‘represent’ high trees in a forest’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 230). Such a view overlooks the creative production that is inherent to *mimesis*. However, we must indeed regard architecture as representative when it is regarded in terms of expression – being able to present *phýsis* in a new experience. In this way, we are able to distinguish architecture as representative in multiple ways, through expressing meanings such as ideas, emotions, and values and through expressing action – I will touch upon these briefly before I explore them more in the next chapter. Regarding the former, although architecture does not represent the literal forms of nature, it does express the characteristic energies that we find in nature; forces like gravity, pressure, light, cohesion and momentum are expressed through the effects that architectural forms like arches, pillars and cubes have upon the observer (Dewey, 2005, p. 230). Moreover, Dewey notes how architecture expresses the enduring values and interests of collective human life, representing the memories, hopes, fears and goals of those who have built. ‘’Just why buildings are called palaces, castles, homes, city-halls, forums, is a mystery if architecture is not supremely expressive of human interests and values’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 230).

As for the latter, Dewey argues that architecture – because of its inherent power to endure – expresses more than any other art the characteristics of our common human life (Dewey, 2005, p. 239). It represents human purpose; the actions that make up our daily lives. This brings us to Paul Ricoeur’s exploration of architecture in his essay ‘Architecture and Narrativity,’ where he establishes a parallel between architecture and narrativity based on his seminal work *Time and Narrative* (1983). In this essay, he establishes that architecture is to space what narrative is to time, ‘’namely a ‘configurative’ process’’ (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 31). There is a parallelism between on the one hand building in space, and on the other hand recounting – emplotment in time. In his *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur examines this configurative process through the Aristotelian use of *mimesis*, which he defines in relation to narrative as ‘’the imitating or representing of action in the medium of metrical language’’ (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 33). Again, Ricoeur emphasizes that Aristotle’s *mimesis* should not be understood in terms of a copy of some preexisting reality or some redoubling of presence. Instead, imitating or representing is a mimetic activity insofar as it produces something – it is

a creative act. ‘’Aristotle’s mimesis has just a single space wherein it is unfolded – human making [faire], the arts of composition’’ (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 34). *What* is produced in this activity is the second concept that Ricoeur takes from Aristotle – *muthos*, or emplotment, which he describes as the organization of events. In narrative, language therefore only becomes a medium when it composes action through *muthos*. Ricoeur explains how the world of action is always already in some way inscribed in the configuration of the building:

> The inscription of action in the course of things consists in marking the event space, which affects the spatial arrangement of things […] Conversely, whether it is a space for settlement or for flow, the constructed space consists in a system of gestures, of rituals for the major interactions of life. Places are points where something happens, where something comes to be, where temporal changes follow actual paths along the intervals that separate and reconnect the places (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 34).

If architecture is to space what narrative is to time, then action is represented in the architectural space through the way in which its materials are organized and composed together into units of space, massive forms and boundary surfaces (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 36). *Muthos* here constitutes the architectural design which arranges materials into a medium in order to serve human purposes. Dewey stresses how it is significant that the word ‘design’ has this double meaning, as it both signifies purpose and signifies arrangement – mode of composition. ‘’The characteristic of artistic design is the intimacy of the relations that hold the parts together […] A work of art is poor in the degree in which they exist in separation, as in a novel wherein plot – the design – is felt to be superimposed upon incidents and characters instead of being their dynamic relations to one another’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 121). The design of a building is therefore always oriented towards a specific purpose, while at the same time it is artistic to the degree in which the relations of the parts together constitute a whole.

This chapter has established what architecture expresses to us and why any comprehensive understanding of architecture must take experience into account. We have first approached architecture through the Greek concept *téchne*, meaning that architecture imitates *phýsis* – the coming-to-be processes of nature and life – and bends *phýsis* in order to bring about what it cannot achieve by itself. This imitation – or *mimesis* – does not signify a literal reproduction, but rather *expression*, which is a way of communicating meaning that requires a medium. A medium refers to the kind of means that is already incorporated into the consequences it produces, and a medium is only formed when it functions in experience *as a medium*. It is here that we can make the differentiation between buildings and architecture. A

building may be used as a means to an end – merely to facilitate a certain activity. Architecture on the other hand elevates the experience of the actions that take place in and with the building; it functions as a medium, signifying a more active and attentive communication with our environment. We can discern different ways in which architecture represents *phýsis*: through expressing meanings such as energies of nature, emotions, and human interests and values, and through expressing action. The next chapter will reveal how closely related the expression of meaning is to the expression of action.

Chapter 2: The Experience of Inhabitation

From this conception of architecture, it is time to discuss the reason why we build architecture – in order to contribute to inhabitation. As I have stated before, I aim to extract the concept of inhabitation from its original Heideggerian context. Whereas Heidegger approached the question of dwelling mainly from the perspective of fundamental ontology – asking what it *means* to dwell – I want to approach inhabitation from a more phenomenological and hermeneutic perspective, in order to ask how we can come to an understanding of inhabitation that is based on our experience of architecture. Last chapter has established *that* architecture expresses meaning and that expression can only take place in experience through a medium. This chapter will explain *how* we are able to comprehend this meaning that architecture expresses, as our understanding of architecture is a crucial component in our experience of inhabitation.

However, first we must establish how I will define the experience of inhabitation. I argue that we experience inhabitation of architecture when we experience a harmony between the way our body intends to act and the way the architecture offers possibilities for the action, in which the architecture simultaneously functions as a medium to us. This conception of inhabitation combines elements of Merleau-Ponty's account of experience in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) with elements of Dewey's description of the experience of art that has been discussed before. First of all, I take on Merleau-Ponty's description of 'the melodic experience of our body in the world', which I think directs us to our experience of inhabitation. This melodic experience involves both our intention towards the world and the way we understand the world is able to respond to this intention. I will then elaborate on our understanding of architecture specifically through Ricoeur's discussion of the mimetic activity in *Time and Narrative*. Moreover, I will add to this conception that we only experience inhabitation when we experience the attentive communication with our environment that Dewey described as characteristic of expression. The architecture must therefore function as a medium in order for us to experience inhabitation.

Let us start by examining Merleau-Ponty's account of the melodic experience of our body in the world. In the previous chapter we have already seen how Dewey described the organism as a force, not a transparency. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty asserts how the body is a force – a power (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 108). Specifically, the body is the power to respond. As Chouraqui explains, for Merleau-Ponty the body is a power in two senses:

> In one sense it's a match with the world. And to be a match means to be both subjected to the possibilities that are in the world –you're not able to do things that the world makes impossible. In another sense, it is a power in the sense of something that generates possibilities (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 100).

