Steps towards a generous city.

An introductory story
I wanted to be "an artist". I still do, it is something of a bitter-sweet thing. I was seduced into academia through the study of art and the reflection upon it. I discovered that I loved art, history and aesthetics. Thinking about making and the made as well as reflecting on systems of thinking about qualities and how to achieve them was sheer joy. It gave me a passion for thinking about what things are, how they come to be; what I think about them and why I think that way. More and more the thinking started to dominate, always in relation to the concrete mind you: me in *my* environment. To know myself was to know about me in relation to my surrounding.

It was through art and my passion for thinking about it that I was confronted with a special more complicated, difficult and recalcitrant kind of art: a conscious architecture, a discipline in which art became a synthetic part of a larger project including daily life, society and all the consequences of collective behaviour. Buildings presented a special case in the drama of everyday life that all art has as its ground theme. Having said all this, when I became conscious of Architecture, of the play of its intentionalities as well as its wealth in unintended consequences, I reacted primitively at first, by developing an intense hate-love relationship with buildings and streetscapes, especially modern ones. The world became a horrible place with lovely moments to alleviate the drag.

A passion for architecture is so much more dangerous than the occasional and easy intimacy of the personal engagement with a work of art. Even difficult art usually stays within the protective walls of its museum, and if it doesn't it can always be ignored. The occasion for its presentation is selective, exclusive and contingent whereas buildings imposed themselves on everyone; they are inescapable in almost the same way that our skin, our body is inescapable. This is what makes them part of our existential network in which our responsibility to ourselves within the environment is urgent. As I was busy hating buildings, *their* selfishness, I learned to hate very well and came to enjoy my hating. In fact it was often more fun to loathe than to love. I practiced my loathing in the spirit of John Ruskin, whose bile was literature. This was worrying. My irritation with "bad" cities knew no bounds, my anger seemed divine. However, at that moment I started to doubt my sincerity and intentions.

This doubt was planted in me as I noticed that whenever I took the trouble to investigate what I considered to be *ugly,* whether they be *buildings, streets or neighbourhoods*, when I began to *understand* their ugliness I began to develop a perverse sympathy for them. I learnt that much of their ugliness was in fact my shortcoming.

I am very sceptical about Pascal's glib comment that to "understand is to forgive". I still do not believe it and I still find it glib. Understanding is a very different activity to forgiving. The latter is an existential choice and must not be allowed to be referred to anything beyond one's own responsibility. Understanding on the other hand, tempts a thing in the direction of a purpose, which somehow finds its relation to you as you contemplate a thing, even if that purpose is no more than an inquiry into existence itself. But all purpose is to some extent a narrowing of the thing to an object in relation to you.

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An understanding is much more like an inspiration: a breathing-in of the world. It is the nature of the purpose or the "working" of a thing that determines the understanding. If choice plays a part in that, it is a choice that has to "fit" the thing understood. When on the point of forgiveness or condemnation, one must always ask, what does one understand? What does one choose to understand? So the understanding, if it plays a role in forgiveness, plays a dubious selective, comforting role. To forgive on the basis of understanding is a choice that does not liberate the forgiving person from his responsibility to choose to forgive all by himself. It is a relationship of association, not one of necessity. Otherwise it leads one merely to a soft determinism whereby people are absolved of responsibility. I want a determinism whereby people are not absolved of their responsibility. A determinism that is open-ended. Something like the rigorous determinism as conceived by Spinoza.[1]

  We shall come back to all this. What in the end was significant was not so much my inclination to forgiveness and sympathy but rather the realisation that my environment was very much *my* environment, to do with what I pleased within the bounds of physical possibility and legitimate, cogent thought.[2] I was able to overcome environments and *make* them my own. I was responsible for *finding* my own environment.

  There appeared to be three ways of altering or making my environment: I could move out and colonise another. I could alter the environment through physical displacement, that is, with the help of bricks and mortar; and I could adapt my thinking about the environment and its relationship to me. Moving out seemed something of an easy way out. It was giving in to my judgements: believing my own preliminary thoughts so to say, my prejudices and giving them the benefit of any possible doubt. And that was something I felt very hesitant about. Making new environments I have never seriously entertained. I would only ever be suited to making or indeed designing the smallest and least complicated of buildings, which I can do without being an architect. My version of a gentle, non-evangelical and decidedly non-violent anarchism tends to sabotage any Babel-like cooperative enterprise. So what remains is *thinking my environment*.

  My project is to arrive at a concept of the generous in our making, more specifically the concept of a generous city. To make this city we have only two choices as moving out is no longer an option: we have either to make with bricks and mortar, or to make with thought. If we decide to make with bricks and mortar we again have two choices. We can continually start again, performing an endless series of naive beginnings, in the hope that the clean slate will encourage us to be better people. This has been a popular strategy with little result. The other is to work with what we have, do the best we can and try to look kindly upon the result. This is difficult. As a society we, and I am now narrowing my argument to those places on the globe where this is indeed the case, have chosen to leave the making with bricks and mortar to specialised people: civil servants, planners, developers, urban designers, architects, designers, builders etc. We have experts and professionals in that particular field of making. We should be ever watchful, but we have chosen to leave things up to them and must trust that they will involve us in some way. That brings us to the other kind of making, the kind that no one can escape. Everyone, not just architects and planners, need to *make* their environment with thought;

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[1] Spinoza, *Ethics*
[2] Deleuze, "Hume"

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they have to *find* their environment. It is only on that condition, on the basis of that *personal* relationship that a city, an environment, can be thought of as good or bad, miserly or generous. We have to *find* it so. To do that well takes exercise, philosophical exercise.

Having said that, the assumptions or the possibility of a generous city are curious and involve us in a journey not devoid of risk. If we cannot steer clear of transcendence, we have to at least be conscious where we take the steps that refers a thought to something other than its terms, to the interior of a greater tautology, rather than an exterior relationship. If we call a city or a building generous, then what does that mean? *Can* a building be generous or selfish? And if it can, which appears to be the tenor of my argument, *how* can it be so? Any generosity is, surely, the product of an interaction between two bodies. As we shall see, a generous city does not consist of the ultimate product but in the way this product is thought through in the design process and subsequently perceived and digested by the person in his environment. A thing or idea is never generous or anything else but in the relation it forms to something else and relations are external to things and ideas.[3] This aspect is crucial.

In so far the bricks-and-mortar kind of making leads you to move in or out of your environment, or the thinking kind of making leads you to take similar actions, you might say that you have either failed the exercise of making, given up, or given in to your own constitution. You have made an existential decision the terms of which may be out there, but the relationship between them and your decision is yours and only yours. That is no bad thing perhaps, but it is nevertheless what it is.

This journey towards a concept of the generous in relation to the environment and more particularly the urban environment is then, necessarily, a very personal journey, where the reader will have to make up his or her own mind. You are caught between the objects of perception and the body of thought against which you judge them. But just like the concept of univocity developed by Deleuze and the concept of *a life* this journey is communicable and universal when you place a person in his environment as a part of that environment instead of as a curiosity, autonomous and preserved in conceptual formaldehyde.

The analysis will take on the following form. I want to delve into what a city might be. What we are when we partake of our environment and how we metabolise with that environment. I want to lay the basis of an ontology in use and the to come to a concept of the generous through Deleuze's analysis of artifice.