We experience the world in terms of the possibilities that it offers *for us*. But at the same time we generate possibilities; technics are the way that we create possibilities which we do not find in nature. Chouraqui explains how the 'normal' experience of the body in the world is an experience of a match, a melodic experience, an 'I can' (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 104). And so this means that 'normal' gestures are the result of a harmony between the body and the world, ''where every aspect of the environment and every intention of the subject combines with the features of my body to produce a seamless gesture'' (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 102). Merleau-Ponty illustrates this 'seamless gesture' through the examples of a hat and an automobile:

> Without any explicit calculation, a woman maintains a safe distance between the feather in her hat and objects that might damage it; she senses where the feather is, just as we sense where our hand is. If I possess the habit of driving a car, then I enter into a lane and see that "I can pass" without comparing the width of the lane to that of the fender, just as I go through a door without comparing the width of the door to that of my body. The hat and the automobile have ceased to be objects whose size and volume would be determined through a comparison with other objects. They have become voluminous powers and the necessity of a certain free space (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 144).

It is the body that 'understands' in the acquisition of a habit. To habituate oneself to a hat or to an automobile is to take up residence in them; to make them participate within the voluminosity of one's own body (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 144/145). We can be equally habituated to architecture – understanding intuitively how to move around to carry out our intentions. These intentions therefore do not have to be completely conscious – sometimes when we carry out a habit, we only become conscious of our intention when something stops us from carrying out that action. To 'understand' is to experience a match between what we aim at and what is given, between the intention and the realization (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 146). Here we come to Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'motor signification;' the body acts in ('motor') and understands ('signification') the world in one movement. This 'motor signification' is the mode of life of the embodied self. ''Although the body is a perceiver, it is

not a theoretical observer. Although it is an agent, it is not a pure physical force'' (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 104). Acting and perceiving occur simultaneously.

So, one condition of inhabitation is experiencing this harmony between the way our body intends to act and the way the architecture offers the possibilities for action. But how can we comprehend the way in which architecture is able to communicate these possibilities with us? In order to explain this, I will further draw upon Ricoeur's discussion of the mimetic activity as presented in *Time and Narrative*. So far, we have discussed Ricoeur's interpretation of Aristotle's *mimesis* through the configurative activity of creating a composition – the *muthos*. However, Ricoeur expands upon Aristotle's conception of *mimesis* by adding both a prior and a later stage to configuration: the stages of prefiguration and refiguration. For Ricoeur, *mimesis* would remain incomplete without these additional stages as they account for its temporal character. After all, the stage of prefiguration explains how we are able to understand the configuration itself; it is constituted by our lived experience. The stage of refiguration, meanwhile, explains how our understanding is affected by the configuration. Ricoeur explains that the very meaning of the configurative act is a result of its intermediary position between the stage of prefiguration and the stage of refiguration (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 53). Therefore, both these stages pertain to the question of inhabitation, although the matter of refiguration will not be discussed until the next chapter.

So, the stage of prefiguration reveals how we can have an understanding of the configuration itself. What does this mean? As Ricoeur explains, ''Whatever the innovative force of poetic composition within the field of our temporal experience may be, the composition of the plot is grounded in a preunderstanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character'' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 54). Without this pre-understanding, the act of configuration would be impossible. After all, to imitate or represent action is first to pre-understand what human acting is and how it is symbolically mediated (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 64). Ricoeur describes how it is through the symbolic nature of our actions that these can be configured into narrative form. ''If, in fact, human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated'' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 57). For Ricoeur there is an immanent symbolism of a cultural nature to action, constituting its first signification. He draws upon anthropologists and sociologists to clarify that symbolism is not a mental operation destined to guide action, but a meaning incorporated into action and therefore not separable from it (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 57). ''The same gesture of raising one's arm, depending

on the context, may be understood as a way of greeting someone, of hailing a taxi, or of voting. Before being submitted to interpretation, symbols are interpretants internally related to some action'' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 58). In other words, we cannot understand actions without understanding the symbolic system that provides the context for those actions. As architecture is to space what narrative is to time, the reason why we can configure architecture is because our actions are symbolically mediated. There are structures according to which these actions take place, which is why we can make sense of them and inscribe those actions into spatial configurations. To understand the possibilities for action that architecture offers is therefore also dependent upon the symbolic elements we perceive.

How can we then make sense of the way that we understand action and its symbolic mediations in architectural space specifically? I will clarify this by relating Merleau-Ponty's concept of motor signification to the way that philosophers like Hans-Georg Gadamer and Umberto Eco already represent the experience of architecture. Firstly, in *Truth and Method* (1960), Gadamer explains how a work of architecture extends beyond itself in two ways. He writes: ''It is as much determined by the aim which it is to serve as by the place that it is to take up in a total spatial context'' (Gadamer, 2004, p. 149). For Gadamer, a work of architecture on the one hand enters into a relationship with us – the inhabitants – in its function; so the way in which the building serves possibilities for certain actions. On the other hand, the architecture enters into relationships with the physical structures that surround that particular building; a building has to adapt itself to its particular architectural circumstances.

However, it seems that in Gadamer's analysis an important part of the relationships that architecture takes part in is omitted, as in our experience a building does not only point beyond itself to its physical context, but to its entire meaningful context. We already saw how Dewey explained that an environment is human as well as physical, and therefore includes the materials of tradition and institutions as well as local surroundings. We are therefore not only talking about the physical dimensions of the environment, but also the human dimensions, which are historical, social and psychological, etc. It is such an understanding of the environment that Umberto Eco refers to in his article 'Function and Sign: Semiotics of Architecture' (1973), where he applies his general semiotic theory to the question of architecture and the built environment. Eco differentiates between two 'functions' of the architectural object: function in the sense of *utilitas*, so 'function' in the narrow denotative sense of the word, and the complex of secondary functions that are connotative and therefore symbolic. ''And it should be clear that we are not being metaphorical in calling the symbolic

connotations functional, because although they may not be immediately identified with the 'functions' narrowly defined, they do represent (and indeed communicate) in each case a real social utility of the object'' (Eco, 1997, p. 187). So similarly to Gadamer, Eco too discerns how works of architecture on the one hand relate to us in how the building offers certain possibilities of functionality. However, Eco goes further than Gadamer by asserting how buildings on the other hand relate to their entire meaningful context in their connotative function. He gives an example of this functional differentiation in the example of a throne:

> A seat tells me first of all that I can sit down on it. But if the seat is a throne, it must do more than seat one: it serves to seat one with a certain dignity, to corroborate its user's 'sitting in dignity' – perhaps through various accessory signs connoting 'regalness' (eagles on the arms, a high crowned back, etc.). Indeed the connotation of dignity and regalness can become so functionally important that the basic function, to seat one, may even be slighted, or distorted: a throne, to connote regalness, often demands that the person sitting on it sit rigidly and uncomfortably […] and therefore seats one 'poorly' with respect to the primary *utilitas*. Thus to seat one is only one of the functions of the throne – and only one of its meanings, the first but not the most important (Eco, 1997, p. 187).