A City

To what extent is a city a *thing?* To define is to set borders. Borders are respected and exist for that which falls within their *scale and field of relevance*. A border for a man is different than a border for a bird. But what is a city to a man, when it is without birds? A birdless city, which is a very different kind of city than a "normal" city. A city cannot be defined, because any single definition is always hopelessly inadequate, just as Plato's definition of a man is an amusing critique of the problem of definition. Definitions narrow things towards a purpose, a use. That relationship must never be lost sight of….

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[3] Deleuze, "Hume"

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So in homage to the omnivalent nature of the city, the uses of which are as equivocal and many-sided as life itself, here is a list in the spirit of Cedric Price with the hope that each definition resonates with the potential for the tragic, the comic and the pastoral. The fact that most definitions could be applied to many more things does not invalidate them.

What is a city?

- Where one moves to lead the good life.
- Where this occasionally succeeds.
- A place from which one moves because of a sadness or a loathing
- A set of corridors and squares, or public rooms which brings one to one's love and which later one remembers with fondness
- A labyrinth of looming walls with people living secret lives on the other side.
- A dilating centre of gravity of interlocking activities and grasping movements which, with exercise, manages to achieve an ever tighter, ever greater close-knit density until God/Nature has His vengeance.
- A super-organism: like coral, the natural product of the co-evolution of man in his environment.
- The artificial product of man's ability to expand his partiality beyond his own family through the creation of interlocking institutions
- The natural product of man's urge to ensure the survival of his genes through collective action.
- A topological medium of images which stretches and shrinks infinitely in the imagination
- A series of (virtual) thresholds for exchange
- A medium with surfaces, each so differentiated that the possibility of distance is created.
- An agglomeration of more or less homogenous areas caused on the one hand by *a gravity of the familiar* and the centripetal force of unease.
- An idea that precedes and informs parcellation
- A good intention shaped by human fallibility, ignorance and greed.
- Something that grows and transforms itself while it is alive and stops growing when it is dead.
- Something that carries its dead with it, like a palm tree its older leaves.
- A larger aggregate of use-machines than the body: A bigger "I"
- The mis en scene of economic metastases in the form of form-behaviour and signage
- There where people live primarily in their reflection. There where their "I" spills beyond the border of their skin and reassembles itself in the faulty mirrors of people's gaze.
- The product of an orgiastic potlatch, (Bataille) or, what amounts to the same thing, a series of reactive debauched expenditures of the money collected to bind loyalty through admiration.

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- A manifesto of power shaped in the dispositif of our voluntary and happy submission to healthy seeming ideas.
- A larger "we" than our neighbourhood, but a smaller "we" than our nationality.
- A heap of organized debris in which time gives itself in the form of marked changes that can be read as memory.
- A set of detached and attached obstacles that provide the conditions of spatial practice.
- A glome of institutions, which as a result of their anthropomorphic collectivity and organisation have begun to lead a life of their own.
- A reciprocal theatre in which everything is geared to observing and being observed.
- A constellation of perceptual relations that becomes a story, or a narrative because their memory is offloaded not onto our bodies but onto the environment as (il)legible traces with open meanings (metameanings)
- A never ending parade with a public and an eternal public with a parade.
- A place were loneliness causes a vortex of centrifugal and centripetal forces
- A place that undergoes a permanent metamorphosis during the day, without losing its self. Heraclitus'river.
- A fine-mazed network of crevices, pipes, ducts, channels, sieves, valves, holes and fibres.
- A surface divided into an infinite number of planes, and nested planes in planes, which, at our scale of observation: from brick to grid are remarkably often rectangular.
- A factory for systematic waste production
- A infinite series of metaphorical mirrors of society on every scale creating monstrous gods in their collective act of reflection.
- A space, the homogeneity of which is ruptured and torn into a constellation of heterotopes: clear mirrors of society, that reflect what you want to see.
- The siren song of mankind. Letting us hear what we long to hear in order to speed us to our death.
- A sick body that, from its own perspective, is perfectly healthy.
- A perfectly healthy body under the spell of boring old Cassandra, who is, of course, always right in the end.
- A place where some people hear laughter and wonder what that means.
- A habitat in which certain organisms flourish better than others.
- A network of borders, eacht with their own set of values.
- A magic book in which the story changes with each reading.
- An explosion of human productivity for its own sake.
- The final proof, should be need it, that we are in fact gods and angels.
- A spatial condition for both miserly and generous behaviour.
- The possibilities congregating on the other side o the door. (Simmel)

A generous city? Designing Small Pleasures (the Smithsons)

- Schep de ruimtelijke voorwaarden voor een *beleefd* en genereus gebruik

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- Maak de gebiedende wijs zo veel mogelijk overbodig: Zorg dat je weet wanneer mensen zich op anderen moeten forceren en ontwerp voor mensen die dat moeilijk vinden en voor mensen die daar geen probleem mee hebben
- Oefen de interface tussen openbaar en privé: beloop veel straten en bezoek veel huizen en kijk, luister, ruik, smaak en voel.
- Schep plekken waar bepaalde vormen van gedrag lekker voelen en anderen niet
- Geef grenzen zodat we die niet hoeven te zoeken. Zorg dat die grenzen niet lijden tot absurd gedrag.
- Gebouwen leven door ons: dit is geen uitnodiging tot een naïef antropomorfisme maar een uitnodiging om gebouwen weer op hun *karakter* te mogen beoordelen.
- Vorm is materialiteit in termen van schaduw en licht gemeten naar hun intensiteit.
- Materiaal is vorm in termen van kleur, textuur en glans. Beiden hebben een stedelijke dimensie
- Gebruik alle architectonische middelen om de ruimte te differentiëren in het gewone, het alledaagse en het bijzondere. (relatieve hoogte, breedte, plaatsing, oriëntatie, arrangement, routing, afzondering, confrontatie, draaiing
- Maak het alledaagse bijzonder door juist het alledaagse te vieren, niet door er iets van te maken dat het uit zichzelf trekt
- Ontwerp voor alle zintuigen. Immers zijn de zintuigen ruimtelijke instrumenten
- Laat men de stad langzaam ontdekken en oefenen. Niet alles hoeft meteen en in een oogopslag begrepen te worden.
- Bij het draaien en de doorgang, op de drempel, gebeurt iets.
- Het ontwerpen voor een genereuze stad is een ontwerpen waarin alle gebruikers (de binnengebruikers, de buitengebruikers, de eigenaars, de stad als lichaam, de architect) een weloverwogen deel aan hebben.
- Maar bovenal is een genereuze stad, een stad die welwillend en met enige sympathie gelezen wordt door iedereen.

generosity

In his 1972 essay on Hume, Deleuze arrives through a series of steps at a most hopeful vision of society. Which could start us off on our quest to find a generous city in more concrete terms. His analysis of Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) and the later *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, (1779) is beautiful and although it does not go beyond Hume, in that everything he discusses can be found in Hume's works, it is Deleuze's method of condensing Hume's thought that leads us a step further. The essay is not a simple summary of Hume's philosophy but forges new alliances creating new possibilities. I think it is worth discussin ghte essay in some detail, as it is not the final image that he arrives at which is important, but crucially the steps he takes to get there.

Deleuze starts with the anchoring of belief as the fundamental existential act upon which all our doing and knowing is based and ends by a series of steps with the idea that the passions and inclinations that rule our spheres of concern need to expand from the family to something larger: society, that modern

society's challenge in fact, is to invent, maintain and reform *artifices* in the form of institutions and social spaces.

Hume's empiricism, he argues, is not just a reverse of rationalism, not just a critique of innateness, of the *a priori*. Hume's empiricism is a science fiction universe. "As in science fiction, one has the impression of a fictive, foreign world, seen by other creatures, but also the presentiment that this world is already ours, and those creatures, ourselves." And "science or theory is an inquiry, which is to say, a practice: a practice of the seemingly fictive world that empiricism describes; a study of the conditions of legitimacy of practices in this empirical world that is in fact our own. The result is a great conversion of theory to practice…"

The theory of associationism is a subtle philosophy of relation in which process and product are put on a new footing with regard to each other. The point is that, according to Hume, *relations are external to their terms*. This is a crucial little sentence, from which a whole universe unfolds, telling us how we can communicate legitimately and… universally.

If Peter is smaller than Paul, where does the relation "smaller than" reside? Not in its terms Peter and Paul, surely. Ideas can contain nothing other and nothing more that what is contained in a sensory impression and that is because relations are external to them. Ideas are one thing and the relations between them another. Ideas are things, relations passages between them. The world of the predicate dominated by the verb to be is doomed. The conjunction "and" has dethroned the interior of the verb "is". When you say "is" you are performing the magic of "and". The physics of the mind and the logic of relations is a conjunctive world described by Russel and Whitehead and Peirce. A relation allows us to pass from a *given* impression or idea to something that is not given. The axioms of relation are the so-called principles of association: contiguity, resemblance and causality. It is these principles that allow passage. They supply the pattern that connects through abduction as defined by Peirce and later used by Bateson. The "Syllogism in grass" or argument by metaphor. Whitehead in his *Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effects*, has given a clear description of the phases of this passage which he condenses into *presentational immediacy, causal efficacy and symbolic reference.* It is, essentially a pragmatic philosophy of the working of the mind. Deleuze's Hume, destroys the three great terinal ideas of metaphysics, the self, the world and God by arguing that it is these principles of passage, that constitute a non-personal, universal *Human Nature*. It is not *what* people think or *find* that is universal or constant. It is not the term but the passage from one term to another that gives us the ability to communicate. It is the way that relations function as effects, and the practical conditions of this functioning of relations that becomes exciting.

Causality requires that I pass from something that is given to me to something that is not given to me, that is not even giveable in experience. The example

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Deleuze gives is: "based on some signs in a book, I believe that Ceasar lived. When I see the sun rise, I say that it will rise tomorrow.." All these things cannot be given in experience. Causality is a relation whereby I am able to travel beyond the given. I travel into the world of belief, of hope of expectation, of fiction…. The functioning of causal relations is explained by experience. Similar cases, similar patterns fuse in the imagination while remaining separate and distinct in the understanding. The property of fusion constitutes habit. Habit, habitus, one dwells in one's expectations. When they are expectations they are almost silent, the calculus of probability achieves a confidence. When they remain no more than hopes they generate a fervour, the wish.

So fiction and nature are condemned to each other like identical twins, communicating silently and confidently when they are close together. Full of anxieties when they separate too far. Left to itself the mind constantly creating its fictions of possibiulity, of reasonability, of likeliness. It moves in a delirium from one idea to another, creating monsters. But the rules of human nature, the physics of the mind imposes its discipline: rites of passage, laws of inference, and rules of transition which accord with nature itself, if only after the event. Our nature disciplines the delirium and our imagination answers by the attempt to make its fictions acceptable. In this way we create credible causal chains, which may still be suffused with illegitimate rules, and strange simulacra. The more these are allowed to repeat themselves, the more they become part of that body without organs, the world we imagine against which we perform our daily routines, against which we sound our decisions and against which we calibrate our conscience. The full spectrum of action is confined by two extremes: whether one goes beyond experience in a scientific way that can be confirmed by Nature itself in the form of a corresponding predictive calculus, in which case the twin fiction-nature are closely allied or one goes beyond it in all the directions of a delirium that forms a counter-Nature, a phantom nature to accompany our fictions, allowing the fusion of anything in whatever way. Beliefs are never false, in that falseness can no longer be adequately checked as relations are external. Beliefs can at most be illegitimate, that is false in the sens of Russel and Whiteheads logic: illegitimate outcomes of the exercise of our faculties. The art is to keep the gap between fiction and nature as small as possible allowing secure bridges but that is not always possible. Some illegitimate exercises of our belief are not only incorrigible like destructive memes that nevertheless reproduce with great success but some are indispensable to our collective functioning. The positing of an identity of the self, of the world, of God requires the intervention of all sorts of fictive uses of relations, in particular of causality, in conditions where no fictions can be corrected, but where the attempt instead plunges us into yet other fictions. Belief is the basis of knowledge. Illegitimate beliefs are those which don't obey the rules. Belief in the Self, the World and God constitute a horizon, whereby the illegitimate and the legitimate mingle silently without the ability of reproach.

But just at that moment when all seems lost in a mist of fiction a secons element is introduced: the principles of association acquire their sense only in relation to

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passions. The affective circumstances, that is, those circumstances whereby feelings change the direction which the associations move. Relations are given a meaning, a direction an irreversibility and exclusivity as a result of passion. What gives the mind a nature, a human nature, a constancy and a consistency is the way the principles of association are guided by the principles of passion. They provide the inclination, though which the associations flow. The passions restrict the mind, or rather its range of association by privileging ideas and objects. It is particularly those objects and ideas which fall within the range of associative discipline: contiguity and resemblance, causes. We are passionate about the near and that which is like us, that which we take as cause of important effects. Well the project of society becomes an interesting one. It becomes a project of extending our partiality.

"The problem is not how to limit egotisms, [i.e. encouraging repressed behaviour in order to make society possible] and the corresponding natural rights but how to go beyond partialities, how to pass from a "limited sympathy" to an "extended generosity," how to stretch passions and give them an extension they don't have on their own. Society is thus seen no longer as a system of legal and contractual limitations but as a system of institutional inventions: how can we invent artifices, how can we create institutions that force passions to go beyond their partialities and form moral, judicial, political sentiments (for example the feeling of justice)? (…) Thus the entire question of man is displaced […] it is no longer, as with knowledge, a matter of the complex relation between fiction and human nature; it is rather, a matter of the relations between human nature and artifice."[i]

So contract and law have their working on the individual. But institutions are artifices, fictions, if you like, tricks to extend the reach of our partiality to include ever greater chunks of society. Nowadays we would prefer the word *model* or *paradigm*, but that does not ameliorate or disguise their true nature. They are fictions twinned with the ghost of an unknowable nature And anything that threatens that greater body becomes poisonous. Hume introduced the positive model of artifice and institution. It is art that makes it possible to create a larger "I" and a larger "we" The question no longer becomes what is true. But what is useful… And here we get to a problem. The problem of the utilitarian. And It is precisely in order to dela with the problem of narrow use that the word utilitarian implies, that the conceptof generosity might prove a *useful* artifice.

Association institutes rules of extension and extrapolation that keeps in tension the twin machine of fiction and nature. The imagination makes simulacra of belief which are complemented to an unknowable nature whose constitution can only be approaximated through a calculus. This calculus can, under certain conditions, be used to separate the legitimate belief from the illegitimate. But its range is limited and its working cumbersome; not always helpful in a world where the body has to survive its environment. With implementation of passion into te equation we being to invent useful artifices, that can extend partiality in the

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knowledge that the herd is always more secure that the stray. How to do this? We use the imagination to reflect passion, we make it reverberate in ever complex rhythms. Passion reflected in the imagination becomes itself imaginary, its topography becomes a topology. It can stretch at will, it can project into the infinite, it can change colour, texture, smell and taste. This resonance of passion in the imagination makes what Whitehead would call the symbolic reference. It makes culture into that curious double being: nothing and everything, frivolous and serious, weak and immensely potent, unreal and real, fictional and fact. And never one or the other, always both and.