As the example illustrates, a throne is more than simply a seat. There is indeed a primary denotative function of seating a person, but through its secondary connotative function this seating occurs in a particular way: with a certain dignity or regalness. We can relate these functions to Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'motor signification'. Focusing on the 'motor' aspect, we have the way in which the architecture enters into a relationship with the inhabitants in that it offers them certain possibilities to act. This would be Eco's denotative function. Focusing on the 'signification' aspect, we have the way in which the architecture refers in our experience to its entire meaningful context, delineating certain symbolic qualities. Through this symbolic structure, we come to understand the way in which the actions take place – Eco's connotative function. However, as the example of the throne already shows, although denotative and connotative functions are separable in reflection, they are not separable in action; actions are always performed a certain way. The way we understand an object determines the way we interact with it, as we act in and understand the world in one movement. This is why the meaning that architecture expresses cannot be separated from the action that architecture expresses, as I had presented in chapter one. Architecture always allows us to perform actions *in a particular way*.

It becomes clear that the connotative functions cannot be separated from the denotative functions of architecture, as our actions always take place in a certain way. This means that in our experience the connotative qualities of a building are closely connected to the actions that take place in and with the building. Certain connotative qualities may work well for a certain type of building, but not for others. Here I want to draw a parallel to the medium of film. Film too composes action; it tells a story through moving images, so through the way that individual shots are configured and the way that the whole is composed through the montage of those shots. In this visual medium, the story is as much told through the actions that the characters undertake, as through the connotative qualities of the imagery itself. The colour scheme of a shot can delineate something about the mood of the characters; costuming is often deployed in a symbolic way, saying something about characters' personalities or signifying their transformations; and even camera angles can express certain emotions. These are all examples of connotative qualities enhancing the narrative and making the viewers understand the narrative in a better way. A dark colour scheme may be well suited for a horror film, but not for a comedy, as it would not fit the story that is being told. There is a similar connection between action and symbolism in architecture; the effects that its medium expresses should follow from and enhance the actions that take place there. The connotative functions make us understand the building in a certain way. We can take for example the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. To me, this style of architecture works so well because it is connected to the actions that take place within the museum; the architecture elevates the experience of the modern art. However, I think it would be a detriment to the aesthetic experience of the architecture if its function would transform into, for example, a hospital. For patients, such a structure may not be experienced as impressive anymore, but rather as daunting. The symbolic mediations of the architecture affect the experience of the actions that it facilitates.

So far we have discussed the way in which we understand the possibilities for action that architecture offers us. We have established that we experience the possibilities to act in architecture through their denotative and connotative functions, which we can comprehend through our pre-understanding of action and its symbolic mediations. Now it is time to discuss our intention towards architecture, which, I argue, is influenced by the way our pre-understanding develops certain expectations. After all, our actions are always saturated with meaning and so we have a certain understanding of what it means to perform those actions. I will give an example of a recent experience I had in a movie theater. Usually I enter the

theater, stand in line in order to let an employee scan my ticket, pass the counter to buy food and drinks – which always makes the theatre smell like popcorn – and then go to find my seat. There is always a certain atmosphere in the building which makes me excited for the movie I am about to see. This theater was different however, as it was built in such a way that would not require any employee to be present; every hall was enormous although there weren't any people present, the walls were empty and without any reference to movies, people had to scan their own ticket to pass through the gates, and there was a little section in which people could buy pre-packaged foods, which they then had to check out themselves at the self-scan cash register. To me, several aspects of what it means to 'go to the cinema' were transformed, in order to – it seems like – make as much money as possible. In other words, the symbolic mediation for action that the theater proposed didn't match with my intention to act. This intention was not entirely conscious or premeditated; rather, it was present through my pre-understanding of action and I became conscious of it because I *could not* act in that way.

We can think of the cinema as a certain paradigm of space. As Ricoeur remarks, a paradigm within narrative constitutes a typology of emplotment (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 68). In architecture a paradigm therefore constitutes a typology of design. There is for example the obvious way in which a suburban family house differs from a high-rise apartment building, or a semi-detached house from a farmhouse. On a smaller scale we can differentiate a storefront from a residential façade, a street café from a grocery stall, and a kitchen from a bathroom. It is important to note that we must not underestimate the degree to which our intention of action is connected to our pre-comprehension of these paradigms of space; the expectations we have of a certain type of space. Earlier the example was given on how the action of raising a hand means something different in different contexts. So too do our actions have different meanings when we perform them in different architectural contexts, and so do different architectural contexts come with different expectations. For example, the act of eating is completely different at home in contrast to a restaurant. There are different symbolic systems that determine the way in which these actions take place and therefore influence our intention towards the building – we expect a different way of eating in a restaurant than we do at home and therefore approach a restaurant in a different manner than our own dining table.

So far an account has been given of the way our pre-understanding of action develops certain expectations towards architecture, which influences our intention. There is one more aspect of intention that I wish to cover, which pertains to the way we make use of a building. As we have seen in the first chapter, Dewey argues that art has the ability to amplify our

experience. The experience that is constituted by expression – and therefore occurs through a medium – signifies a deeper interaction between people and their environment. We have seen that if we merely make use of a building as a means in order to fulfil a certain goal, a medium is not formed and therefore the architecture does not take part in elevating one's experience. I will argue that inhabitation does is fact require the architecture to function as a medium and therefore add to the meaning of the actions that take place within. This is a complicated matter due to the fact that, as Dewey asserts, works of art inherently are a significant part of saturating actions with meaning (Dewey, 2005, p. 340). We can think of the way that churches take part in the meaning of the act of worship – there is something significantly different between the experience of worship in any place whatsoever, and the experience of worship *in a church*. We can think of countless examples of actions which could not take place without a particular built space and thus have necessarily emerged within the evolution of built spaces. However, what I am talking about here is the way in which we relate ourselves to the buildings. When a space is merely used as a means for actions to take place, then we do not properly inhabit it. There must always be a certain kind of appreciation for the medium itself – whether consciously or unconsciously – in order for us to experience the inhabitation of the space. I think that it is especially here that the aesthetic qualities of the architecture influence people's experience of inhabitation. It is no wonder to me that Vitruvius famously declared *firmitatis*, *utilitatis*, and *venustatis* – stability, utility, and beauty – as the three necessary principles to any well-designed building. I think that it is partly for this reason that the first place many people think about when reflecting upon inhabitation is their home; a space which, more than any other space, they have furnished and decorated according to their own aesthetic taste. Precisely because of the aesthetic match between the space and one's own taste, people will more readily appreciate its medium instead of merely the actions that the building facilitates. I think that when we are less familiar with a building, its aesthetic qualities help direct our attention towards the building itself. In contrast, we may be less struck by the aesthetic qualities of buildings we are very familiar with – like our own homes – but I think that here the medium itself gives us, perhaps unconsciously, more a sense of tranquility and belonging. In such spaces, we may be less aware of the deep interconnectedness between us and our environment, but our ability to carry out our intentions all the more effortlessly signifies it is indeed very much present. With both familiar and unfamiliar architecture, their medium is therefore crucial for us to experience inhabitation.