The task of society then, of the people who make up society, who produce culture through their belief (Eliot) is twofold. To ensure that the enlarged passion is no less vivid and potent than the partiality of family and the contiguous. And on the other hand, to make sure that the creation of culture is not directionless and delirious. To make sure it is given direction: a teleology. We can, according to Hume resolve these things through the techniques of reward and punishment (which, by the way require yet another fiction. Spinoza's view on rewards and punishments is very valid here) as well as thorugh the agencies of custom and taste governed by an aesthetics of passion. The passion of possession, for example, which to any account contains a large fictional element, for what is possession other that a sort of magic? Discovers in the principles of association the means to determine the rules that constitute the concept of property and the calculus of relations detreeming its laws. The principles of association find their sense in a casuistry of relations that works out the details of the worlds culture and law. Relations are the means of practice.

In concrete terms this can be translated into examples that are directly relevant to the making of an environment. We now understand the nature of insitutions and the regulations they encourage to adopt. Artifices, promoting fictions that are found useful to the maintenance of the great and useful fictional tautology that is society. We need not hide, like in Plato's republic, the fictional nature of society. It need not be a secret. On the contrary. Creating a lie would merely make of society a a structure benefiting a minority at the cost of a majority. It would privilege those ho are in the know of this dirty trick, this horrible little secret. No fiction has a purpose, it constitutes a story of how this take their course and so informs our actions. Our responsibility is however towards the twin nature of our conception of society. Ensuring that, however wide our partiality to ensure our survival, the fiction that constitutes the basis of our actions is constantly practiced and tested against its double, the Nature that we can acces only through our calculus of probability.

So what then is generous? We have already seen that any term cannot be generous in itself. Generosity resides not in the terms of the relation it describes. And a relation can never be other than a pattern or connection that is *found*. Generosty resides in the inclination with which you furnish the direction of the flow of the relation, how you characterise the flow of the relation, and the use you

make of it. An idea or thing cannot be generous by itself. A city can only be generous if its is given in generosity, if it is found generous. The establishment o fhte generous resides in the action of being generous. So how can one be generous?

During a seminar on the text by Deleuze, a student of mine asked: is Santa Claus generous? This was a very significant question. Santa Clause (in fact it was the Dutch avatar of a similar institution, Saint Nicholas who celebrates his birthday on the 5th of december. I think that, in order to discuss whether Santa Clause constitutes an example of the generous we need to analyse a text by Bataille on the Potlatch as well as Spinoza on the rewards of virtue. Because it is the nature of giving presents and rewards and punishments that opens up a quagmire of strange exchanges and values.

This is a central text to my project. The reason is twofold. On the one hand it reformulates society not as a repression of the self, but as a project engaged in the extension of familial partialities to include society as a whole, making generosity the fundamental mechanism in the creation of a healthy society. Selfishness is not just the privileging of the self, for there is nothing wrong with that. Just as there is nothing wrong with using things. Selfishness is the privileging of a self that cannot see very far or very well, beyond immediate desires. It keeps the manifold out of view. It can only see immediate uses, few possibilities, few opportunities, no indeterminacy. The utilitarian as used in common parlance, (which has nothing to do with utilitarian philosophy) is a mechanism of the self that is simply not useful to the self-in-society. It is too narrow and ultimately self-destructive. The utilitarian is a case of ressentiment: a force that turns back on itself. The selfish attitude could only work successfully if it eliminates even the other in the self.[ii] Selfishness in society destroys not just society but it turns against the itself-in-society. To broaden the self to include society is important to the self's own survival, especially as society becomes increasingly dense and numerous and the environment increasingly *used up* in a Heideggerian sense. Selfishness is *self*-destructive in every situation wherever the I is related to a you. Even in a reflective solitude, selfishness can destroy. In order to avoid the problem of narrowing that objectification necessarily entails, and in order to stretch our egotism to include our being-in-the-world and give everyone a place and to find more uses we need generosity. We need *artifice* to broaden the self to become part of the world in use. We need a complex self. To create a better self-machine, a self machine called society of which the individual self is a working part without being absorbed and nullified, an artificial creation, we need generosity.

   Now architecture is fundamentally and profoundly a social machine, offering a beginning for every situation. But how would generosity work within the discipline of architecture which configures social space? What is a generous architecture?

   One way to be generous, could mean that, despite a clear prioritisation of use for which one is prepared to accept responsibility and acknowledge a

gratitude explicitly, one makes a conscious effort not to lose sight of the (silent) whole.[iii] That is, one places one's use of something in the context of its indeterminate manifold. To be generous in that way means that during the prioritisation of aesthetic, that is, desirable qualities, one does not go too far in pursuing a seclusion and *cleansing* of values by treating them as exclusive.[iv] In fact the qualities that one is pursuing can only flourish in an inclusive context, in which they take up their position as priority and are not asked to subsist in an environment in which they appear vacuum-packed. This requires an undermining of the traditional subject-object dualism that still persists in practical philosophy. Every discourse between a body and its environment should be a negotiation between two subjects. Or rather the subject is the relationship between the body and its environment. The behaviour subject and the form subject. I think this is what both Buber and Heidegger were saying in their own way. To reduce something to an object is useful *and* full of risk. The discourse of design would benefit if it were to, somewhat in the spirit of Louis Kahn and Team 10, approach every *thing*, not as an object but as a body-subject. Essentially this entails treating the design task of, say, a house, as the projection of the human beings-in-the-world that use it. In this way a house is approached not as an object but as the centripetal form of the centrifugally behaving body-subject. The boundaries of the complex body do not end at the surface of the skin, but where its relationships with the environment peter out. A house can then, through its many users be asked in Kahn's terms "what it wants to be". And the answer is given by taking account of *all* the users and as many uses as can be summoned. This is what makes architecture so complex and such a political art. Nevertheless it is this humanising of matter through the users that in fact constitutes the architect's task. And he must forget no-one, especially not his own self in relation to the task.

The city is a locus of production and consumption.

I would like to remind you of the original meaning of euconomia: good housekeeping. Sloterdijk in his seminal text
Consumption is the other side of production just as no is the other side of yes.
Consumption is a form of production:
- It maintains the bodymind (Dennet and Damazio)
- It constructs and develops the self as a work of art (Nietzsche)
- It is the processing of raw materials for new products (Deleuze)
- The products have value (A problem of aesthetics)

There is a second bipolar space:

The architect, the urban designer, the client and the builder *make* the city

The dweller, the worker, the mother and the child also *make* the city

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The making of the architect and his clan is another kind of making than the making of the mother and the child.

But to define that difference is harder than we think.

Of course, the architect's production results in buildings and thrown into the world.

The buildings are young and tender and frequently unloved.

(Aalto and his light)

And the mother and child's production results in buildings used and made to fit the concerns of daily life, they are, to take an image of a central aspect of family life, made up, like the marital bed. (Children never make up their bed)

If the users enjoy using the buildings, they are loved and maintained. They become part of the production-consumption of the city: they are made up.

If not they are left to neglect and so make the production-consumption of the city appear heavy and unbearable.

The problem is always who does what?

Are buildings as *made* by architects as important buildings as *made up* by people using them?

Is the city *made* by architects or by people using them? And to what extent are architects themselves people to be considered as users in their creative act?

History appears to be ambivalent. Sometimes we invest in architecture. Sometimes we invest in our selves in relation to the things that already exist.

Sometimes we invest in destroying things. We do this for a variety of reasons.

- Because we enjoy destroying things
- Because we feel that we should begin with a clean slate
- Because we hate the other
- Because we want to use the product and digest it to create a raw material

But leaving aside (for the moment) why we destroy things we should concentrate instead on who makes what and what the consequences of that making are..

Does the making of the architect determine the way a city is lived?

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Does the making up or indeed the using up of the users (including the architect) determine the way the architects makes?

What is the relationship between the production-consumption of the architect-team and the production consumption of the users?

What is a relationship?

That is a question we need to settle first. I cannot picture a relationship other than in terms of my (as my self) participation in such relationships.

Relationships do things

It really just comes down to this: In a relationship when something happens to one, something also happens to the other. *What* happens is not always determinable. Relationships can be expressed in terms of space, time, modality and more. But let's not become unnecessarily complicated.

A good concrete example of a relationship is marriage. Married people do things together. They get up, drink tea, argue, laugh, sleep, fuck, care for their house and their children, their career, they maintain their relationship by playing spatial and temporal games, games of possibility (modality) When they both say yes, the no is banned to a realm outside of their sphere. When they disagree the yes and the no create walls within the house.

I would like to suggest that this is a cogent model for the relationship between the raumgestalterin and the raumbraucher.

This means that both parties need to practice their art to become good at it. And those bad at practicing their art need to find ways to improve themselves.

The idea of improvement is of course and interesting one.

What exactly does better mean?

In evolutionary terms better means something very specific.

A bigger picture
Strolling through the National Gallery in London years ago, I gradually stopped looking at the paintings by themselves and started including the people looking at the paintings. There seemed to be a rhetorical continuity between the paintings, the people looking at the paintings and the space of their meeting. Everything appeared to work together in a quiet sort of way. In the rooms with the grander, nation-building paintings of England and France, the pictures were large, of large subjects (wars, heroes, God, wealth etc.) and they were hung in grand halls,

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spatially differentiated through their use of ornament, gold leaf and colour. The paintings, themselves grand surveys of the works of God and man, were "surveyed" in their turn. The visitors invariably stood as straight as they could and at some distance from the objects they were contemplating. Of course the people more or less *had* to stand like that: the paintings were large and hung in large spaces, giving people the space to stand back. The spatial and situational conditions *afforded* such a pose.[v] The Dutch collection was housed in a different set of rooms. The ceilings were lower, the ornament reduced to a few profiles and the paintings, hung at a height relative to the eyes of the average body, were generally smaller and so appeared lower. The subject matter was intimate, contemplative and melancholic: homely interiors, showing the small triumphs and tragedies of the everyday, still-lives showing the vanity of all desire. The world to be inspected was one of reflection, divine detail, subtle light and small space. The virtual spaces, though full of symbolism, did not thrust that symbolism forward. As objects of the everyday they appeared to provide the conditions for a certain kind of mood to dwell in.[vi] What was wonderful to see therefore, was that as soon as visitors to the gallery would enter these rooms, their bodies would fold forward and become smaller. Their faces would be stretched back from the nose and they would hunch to *inspect* rather than *survey* the wealth of detail and the careful modulations of light.

A wider view
This paper sets out to explore some of the philosophical issues of *use* in relation to the body and its kinesphere, the space through which it moves its limbs and the relationship that the partial objects and surfaces of its surroundings build up with that moving body.[vii] Its ultimate goal is to arrive at a concept of the generous in architecture. In more general terms, my research is concerned with the question of how to arrive at an ontology of use. Ontology is a discipline that explores the existence of a thing by attempting to describe it as a part-of-the-world. My secret agenda is a phenomenology of the pragmatic: a way of describing the pragmatist view so that it slots in easily with the phenomenological existentialism in which I feel at home. My purpose is to come to a description of the concept *use* in the arena of our doing, thinking and making as bodies in our environment and to then mobilise this description in the construction of an *aesthetics of use*.

Use pervades every aspect of our being through its relation to activities such as possession, enjoyment displacement and arrangement as well as the objectification and territorialisation of our environment.[viii] A renegotiation of the idea of use can, I believe, place the relationship between the useful, the utlilitarian and the poetic back at the centre of the discussion concerning design and aesthetics and place man firmly in his environment as an active and conscious participant in something larger than himself. Above all, it can make that relationship *immanent*, released from having to invoke a separate *other*. The question is whether, and how the concept of use can be seen as central to an understanding of that relationship. A solution might lead to a concept of *the complex body*, the body as a dynamic assemblage, constantly reterritorialising its

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environment, constantly renegotiating the always *political* boundaries of taste.[ix] With this we could explore the fundamental role architecture plays as 'a morphological practicing of society', resituating our attitude to design to incorporate a key spatial and social quality, namely the generous.[x]

Form-behaviour
Early in his oeuvre Merleau-Ponty posited that "behaviour is a form"[xi] The intimacy of the relationship between the two however, appears to be such that they verge on becoming interchangeable. If behaviour *is* a form, can we also turn these words around without violating the sensitivities of the syllogism? Is *a form* behaviour? A little later in the text he would appear to lay the basis for such an inversion: "The world, inasmuch as it harbours living beings, ceases to be a material plenum consisting of juxtaposed parts; it opens up at the place where behaviour appears." That is not to say that there is a localised *emptying* of that plenum where it opens, but that through the interplay of behaviour and the senses, layers of the plenum differentiate, some helping the process by reducing themselves to silence, to allow the message of that which is further away to be conducted to the senses through the medium of air, that is the opening.

Behaviour "a kinetic melody gifted with meaning" is the *forming* of the environment, a *spatialising* of the world.[xii] Form is the differentiation of the foreground with regard to the background in the process of identifying things within the pregnant tableau presented to our gaze. Our ability to recognise *styles* of form is intimately meshed with our ability to know what to do with them and how to place our bodies relative to them.[xiii] Form is in fact *the world described with reference to use.* Through description by the mind space is *prepared* for behaviour. The relationship between a thing and a bodily intention relative to that thing as expressed in *the decision* to allocate meaning and unleash action is, I would argue, always a form of *using*.[xiv] Use is where the indeterminate relationship between thing and significance is clenched and determined in attitude and action. A form therefore is a form on the condition of behaviour. A form is behaviour in that form is *a-description-in-use* of things in the surrounding space expressing itself in movement, orientation and posture. A *thing* becomes *a form* when it is described with reference to its use to us.[xv] Form is the difference between a thing in its indeterminacy and an object as described relative to a perspective. Form and behaviour are the two directions that relate a body with its environment: behaviour is the centrifugal term and form the centripetal term of the contiguity that use presupposes in any relationship. An echo of that relationship resides in the word perform.

A good meeting of faces

"place Illustration 1 here"

Fig. 1: Chapterhouse in Wells Cathedral built between 1290 and1300.