One project that comes to mind I think of architecture being appreciated for the medium itself and simultaneously enhancing the experience of the actions that take place within is the *Kunstmuseum* in the Hague, designed by H.P. Berlage (1935). To me, this building is a great example of the architecture being completely integral to the experience of the art; here, the architecture does not take away from the experience of the art but actually elevates it. People enter the museum through a long pergola, gradually distancing themselves from the bustle of the streets. Once inside, the visitor enters the monumental hall from which the different rooms are accessible. Every space is lit with tempered natural daylight and in order to prevent museum fatigue, Berlage designed the rooms in a human scale and of different sizes. The passage between the rooms are never placed directly opposite each other so that each room receives equal attention; and to allow the visitor to get lost in the art, he ensured that there is no clear walking route (Kunstmuseum Den Haag, 2022). These considerations, in combination with the beautiful details of the building, make it so that to me the architecture is inextricably linked to the experience of the art and therefore adds meaning to the experience. However, I cannot presume that everyone has this experience. I can also imagine a person who is very exited for a particular exhibition but does not care much for architecture and hardly notices the building – to this person the museum is mostly a means in order to see the exhibition. I would argue that in this case, the person would not inhabit the museum.

I have argued that we inhabit architecture when we experience a harmony between the way our body intends to act and the way the architecture offers the possibilities for meaningful action, in which the architecture is not only a means for the action to take place but appreciated as a medium in itself. On the one hand we have determined that the possibilities for meaningful action that we experience in a building are determined by its denotative and connotative functions, which we can comprehend through our pre-understanding of action and its symbolic mediations. Architecture always refers to an entire world of meaning while offering us possibilities to act, by means of which we always perform actions in a particular way. On the other hand, our intention towards architecture is influenced by the way that our pre-understanding of action develops certain expectations of spaces. Moreover, the architecture must – through its aesthetic qualities – direct intention towards its medium itself. There must always be a certain kind of appreciation for the medium of architecture in order to experience inhabitation.

The experience of inhabitation relies on the experience of a harmony between our body and the architecture; a match between our intention of action, which is determined by our pre-comprehension of that action, and the possibilities for meaningful action that the architecture offers. This, however, is not always the case, which becomes clear in Foucault's discussion of the possibility of architecture to allow for people's liberation. He gives the famous example of the *Familistère* of Jean-Baptiste Godin at Guise (1859). The Familistère was a residential block that was to serve as a commune in which laborers of the nearby factory could live, work and recreate together; a true social utopia. The workers were to be met in their every need with a daycare center, a school, a bathhouse with laundry room, drying room and a swimming pool, a theater and shops. At first it therefore seems like the building-complex would address the workers every need. However, Foucault makes clear how a spatial configuration can still in some way prevent the experience of inhabitation, despite the fact that it allows for many desired functions:

> The architecture of Godin was clearly intended for the freedom the people. Here was something that manifested the power of ordinary workers to participate in the exercise of their trade. It was a rather important sign and instrument of autonomy for a group of workers. Yet no one could enter or leave the place without being seen by everyone – an aspect of the architecture that could be totally oppressive. But it could only be oppressive if people were prepared to use their own presence in order to watch over others (Foucault, 1997, p. 372).

It becomes clear that in the work of Godin, any action that pertained to liberty but actually resulted in oppression could therefore not result in inhabitation. The Familistère was intended for the possibility of the exercise of freedom; however, when there is not a convergence between the building and the way that people actually respond to the configuration of the building, ''the panoptic qualities of Guise could perfectly well have allowed it to be used as a prison'' (Foucault, 1997, p. 372). Thus, the intended way of living by the architect does not necessarily translate into that way of living by the people. For Foucault this does not mean that the exercise of freedom is completely indifferent to spatial distribution, but that an intended way of interaction can only function when there is an understanding of the way that people tend to respond to a given spatial distribution: ''in the case of divergence or distortion, it becomes the opposite of that which has been intended'' (Foucault, 1997, p. 372).

Chapter 3: The Refiguration of our Experience of Architecture

Something that may be quite obvious, but has not really been touched upon yet, is how our pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic mediations in architectural space is not static, but rather in a constant state of transformation. In fact, architecture takes part in the process of saturating actions with symbolic meaning and transforming this meaning. This is important for our understanding of inhabitation and building, as this means that there is a significant temporal aspect to the experience of architecture – buildings may remain the same, but our understanding and therefore experience of them changes over time. An understanding of the way in which our experience of inhabitation changes therefore has consequences for our understanding of the act of building itself. This chapter will give an account of the way that our pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic mediations in architectural space changes, in order to be able to argue in the next chapter that the way we build cannot remain static either.

I will call the way that our pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic mediations in architectural space changes *refiguration*, after Ricoeur's third stage of *mimesis*. In his *Time and Narrative* he states that the very meaning of the act of configuration, which constitutes emplotment, is a result of its intermediary position between the stages of prefiguration and refiguration (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 53). In other words, the meaning of the configurative activity results from its ability to alter people's pre-comprehension – to transform the way that people see and understand themselves and the world. To build is therefore to contribute to inhabitation. It is here where we can come to understand the mediating power of architecture between people and their environment, as this transformed pre-understanding alters the way that people experience inhabitation. Ricoeur says as much in his 'Architecture and Narrativity', as he asserts that ''it is inhabiting which the architectural project redesigns and which we are going to reread'' (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 33). After all, a narrative does not complete its journey within the enclosure of the text, but in its counterpart: the reader (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 38). Ricoeur here refers to the dialectic between reading and writing:

> For it is very much a matter of dialectic: taken up again and assumed in the act of reading, the text unfolds its capacity to illuminate or clarify the life of the reader; it has both the power of discovering, of revealing the hidden, the unsaid of a life shielded

> from Socratic scrutiny, and that of transforming the banal interpretation that the reader makes according to the bent of day-to-day life (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 39).

Refiguration is the third moment of narrative, because this possibility to clarify or transform the life of the reader is exactly what carries the text outside itself. The dialectic has a double input as the reader comes to the text with their own expectations, and these expectations are then confronted in the reading, by the text's propositions of meaning (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 39). It is from this double input that we will come to understand the notion of refiguration within the context of architecture, as our pre-comprehension impacts both. After all, in the previous chapter we have already discussed how it is through our pre-understanding of action and its symbolic mediations that we can recognize denotative and connotative functions in architecture, while at the same time this pre-understanding develops certain expectations towards architecture. I will now discuss refiguration from both these perspectives.

We have determined that we can recognize the denotative and connotative functions that are represented in architecture because we have a pre-understanding of the world of action and its symbolic mediations. However, this pre-understanding is in a constant state of development because – as will become clear throughout this chapter – we always attribute meaning to what we perceive. Before elaborating on this further, I will give two examples that illustrate how meaning-attribution to architecture always occurs, even when it not intended by the architect. The first example of this is functionalism, which is an approach to building in which the design of the architecture solely serves the particular function. In his essay 'Functionalism Today' (1965), Theodor Adorno explains why functionalism can never be *pure* functionalism through exposing the paradoxes within Adolf Loos's treatment of functionalism and ornament. In his championing of functionalism, Loos had dismissed ornament as the decadent product of erotic symbolism. However, as Adorno retorts: ''Criticism of ornament means no more than criticism of that which has lost its functional and symbolic signification'' (Adorno, 1997, p. 7). Even elements of functionalist architecture may therefore become ornamental over time. Moreover, even the functional can attract the symbolic as humans may attach symbolic significance to even the most technical of objects. Functionalists cannot prevent their works of architecture from being expressive – from being invested with meaning. Even when functionalist architects try to avoid expression, they must still pay tribute to it by attempting to avoid it (Adorno, 1997, p. 10). Therefore, ''the absolute rejection of style becomes itself a form of style'' (Adorno, 1997, p. 10). It is impossible for architecture

to offer possibilities for actions without to some degree determining the way in which these actions would occur.

In contrast to functionalism, we will now reflect on a monument in which the symbolic function far surpasses the denotative function: the Eiffel tower. As Roland Barthes makes clear, the Eiffel Tower was from the outset quite hated by the people in Paris. ‘’Maupassant often lunched at the restaurant in the tower, though he didn’t care much for the food: ‘It’s the only place in Paris,’ he used to say, ‘where I don’t have to see it’’ (Barthes, 1997, p. 172). After all, the tower was regarded as utterly useless, ‘’which, it was believed at the time, was sufficient to condemn it’’ (Barthes, 1997, p. 173). In response, Gustave Eiffel listed all kinds of possible uses for the tower; it could function as platform for aerodynamic measurements, studies of the resistance of substances, radio-electric research, meteorological observations, etc. However, as Barthes states:

> These uses are doubtless incontestable, but they seem quite ridiculous alongside the overwhelming myth of the Tower, of the human meaning which it has assumed throughout the world. This is because here the utilitarian excuses, however ennobled they may be by the myth of Science, are nothing in comparison to the great imaginary function which enables men to be strictly human (Barthes, 1997, p. 174).

For Barthes, the Eiffel Tower plays the part of a pure signifier, so a form in which people perpetually put meaning – meaning drawn from their knowledge, their dreams, their history – without this meaning thereby every being finite or fixed (Barthes, 1997, p. 173). Although Eiffel himself rationalized his project as a primarily useful one, over time people attached such symbolic significance to it, that any of the denotative functions seem meaningless in comparison. The Tower serves as the universal symbol of Paris, of modernity, of technological development in the nineteenth century; ‘’there is no journey to France which isn’t made, somehow, in the Tower’s name, no schoolbook, poster, or film about France which fails to propose it as the major sign of a people and of a place: it belongs to the universal language of travel’’ (Barthes, 1997, p. 172). As Barthes explains, there is a double movement going on here: ‘’architecture is always dream and function, expression of a utopia and instrument of a convenience’’ (Barthes, 1997, p. 174). However, similarly to the philosophers mentioned before, for Barthes these two functions cannot actually be separated. Barthes refers here to the Babel complex, as Babel was supposed to *serve* to communicate with God, although this function obscures the fact that the way in which this action was to be achieved

was by way of a great ascensional dream. After all, to Barthes ‘’use never does anything but shelter meaning’’ (Barthes, 1997, p. 174).

As the examples of functionalism and the Eiffel Tower make clear, we inevitably attribute meaning to what we perceive. This process of meaning-attribution is what Merleau-Ponty calls *constitution*, or later *sedimentation*, by cause of which we are able to count on our acquired concepts and judgments (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 131). As Chouraqui explains, sedimentation is a process of meaning-making which is crucial to understand why the world is embodied to us (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 114). He gives the example of the façade. When we look at the façade of a house, most people would not say they are looking at a façade but at a house, although it could very well be that the house is being rebuilt and only a façade is left. ‘’The house behind the façade is being constituted in the very act of perception’’ (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 115). Without this constitutive act we would not be able to function; with the perception of a façade we must make related assumptions about what is behind it, or else we would not know we could enter (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 115). Merleau-Ponty too makes use of everyday examples in order to illustrate how we attribute meaning to interactions without our necessarily realizing it, as they become ‘sedimented’ in our interaction with the world:

> When I move about in my house, I know immediately and without any intervening discourse that to walk toward the bathroom involves passing close to the bedroom, or that to look out the window involves having the fireplace to my left. In this small world, each gesture or each perception is immediately situated in relation to a thousand virtual coordinates. When I chat with a close friend, each of his words and each of mine contain, beyond what they signify for everyone else, a multitude of references to the principal dimensions of his personality and of mine, without our needing to evoke our previous conversations (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 131).

In these examples, there is an acquired world, giving experience additional meaning. I think that this concept of sedimentation is further evidence as to why we first think of our own homes when we reflect upon inhabitation, as it is here that sedimentation is particularly powerful. In our homes, there is a whole world of meaning that we perceive beyond its physical structure. For many people, there is no place on earth where the meaning of certain actions is so intertwined with the architecture of their own house – no place where sleeping more comfortable than sleeping in their own bedroom, and no place where cooking is more pleasant than cooking in their own kitchen; knowing exactly how to move around, what to find behind each cabinet and which places are best suited for certain types of preparation. It is

a completely different experience cooking in any kitchen whatsoever, and cooking in your own kitchen. Chouraqui gives the example of the building in which he was writing his book:

> Every day that I go into this building, I know more about this building. It means more to me. It is also the building that I did stuff in yesterday, which was not the case the day before because I had a free day, and so on. In other words, there is a dynamic where every object comes to greater definition, greater distinction, greater clarity, it becomes harder for me to confuse this building with another one, for example (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 116).

He explains that this process of constitution leads into Merleau-Ponty's idea of history, as ''history is the milieu in which constitution functions'' (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 116). In history we obtain a richer and clearer meaning of the world; we are transformed. For Merleau-Ponty, the world is more that the series of objects we encounter in it; after all, it contains certain rules for interpreting them. We call these rules cultural rules, and these rules are grounded in history and pertain to the entire fabric of our meaningful world. As such, ''perception relies on the structure of history'' (Chouraqui, 2021, p. 116). We can relate this to our perception of the Eiffel Tower. At first the tower was seen as an empty monument; it did not have a function and did not mean anything to the people of Paris yet. So Gustave Eiffel sought to make it into a 'temple of Science' (Barthes, 1997, p. 174). However, over time people developed meaningful relationships with the Tower, which then came to take part in its symbolic status. Eventually this process became so powerful that any denotative function turned meaningless in comparison to its connotative function; although, of course, the denotative function can never be ridded of completely as people will always have to interact with the structure – walk around it, ascend it, make use of its restaurant, etc. – in order to perceive and attribute meaning to it. We will always continue to attribute meaning to the Eiffel tower, and so Barthes asks himself ''who can say what the Tower will be for humanity tomorrow? But there can be no doubt it will always be something, and something of humanity itself'' (Barthes, 1997, p. 173).