"The Room is the place of the mind. In a small room one does not say what one would in a large room". Louis Kahn[xvi]

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Take *the form* of the Chapterhouse in Wells Cathedral. It is surely one of the great emblems of (social) space. The architecture per*forms* the superb magic of form-behaviour.[xvii] Such a space is a set of relations, expressed in use, between a body and the partial objects of its environment through the visually "silent" medium of air, whereby form and behaviour unfold in the practice of the space. The central column of the chapterhouse is the start of a kinetic melody of lines which reach to the ceiling, do a glorious thing with ribs, fans and vaults, and then come down again, fitting their way around the lacy windows and the arcade of niches, all the way back to the silent ground. The architecture begins and ends with a seat. A centrifugal seat at the centre sprouts the matter of space to be confronted with a centripetal seat on the other side of an apparent emptiness, the pregnant air, the ground, silent as all messengers should be after they have delivered their message. It is the grand setting of an epic confrontation between faces. An interfacial space.[xviii] It affords a kind of activity and makes that activity special. It does not so much *symbolise* or represent that activity. A symbolism is always *a speaking about* an activity, and in the speaking about it, symbolism always prevents people getting on with the activity itself. That is what is wrong with a symbolism that becomes too emphatic, too heavy: it never stops talking about what it could be doing. This space is different. It affords the activity of the meeting of faces and makes that activity special. That is all.

use it in silence
Space, as Bergson puts it in *Matter and Memory*, is an arrangement privileging the body in the intentional analysis of its environment.[xix] Space in architectural terms is an event, whereby body and environment find a fit in appropriate behaviour, that is, an interaction of the body and what it faces. "Perception," Bergson says, "is the master of space".[xx] It is master because it is good at what it does within its own frame of reference and it is master in that perception *commands* space as a general does his army. It works with what its got and focuses strategically on what is important but cannot ever control everything all of the time. Perception is a political activity: it prioritizes the given towards a goal. And perception does this through description, that is finding possibilities or forms with regard to use. The physiology of perception decides what it selects from the multiplicity, what it focuses on and so perception is a way of determining direction through space and one's behaviour in space. The more one practices one's perception, the more one is able to take on board, making one's journey through space more exciting, better grounded and more fluid. The use of space in this sense is a machinic assemblage of aggregates: perception and form-behaviour. But what is use exactly?

Whenever people use words such as *utilitarian*, *pragmatic* and *useless* in a derogatory way they are, perhaps understandably, expressing their disgust with what they perceive as an ungenerous event in society, a selfish and opportunistic approach to a situation or a turning away from something which doesn't suit someone's immediate purposes.[xxi] Similarly *a pragmatic* approach denotes a willingness to compromise cherished principles in the adoption of unsavoury

means to whatever end. In common parlance the word *use* is, like the air and the ground creating the possibility of architectural space, either silent and unquestioned, slipping by in any sentence without properly allowing itself to be taken account of, or it takes the foreground in righteous indignation with phrases such as: "I feel used" and "you are using me" or "this thing is useless". Use thus becomes emphatic where a particular activity or contiguity becomes problematic. When use is silent we may perhaps assume *a health*, like a body without pain; when use itself becomes the focus of attention, there is discomfort.[xxii]

Our *being* can be said to be *a form of using*, that is an interacting with the environment for the specific purposes of self-preservation, self-maintenance, self-exploration and self-fulfilment. The omnifarious applications of the word *use* all refer to some sort of affirmed relation between the body and the environment of which it is a part. In fact, I cannot find an example where this is not the case. Perhaps it would help if we were to restrict the idea of *use* exclusively to *conscious use*, so that only conscious beings are allowed to *use* things. That would certainly restrict our application of the word use, and make it less generic, but we would soon get into an awful muddle, partly because we find it difficult to explain consciousness and partly because, the further we get in that process of explanation, the more consciousness reveals itself to be a product of the physics and chemistry of a Spinozist *Deus sive natura*, which refuses to posit a dualism. Confining the idea of use to consciousness would inevitably lead to such a dualism and I do not want to go there. It is not for nothing that scientists, in my view completely legitimately, speak of the "behaviour of particles" etc. And where there is behaviour, there is form and use.

contiguity and non-difference
The relationship between the body and its environment that is expressed in use *always* reduces to a contiguity. This is immediately obvious in cases where I am *using a hammer* or *a saw*, where the body, the saw, the material sawn and the idea of purpose form an intimate tautological network with, perhaps, a finished table as its projectile; but use can apparently also traverse vast tracts of time and space in instants: I can *use Plato as an example*. If we investigate the nature of this apparent instant traversal of time and space, we could also argue that I am simply violating the plateaus of logical typing by allowing Plato as the-name-of-an-ancient-Greek-male-who-wrote-brilliant-things to stand for a much more precise but cumbersome concept which could start off something like: some-of-the-writings-of-Plato-as-translated by-***-and-interpreted-by-me-at-this-time-of-my-life-which-is-significant-because-etc. The precision to be achieved is potentially infinite and the further we go, the more direct and immediate the contiguity of between "Plato" and me. The more precisely one defines the terms of use, the more *use* becomes a concept which engages the body with its environment through contiguity, as a kinesphere, either spatially, temporally or ideationally/mentally. In that sense use is an aspect of a machinic causality rhizome. When discussing space that contiguity is simply effected through the conductive nature of a visually silent but experientially pregnant air. All use, including the spatial presupposes a contiguity between the body and its

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environment. In other words use essentially covers the territory that form-behaviour covers.

That is what we might term the plane of consistency that unites the centrifugality of behaviour and the centripetality of form in use. If every interaction, between the body and its environment can be characterised as a form of use through the dynamic contiguity between body and environment there is a fundamental non-difference at the root of all our doing, our being, requiring no dualism. Every aspect of our being-in-the-world can be reduced to the topology of use. We only need one substance and within that substance the contiguity of attributes offering use. So the question becomes: what do I do when I am being utilitarian, and what do I do when I am being poetic? What is the difference between those two activities? And if we can overcome the difference, does it improve our attitude to the design task or indeed our ability to experience spaces well and creatively? If being utilitarian and being poetic constitute the same kind of activity with different intentions and in differing contexts, might it not be possible to see the poetic of the utilitarian and vice verse? And might we then not reduce the whole problem of beauty to one of attitude and context in use: a politics of beauty, whereby beauty is that what a person brings to a thing? Is being human not the relationship we maintain *between* our body and the environment? Does not *the human* in fact reside in that *relationship*, rather than in the body by itself, if such a thing could be imagined? Does it then help us to be able to *humanise our environment* by putting that relationship at the centre of our concern and make it more consciously part of ourselves? And how would you do that without becoming ridiculous and affectatious or mystical? Would this allow us to find beauty everywhere without having to become offensive or, indeed without violating the plateaus of logical typing in a "logically violent" romantic idealism?[xxiii]

uses of silence
Earlier I mentioned that space was a silent medium. Gregory Bateson, came up with a notion that I rather enjoy.[xxiv] He posited that *non-communication* or silence lies at the basis of a number of crucial aspects of evolution, learning, ethics and aesthetics. Non-communication in particular fields is *healthy*. In evolution, for example, he convincingly argued that we do not *want* every acquired characteristic to become hard-wired in our DNA in a Lamarckian way, for that would sacrifice an individual's flexibility to cope with changes in his environment. On the contrary, it is more likely that any strict Lamarckian mechanism was hard-wired *out* of the system at some point during the history of life on earth as the products of such a hard wiring would simply not survive. Only in the dynamics of populations does the much slower Darwinian *selection* of characteristics work to change individuals. In daily life we do not *want* to know the process of perception for we might very well no longer trust our senses and that would be cumbersome. In social life we do not *want* to know what everyone is thinking, as we are human and sensitive. Social life would become impossible as we would not be able to transcend the selfish and egotistical. Our primary reactions to everything would have to count and we would never be given the chance of developing a better

tactic to deal with a difficult person. Faith, to take another example, quite apart from all the other things it might be, is also *a healthy* way for people to jump complexity and the unknown so as to be able to get on with the washing up while maintaining their relationship to the world.

Non-communication in use is *that use* in which consciousness *does not need* to play a part. The idea of purpose becomes involved in the argument here. However, its network of linkages can be extremely convoluted. One may be conscious of doing something, but the exact way one might be using all sorts of things in the drive to get that something done, can remain silent, saving consciousness for more immediate concerns. But to thereby claim, for example, that one isn't *using* the-floor-to-rest-the-trestles-on-which-to-rest-the-wood-to-be-sawn-in-half, is to be pedantic. *Of course* one is using the floor! But one doesn't need to make a point of it. It can be taken for granted, surely, its use can remain silent. But something happens in this silence. A simple activity engages an awful lot of instances of use but the gratitude of the conscious mind has little or no time for the floor or the constellation of things needed to saw a piece of wood; the floor has been such a trustworthy servant for so long, it needs no gratitude…. The gratitude of consciousness after a job well done, goes out instead to the sharp teeth of the saw, the strong yet flexible blade perhaps and the well-formed handle, making it a "good" saw as well as quietly expressing (self-)satisfaction at the easy, fluid motions of the sawing body. The ground is silent. This notion of non-communication or silence in use, just as air is to the concept of space, can be explored in a slightly wider context and made relevant in a socio-spatial sense.

making objects of people through silence
Jamaica is a country with a considerable population of poor people. There are men with just one tool: a saw or a hammer. They wander around with that single tool in the tenacious hope that someone will call out to them from the pleasant shadows of a veranda or from a gap in the endless wall of rusty corrugated iron to have them do a job. Their name at that moment is derived from the tool they visibly carry with them: " Ey 'ammerman, com 'ere nuh?" of "Eeh! Sawman! Com an 'elp me..." Arriving on the veranda it is perfectly possible that they will not need that particular tool to perform the task that has been proposed to them but that is beside the point. The tool performs an important function: on the one hand it is an instrument that can legitimately be used by the man who is attached to it; on the other it is a nomadic bill-board.[xxv]

Of course the "sawman" or the "hammerman" is much more than just a machine that can perform the trick of hammering or sawing. That fact is crucial. He is also *a man*, with everything that this implies. In fact, he is a man caught in a network of social and natural relations. He is a *man-in-the-world*. Our dealing with others, that is, other subject-bodies, requires strategies whereby the extremely complex, is simplified without objectifying them. To reduce hammerman to his hammer or his saw, denies him his multiplicity, his manifold. That mistake has been made over and over again in the past and is still being made. It was made during slavery and before the full emancipation of the

woman; social processes we are still struggling with.[xxvi] Hammerman's potential *use* takes priority over the rest of his many abilities and gives him his name as he walks there. But during the evening, when he's earned his money, he is no doubt "lover-bwuoy" or something even more glorious such as "dancehall king" To achieve these names he has exchanged his hard-earned cash for some bling-bling attributes in order to be able to make the right impression. He *becomes* what he *uses* his body for, and this he communicates to the world and to himself through the relevant and most effective attributes. That these attributes do not always have the desired or intended effect makes the operative territory of use more interesting, less predictable, but no less fundamental to his being. Not only is he *adaptable* from his own perspective on the world around him, but also from the point of view of the network of relations that he is part of within his environment. The use of his body by him and by others, intentional or contingent, gives him his *substance* in the form of a direction, that is, his emergent being in terms of a name. It is important to emphasize that use is extremely unstable. Descriptions, such as names always narrow a thing and thereby give it a direction, just as a corridor suggests a clear direction by virtue of its narrowness. His body is constantly being territorialized.[xxvii] That is, it is constantly being de-territorialised by uses that have abandoned the body, or been abandoned by it and it is constantly reterritorialised by uses which it accepts or which are being forced on to it; uses which master his body and his name. Many uses deploy themselves simultaneously, are master over the body in a coordinated and concerted way, others need to wait their turn for full effect. It is this multiplicity whereby man transcends the status of object to make him into a human being and determines the care we take in approaching him as a human being, observing the right codes of conduct. I imagine this goes some way to what Buber meant with the *I-you.*[xxviii] It is certainly something that plays an important part in the formulation of generosity.

What is equally important is that the body does not receive these functions passively. It is subject to evolution and involution. It reacts to uses. The gestures, movements and postures of the body change. A *hammerman* does not walk like a *dance-hall king*. In the long term the response can be even more radical. The body changes itself. It can change through involution, which essentially means that it learns to do something increasingly well, effectively and efficiently.[xxix] And the body changes through evolution: the hand that began as a foot, or vice verse. What applies to the *body as object* also applies to every other kind of *object*: an object as distinguished from its background by our consciousness is much more than the narrowing it has undergone to become that object in our curious gaze.

useless objects
To return to our earlier point, perhaps we can say that the difference between the utilitarian and the poetic, is that aspect of univocality implied in the objectification of a thing and its silence with regard to its manifold: its virtual uses. Objectification privileges a particular description of a thing and everything that is not said, is ignored, is turned away from, as if it were *useless*. Reducing an aggregate as complex as a person, a self, to a single use while keeping his/her

multiplicity silent is an act of objectification and objects are partial descriptions of things in the world reduced to an immediate use.[xxx] *Conscious use* privileges and narrows simultaneously. That is its glory *and* its tragedy. *A description-in-use* is always both an act of creation, in that it sets the condition for the thing's being as an object in relation to the using body and an act of destruction in that it *narrows* the thing to that object. In its thingliness it is indeterminate; as an object it has been brought into a relation with us, it is being used as a whatever. We must allow things to escape their objectity, to be freed from their univocal use, just as Man Ray set objects free by denying their designed use through a carefully aimed destruction of purpose. In this way the object is reterritorialised as a work of art. And every work of art is a beginning of a wonderful journey of interpretation and silence.

"place Illustration 2 here"

Fig. 2: Man Ray, Cadeau, 1921

an endless beginning: design vs experience
At this time we should return to the point made earlier about the seeming paradox that the more one practices one's perception, the more one is able to shed *and* take on board, making one's journey through space more exciting *and* more fluid. Apart from making us more skilled in negotiating a certain space, perception would surely also appear to suggest the possibility of habituation, increasing the univalence of a space. A silencing of the manifold. A spatial habituation in such a glorious room as the chapter house in Wells would be a tragedy. At the same time the silence or self-evidence of the spatial setting of the paintings in the National Gallery is wonderful. Therefore we would do well to institute a bifocal approach. A complementary practice. On the one hand we practice space morphologically and fit our movements and gestures to it. On the other, we practice our looking critically through the constant undoing of habituated uses, our addiction to the familiar, through improved looking, searching for the wild growth of possible other uses, whereby even the search itself becomes useful, if only to escape habituation. Bergson gives us one half of the formula: "is not the growing richness of (..) perception likely to symbolize the wider range of indetermination left to the choice of the living being in its conduct with regard to things?"[xxxi] As one practices perception things can be made to loosen their programmed purpose; practiced perception introduces the virtual and the indeterminate in one's looking. That is art: the offer of a constant beginning in the renegotiation of the body's boundaries.

Here might lie one of the central dilemma's of architecture. As one becomes better at looking, so one becomes better at reading and enjoying one's environment, which might appear at first to lessen the need to provide "good" architecture. After all, if we are able to not just adapt ourselves to all spaces but even learn to tease out their wealth of perceptual possibilities, what is the point of all this sophistication in design?