So far we have discussed refiguration from the perspective of recognizing denotative and connotative functions represented in architecture, which is always in a state of development because we necessarily attribute meaning to what we perceive, and at the same time history gives us certain rules for the act of perception. Let us now discuss refiguration from the point of view of our expectations towards architecture. Here I will argue that our expectations towards architecture are refigured through our interaction with paradigms of

space, and that at the same time these paradigms themselves are not set in stone but also in a constant state of transformation through the dialectic between innovation and tradition. As Ricoeur explains, paradigms are themselves issued from previous innovations, and these paradigms provide the rules for further experimentation. Conversely, these rules change again under the pressure of new inventions, but they change slowly and even resist change. Paradigms constitute the grammar that governs the composition of new works – ‘’new before becoming typical’’ (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 68). Every innovation therefore remains in some way governed by the rules of the tradition’s paradigms, as ‘’The labor of imagination is not born from nothing’’ (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 68). We can think for example of the paradigm of a kitchen; what constitutes a typical kitchen today is not what constituted a kitchen a hundred years ago. The paradigm of the kitchen has shifted through the innovations that have taken place. At the same time, not everybody will have the same notion of what the paradigm of the kitchen entails, as people’s understanding of these paradigms is determined by the interactions they have had with those paradigms. Through the way we interact with spaces, our pre-comprehension of paradigms that those spaces take part in is refigured. There are for example many building paradigms for housing – the suburban family house, the apartment building, the student housing, the retirement home. As we continue to interact with these different kinds of housing, we come to understand how people act differently in them and how they allow for different social relations. In the same way we can come to understand different kinds of spaces – kitchens, balconies, bathrooms, terraces, entrance halls, etc. By interacting with these paradigms of space we come to understand the rules and relations by which they operate. Every interaction with a new space in some way adds meaning to and transforms one’s pre-comprehension of those paradigms of space; our pre-understanding is constantly being refigured through our interactions with spaces. A new restaurant is therefore connected to the other restaurants we have experienced, and a tension is formed between our pre-understanding of action based on our previous experiences and the way that the new restaurant seems to call us to action. These paradigms are not only in a state of constant transformation; new paradigms can arise as well. For example – although I am not certain when this initiative started – I recently became aware of places in which students and elderly people live together. In exchange for low housing costs, students undertake activities with the elderly in order to combat loneliness. Living situations like these can develop new kinds of experiences of inhabitation for both students and elderly people. I can also imagine that with our current housing crisis architects may want to experiment even more with new ways of living together, in order to be able to house more people.

In conclusion, on the one hand it is impossible to know in which way people's pre-understanding will develop and so how people will come to understand a certain structure – after all, perception necessarily results in meaning-attribution and the rules by which we perceive are given to us through history. At the same time, it is possible to anticipate on people's expectations from an understanding of the relations that constitute paradigms of space. It is the very meaning of the configurative activity to refigure our pre-understanding, and so to contribute to our experience of inhabitation. Perhaps this is the reason why so many people are curious about celebrity's houses – as evident in the popularity of 'Architectural Digest' – and why home renovations programs are so prevalent; these media are a way of discovering new possibilities in architectural spaces beyond one's own physical environment. They have the ability to refigure people's understanding of inhabitation, and therefore to make people see their own homes in a new way.

With this understanding of refiguration, I would like to end this chapter with two examples of the way that architecture has the ability to change the way that people inhabit. One very significant way in which architecture has influenced human relations and the way in which people think about themselves, is through the very permanence of its structures. Archaeologist Marion Benz stresses how from the Neolithic period onwards, humans have built monuments at certain points in history to tie a community to a place rather than to a group of people:

> Humans had the technological ability to build houses long before we started living in them full time. So it wasn't as if we had a technological breakthrough that led to a new way of thinking. Indeed it might be the reverse. As societies became more complex, we needed more permanent objects to think about ourselves […] Settled life caused a culture shock that's still reverberating across human civilizations today. To cope with that, or perhaps to express it, people built monumental structures that converted ordinary stretches of land into fantastical landscapes. Stone monoliths, pyramids and ziggurats, and even today's mega skyscrapers express the same impulse to tie humanity to a specific, special place (Benz as cited in Newitz, 2021, p. 33).

We can see that our way of living developed along with the act of building; people built monumental structures and in turn, the permanence of these structures influenced the way a community could think of itself – as a community permanently tied to a specific place. Through these new experiences of inhabitation, new social relationships could emerge, and these social relationships were then reflected back into the built structures and passed on to

new generations of people (Newitz, 2021, p. 40). A more specific example of the way that innovation in architecture changes the way that people inhabit is offered by Michel Foucault, who in a 1976 interview with the French journal *Hérodote*, emphasized the importance of the reciprocal relations between people and their environment in the development of architecture. He gives the example of houses in the Middle Ages, in terms of the problem of the chimney. Foucault refers to a historian who was in the process of showing that when it became possible to build a chimney inside the house – a chimney with a hearth – that at that moment all sorts of things changed in relations between individuals. The most interesting question for Foucault here is why people struggled to find a way to put a chimney inside houses in the first place:

> It is certain, and of capital importance, that this technique was a formative influence on new human relations, but it is impossible to think that it would have been developed and adapted had there not been in the play and strategy of human relations something which tended in that direction. What is interesting is always interconnection, not the primacy of this over that, which never has any meaning (Foucault, 1997, p. 377).

The chimney created the possibility for the emergence of new human relations, but there was already something in the pre-existing human relations which demanded the institution of something like a chimney to begin with. Any innovation within architecture can therefore only be understood through this reciprocal relationship. Innovations create possibilities for new meaningful relations with the world, but at the same time these innovations can only be understood through conflicts within existing paradigms.

Chapter 4: Building in order Experience Inhabitation

Lastly, it is time to return to the research question: *'How can we understand the act of building in terms of a conception of inhabitation that is based on the experience of architecture?'*. This is the question that will be answered in this chapter. However, before I can do this, let us quickly assess what I have argued so far. The experience of inhabitation depends upon the interaction between people and architecture; it is a melodic experience in which the possibilities for meaningful action that the architecture offers correspond with people's intention of action, while at the same time the architecture amplifies the experience through functioning as a medium. We can recognize the possibilities that architecture offers through our pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic mediations, while this pre-comprehension also develops our expectations towards architecture. At the same time, I have stressed the importance of the aesthetic qualities of the architecture to the experience of inhabitation, as these facilitate a deeper interconnectedness between people and their environment in experience, and I have argued for a close connection between the connotative design choices and the actions that take place somewhere. In the chapter on refiguration, I have argued that interaction with architecture always refigures our pre-comprehension in some way; it is the very meaning of the configurative activity and so it is the task of the architect to contribute to inhabitation. On the one hand it is impossible to say in which direction our pre-comprehension will evolve, but on the other hand it is possible to understand people's expectations and so to propose new meaning from an understanding of these expectations.

Now, from this understanding of the experience of inhabitation I want to draw two conclusions pertaining to the act of building, both of which come back to the general idea that building must come forth from an understanding of the experience of inhabitation. The first conclusion will concern the melodic experience of inhabitation of being able to act according to one's intentions. The second conclusion will regard the importance of the aesthetic qualities of architecture experience of inhabitation.

First of all, we can conclude that it is the task of the architect to contribute to the experience of inhabitation, but that at the same the architecture must still present possibilities of denotative and connotative functions in such a way that matches with people's existing pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic mediations. This means that in the act of building, the architect must first delve into the world of the people that they will build for, and come to

understand their pre-comprehension in regard to the functions that will be constructed. It is then from such an understanding that the architect can use their own expertise to resolve challenges that inhabitation faces and to propose new meaning. Let us go back to the example of the movie theater. I suspected that the ways in which the architect deviated from designing for the actions that are usually found in a movie theater was not because they wanted to improve upon the experience of going to the cinema, but because they were constrained by the demands of their client to design in such a way that would make the client as much money as possible. We see here, therefore, that the design choices did not rest upon connections internal to the actions, but on external factors. Why is this a problem? In order to explain this, we will return once more to Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* and his account of the configurative activity. Here, Ricoeur explains how the act of configuration pertaining to narrative is more concerned with the coherence of the *muthos*, than with the substance of the particular story itself. ''It's making [faire] is immediately a universalizing 'making' […] To make up a plot is already to make the intelligible spring from the accidental, the universal from the singular, the necessary or the probable from the episodic'' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 41). For architecture this would mean that the significance of the configurative process lies in the coherence of the way in which actions are composed together – so *how* actions are represented in such a way that it is universal. Ricoeur makes clear that the universals that a plot generates are not Platonic ideas; ''A plot engenders such universals when the structure of its action rests on the connections internal to the action and not on external accidents. These internal connections as such are the beginning of the universalization'' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 41). Therefore, the way that actions are inscribed into space must result from the internal connections to the actions, and this must not be based on chance. A plot is a mediation between individual events and the story as a whole – it draws a meaningful story from a diversity of events and incidents. Events therefore get their definition from their contribution to the development of the plot (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 65).

We may view configurating architecture from a similar perspective; the way in which materials are arranged – and so come to express meaning and action – must follow from considerations internal to the meaning of the actions. Dewey takes on a very similar approach to this act of composition as Ricoeur does. He explains: ''Order is not imposed from without but is made out of the relations of harmonious interactions that energies bear to one another'' (Dewey, 2005, p. 13). Ordering is therefore dependent upon internal connections and cannot be imposed without taking these relations into consideration. Therefore, the problem of the

movie theater is not that the architect deviated from the way that most people have a pre-comprehension of what it means to go to the cinema; rather the problem is that this deviation relied upon capitalistic considerations instead of considerations coming from conflicts within the existing paradigm of the cinema.

Moreover, there are many challenges facing society today in which architecture is both part of the problem but can also contribute to its solution – environmental destruction, loneliness and a housing shortage being examples of this. As we saw in the previous chapter, such challenges can result in new or transformed paradigms of space, constituting a new way of living. We have seen that architecture has a genuine capacity to change people's pre-understanding of action, and therefore change the way that people act. However, this does not mean that the architect's intentions to propose a new way of living will be accepted by the inhabitants. After all, we have also seen that without an understanding of the way in which people will respond to a certain configuration of space, the results may easily become the opposite of what the architect intended – as was the case with the *Familistère* of Godin. It is therefore important that, as Ricoeur argues, inhabitation becomes an answer to building (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 39). Not in the sense that existing models of inhabitation are reproduced, but rather that an understanding of the experience of inhabitation becomes guiding in the design process. Such an approach should contribute to inhabitation by understanding the way in which it is experienced, and creatively respond to challenges with at the same time people's expectations towards architecture in mind. As Ricoeur asserts, ‘'it will not suffice for an architectural project to be well thought-out, or even for it to be held to be rational for it to be understood and accepted. All planners ought to learn that an abyss can separate the rules of the rationality of a project – that is true for all politics, moreover – from the rules of acceptability to a public'' (Ricoeur, 2017, p. 39). The experience of inhabitation relies upon being able to act according to one's intentions, which means that architects must gain an understanding of people's expectations towards architecture, from which they will be able to innovate and respond to existing challenges in the act of building.

Secondly, we have established that the aesthetic experience that is constituted by architecture when it *expresses* – and therefore occurs through a medium – signifies a deeper interaction between people and their environment. It is this amplified connection in experience that is crucial for the experience of inhabitation. When a space is merely used as a means for actions to take place, we therefore do not properly inhabit it. Only when the architecture is experienced as a medium – and therefore the specific arrangement of materials

of the space are immanent to the meaning of the actions that take place there – can we experience inhabitation. This means that here too an understanding of the experience of inhabitation must be seen as an answer to building. It is here that the aesthetic qualities of the architecture are especially important; through the aesthetic qualities of architecture, people's intention is more likely to be directed towards the medium of architecture itself. I have already proposed that a part of the reason why people want to live in a house that is beautiful to them – both inside and out – is because of the significance of the medium of architecture to the experience of inhabitation. People furnish and decorate their houses according to their own aesthetic tastes, so that the aesthetic experience of their environment becomes more integral to the actions that take place in those spaces. We may not be as struck by the aesthetic qualities of buildings we have become habituated in, but in such cases there is all the more a deep interconnectedness between us and our environment. However, it is clear that people are not always able to alter the interior of architectural spaces to their own tastes and equally cannot always surround themselves with architecture of which the exterior is to their own tastes. It is therefore also the task of the architect to create a building which the people that will live there will generally find beautiful. In my experience however, the concept of beauty is hardly touched upon in architecture school precisely because beauty today is found to be subjective. Rather, it is important that the 'concept' is coherent – that all design choices are guided by and can be lead back to the chosen concept. I agree that design choices should not be arbitrary; however, I equally believe that what people find beautiful in architecture is also not arbitrary.

So let us dwell upon aesthetic qualities in architecture for a moment. How can we have an understanding of aesthetic experience in architecture from which we can comment on the act of building? First of all, we may note that beauty is something that happens in experience and is therefore neither subjective nor objective. As I mentioned, I do not agree with disregarding the notion of beauty from the design process because there is a subjective element to it. Just because it is impossible to build something that will be universally regarded as beautiful, does not mean we should give up the concept altogether – precisely because of its contribution to the experience of inhabitation. As we saw in the first chapter, Dewey explained that architecture is principally expressive of human affairs. It is therefore no surprise to me that he argues that ''esthetic values in architecture are peculiarly dependent upon absorption of meanings drawn from collective human life'' (Dewey, 2005, p. 242). Dewey gives the example of the ugliness of most factory buildings. For him, the function of

these buildings inevitably reflects a distortion of human values, which is therefore incorporated into their experience. He wrote: ‘’No mere technical skill can render such buildings beautiful as temples once were. First there must occur a humane transformation so that these structures will spontaneously express a harmony of desires and needs that does not now exist’’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 241). However, Dewey wrote his book in the 1930’s and today most of the factories he would have encountered have fallen out of use. Nowadays, many old factory buildings are being transformed into workplaces and apartments, and are actually deemed as beautiful – I think precisely because these factories are no longer associated with the degrading human conditions in which people used to work there. Over time the meaning that people attribute to these factories has changed and so its connotative functions have changed. He also gives the example of the farmhouse:

> Architecture, sculpture, painting can stir emotion profoundly. The ‘right’ farmhouse come upon in a certain mood may constrict the throat and make the eyes water as does a poetical passage. But the effect is because of a spirit and atmosphere due to association with human life. Apart from the emotional effect of formal relations, the plastic arts arouse emotion through *what* they express (Dewey, 2005, p. 247).

The human values that are represented in both the denotative and the connotative functions in architecture influence whether we find that architecture beautiful. It should therefore not be so interesting to architects *what* people find beautiful, but rather *why* people find certain things beautiful. The investigative work on the part of the architects is therefore not an analysis of historically deemed ‘beautiful’ buildings, but an investigation into human life itself. From such an understanding of beauty, architects can propose new forms of beauty in a way that is more likely to be appreciated by the future inhabitants themselves and which will therefore contribute to the experience of inhabitation.

In this chapter, I have shown that the act of building must be responsive to our experience of inhabitation. The experience of inhabitation depends upon the interaction between people and architecture; it is a melodic experience in which the possibilities for meaningful action that the architecture offers correspond with people’s intention of action, while at the same time the architecture amplifies the experience through functioning as a medium. This means that architects must build in such a way that anticipates our expectations towards spaces and understands the symbolic systems that mediate our actions; after all, from such an understanding architects can respond to existing challenges and propose new meaning in a way that contributes to the experience of inhabitation. Moreover, the act of building must

occur in such a way that the design follows from considerations that are internal to the meaning of the actions that take place, and not from external concerns. Lastly, in the experience of inhabitation there is an elevated experience through the interaction between people and their environment, which is constituted by the architecture functioning as a medium. The act of building must therefore establish architecture with pleasurable aesthetic qualities. As architecture is mainly expressive of human affairs, the aesthetic values in architecture are especially dependent upon the human values that the denotative and connotative functions express. These values are not stable so what we deem as beautiful in buildings is not stable either. However, architects can indeed explore *why* people find certain things beautiful by investigating human life itself.

Conclusion

To conclude, this thesis has presented a conception of inhabitation that is based on our experience of architecture, from which it would be possible to comment on the act of building. In order to answer this question, I have first explained what exactly I mean with the term architecture. We have first approached architecture through the Greek concept *téchne*, meaning that architecture imitates *phýsis* – the coming-to-be processes of nature and life – and bends *phýsis* in order to bring about what it cannot achieve by itself. This imitation – or *mimesis* – does not signify a literal reproduction, but rather *expression*, which is a way of communicating meaning that requires a medium. A medium refers to the kind of means that is already incorporated into the consequences it produces, and a medium is only formed when it functions in experience *as a medium*. It is here that we can make the differentiation between buildings and architecture. A building may be used as a means to an end – merely to facilitate a certain activity. Architecture on the other hand elevates the experience of the actions that take place in and with the building; it functions as a medium, signifying a more active and attentive communication with our environment.

The second chapter discussed the experience of inhabitation itself. I argued that we experience inhabitation of architecture when we experience a harmony between the way our body intends to act and the way the architecture offers possibilities for the action, in which the architecture simultaneously functions as a medium to us. This conception of inhabitation was inspired by Merleau-Ponty's account of the melodic experience of our body in the world, combined with Dewey's description of the aesthetic experience. We experience the world in terms of the possibilities that it offers *for us*. But at the same time we generate possibilities; technics are the way that we create possibilities in the world which in nature do not arise by themselves. There are two sides of this description of the experience of inhabiting architecture. On the one hand we have determined that the possibilities for meaningful action that we experience in a building are determined by its denotative and connotative functions, which we can comprehend through our pre-understanding of action and its symbolic mediations. This pre-understanding is the first stage of *mimesis* – prior to and necessary for the configurational stage – with which Ricoeur transformed the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis* in order to account for its temporal nature. Through this pre-understanding, we can recognize how architecture always refers to an entire world of meaning while offering us possibilities to act, by way of which we always perform actions in a particular way. On the other hand, our

intention towards architecture is influenced by the way that our pre-understanding develops certain expectations of spaces. Our actions have different meanings when we perform them in different architectural paradigms, and so do these diverse architectural paradigms come with different expectations. At the same time, the aesthetic qualities of the architecture must direct our intention towards the medium itself and elevate our experience by facilitating a deeper interconnectedness between us and our environment. After all, when a space is merely used as a means for actions to take place, then we do not properly inhabit it.

Chapter three discussed the third stage of *mimesis*: refiguration. This refers to the ability of architecture to alter our pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic functions in architectural space. As Ricoeur asserts, the very meaning of the act of configuration results from its intermediary position between the stages of prefiguration and refiguration – so results from the ability of architecture to alter people's pre-comprehension and therefore contribute to the way that people inhabit. On the one hand, it is impossible to know in which way people's pre-understanding will develop and so how people will come to understand a certain structure – after all, perception necessarily results in meaning-attribution and the rules by which we perceive are given to us through history. On the other hand, it is in fact possible to anticipate on people's expectations of space. The existing paradigms of space are themselves issued from previous innovations, and these paradigms provide the rules for further experimentation. Any innovation within architecture can only be understood through the reciprocal relationship between architecture and people.

Lastly, in the fourth chapter I commented on the act of building itself, based on the given conception of inhabitation. I concluded that, inhabitation must become an answer to building – not in the sense that existing models of inhabitation are reproduced, but rather that an understanding of the experience of inhabitation becomes guiding in the design process. The experience of inhabitation relies upon harmony between the way our body intends to act and the way the architecture offers the possibilities for action, in which the architecture simultaneously functions as a medium to us. It is the task of the architect to contribute to inhabitation, but that at the same the architecture must still present possibilities of denotative and connotative functions in such a way that matches with people's existing pre-comprehension of action and its symbolic mediations. This means that in the act of building, the architect must first delve into the world of the people that they will build for and come to understand their pre-comprehension in regards to the functions that will be constructed. It is then from such an understanding that the architect can use their own expertise to resolve

challenges that inhabitation faces in order to propose new meaning. Important in this is that the way in which actions and their symbolic mediations are composed together come forth from connections internal to the action and not from external factors, such as capitalistic considerations. Moreover, in order to inhabit, our intention of action must in some way come together with a sensitivity to the medium of the architecture itself. Only when the architecture is experienced as a medium – and is therefore immanent to the consequences that it produces – can we inhabit. I have argued that here the aesthetic qualities of the architecture are especially important. As aesthetic qualities in architecture are dependent upon the human values it represents – but our pre-comprehension changes over time – it is therefore the task of the architect to investigate *why* people today find certain spatial configurations beautiful. It is then from such an understanding of beauty that architects can propose new forms of beauty in a way that is more likely to be appreciated by the future inhabitants themselves and which will therefore contribute to inhabitation.

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