Thankfully this argument is fallacious on two points. Firstly there is already more than enough of the apparently mundane and the supposedly ugly to

practice our skills of experiential transformation, the skill that makes value from nothingness and waste and secondly, more surprising architecture can tease us to new heights of critical looking which in turn will enliven our way of re-evaluating the whole. Good architecture is the offer of a beginning: the co-evolution of good design *and* good looking or experience. There are no limits to the evolution that is possible. And it need never collapse. Even when we can no longer bring up the energy to think creatively, the wealth will simply relapse into silence. At the same time, the gap that is formed between people willing to practice and inform their looking and those who have other concerns stands at the basis of important processes of social differentiation and could be the subject of social concern. But that is another story.

Recently I arrived to present a lecture at the Academy of Architecture in Rotterdam. On arrival the floor was strewn with garbage. A group of students was happily occupied with a workshop given by the self-styled garbage architect Denis Oudendijk from Refunct. He was busy measuring the size of hamburger cartons in relation to a series of chair frames welded together and turned upside down. We got talking and it quickly appeared we share an interest in the concept of waste. He said that the object of the workshop was to explore the use of things for a purpose for which they had decidedly not been designed. It was then that one could see how behaviour and form are logically identical. These hybrid Frankenstein structures emerging from a reprocessing of configurations and settling into their new life as the mundane objects of the everyday, chairs made of sawn through baths etc, carried with them the traces of previous territorialisation. *That* made them so resonant in their new function. Their reterritorialisation was partial and therefore to some extent potentially tragic or heroic. And it is precisely the indeterminacy of in the concept of "raw material" to which waste products have once more descended that interested us. Garbage is what has become useless in a particular way. It carries the spores of its use, it has been *used up* in a Heideggerian sense and it is worn out with reference to that particular use and as such it is returning to the ground trying to recover its indeterminacy. The perceptually rich, i.e. *those who can see possibilities* by inhabiting the virtual, do not respect the conventions of use, the univocality or indeed the mono-functional exhaustion of objects. They are omnivorous monsters. They are able to abstract the objects of the environment, whose purpose has been cast, and re-territorialise them to their own purpose. One of the most beautiful descriptions of this act of de- and reterritorialisation of the object in use, is given in Baudrillard's classic *The System of Objects*, he quotes Gilbert Simondon's account of the pertrol engine.[xxxii] I will not quote the story in full, but it recounts how the cylinder first received fins to aid the cooling process of the engine. These ribs, like the ribs in gothic architecture, suggested that they might be used structurally as well so as to lessen the necessary material needed to keep the cylinder working effectively. A similar if inverted version of the story could be told of the co-evolution of gothic structure and ornament. Such stories of co-evolution are precious emblems of Bergson's indeterminacy, working to fold uses into the space that is form-behaviour just as Alvar Aalto was often able to fold various uses into his architecture: $1 + 1 = n^n$.

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An observatory
So how does that work in concrete terms? What does a generous space look like? A generous space is a space that, in its morphological configuration and in its situational configuration, affords what Buber called "a good meeting". There is of course the generous gaze which approaches the experience of every space sympathetically and there is generous design, whereby the architect performs the complex dance of a well thought through *politics of use*, a careful prioritisation of uses. There is an infinite number of such spaces possible, they depend on attitude and context, intention and situation. But I want to describe one that might take us back to the beginning of this essay which was about observing people who are observing things. André Dekker, an artist and friend, works with a small group of artists calling itself Observatorium. They make "observatories". One of them was the so called bookcase house, or house for seclusion, a wooden structure proportioned according to the mathematical system devised by the monk-architect Dom Hans van der Laan. The bookcase house, a temporary structure, was made of made of thin plywood, structured so that the walls formed a series of 29 empty bookcases giving a notional thickness to the sides. The bookcases remained empty apart from a few paintings placed on the shelf with their "face" turned against the wall. Indeterminacy ruled. People were invited to inhabit the bookcase house for a while and asked to fill out a questionnaire. I was introduced to my friend after the project had ended. I have never actually been in the house. I have just been able to enjoy it from photographs and drawings. On the photographs one occasionally sees people in the process of wandering about or sitting quietly. Perhaps the observatory or bookcase house was a machine to observe the surrounding country-side in which it was placed. Perhaps it was an auto-observatory, whereby people *in* the structure and *around* it were invited to observe its changing spaces as they quietly walked about. Perhaps it was an observatory of the self. As one dwelt inside the emptiness of the house, one was, after all, confronted with the self in a very penetrating way. Perhaps it was an observatory of the imagination. I let my mind roam through the pictures I was shown. Perhaps it was all of these. There are many possibilities.

Jacob Voorthuis, Eindhoven, 22.03.2007

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[i] Deleuze, Pure Immanence, p. 49.
[ii] Gilles Deleuze, Nietzsche and Philosophy, (London: Continuum Books, 1986) pp. 104-111.
[iii] Compare the admirable definition of democracy which is a system of government which expressly avoids the temptation to become a dictatorship of the majority, as this would inevitably lead to an antidemocratic system, but pursues a form of government in which the power of the majority is explicitly geared to protecting the rights and duties of the minorities it is entrusted with. That is in fact the only condition in which a democracy is possible at all.

iv I use her C.S. Peirce's definition of the aesthetic, which is a discipline concerned with defininig and describing qualities that are either desirable or undesirable. Charles Sanders Peirce, "Lectures," The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. 5. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-58)

v For the concept of *affordance* see: J.J. Gibson, The ecological approach to visual perception. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979)

vi See David Summers, Real Spaces, World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism, (London: Phaidon Press, 2003)

vii Wim Nijenhuis, "De ruimte van de val, over dans, architectuur en lichaamsperspektief." (The space of the fall, about dance, architecture and the bodily perspective), consulted at http://home.hccnet.nl/j.w.nijenhuis, 2004, last consulted on 19.03.2007.

viii Although this specific point belongs to a different part of the project, it might be worth mentioning that Posession is best defined in terms of having the use of something as any other definition would likely provoke the beautiful and damning lines of the Dutch poet of emaciated poems Jan Arends, who rightly wrote that "no one on this earth has ever owned even a single grain of sand." (original poem in Dutch) Jan Arends, Vrijgezel op kamers: Verzameld werk, (Amsterdam : De Bezige 2003) In the same way, it is hard to see the investment of joy in any activity that does not at the basis of it presuppose a use even if that use is the process of enjoyment itself.

ix I use the word political in its Ruskinian sense painted with the brush of Bataille, namely the activity of prioritising activities within a budget of "energy" (a word I dislike). John Ruskin, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, (1849) preface and George Bataille, On Nietzsche, (London: Continuum, 2004) p. 30.

x Gilles Deleuze, Pure Immanence, Essays on a Life, (New York: Zone Books, 2001) pp. 48-49.

xi Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behaviour, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) pp. 124-8.

xii Merleau-Ponty, The Structure of Behaviour, p. 130.

xiii On this aspect of style see especially. Merleau-Ponty, The Visible and the Invisible, (Evanston, Norhtwestern University Press, 1968) p. 13, pp. 132-9, p. 179.

xiv On the nature of the decision as an emotionally informed rupture of a possible infinite series of logical injunctions and connections see Antonio Damasio, Descartes Error, Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain, (New York: Harper Collins, 2000) pp. 165-169.

xv This distinction between object and thing differs markedly from Heidegger whose thingliness remains attached to use as seen from the aspects of care. For a discussion on Heidegger's distinction between object and thing see: Jeff Malpas, Heidegger's Topology, Being, Place, World, (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2006) pp. 230-251.

xvi Louis Kahn on a Drawing entitled "A Room" The source for this drawing I have not been able to relocate..

xvii R.G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art, (Oxford: Oxford Univ Press 1938) p. 66

xviii Peter Sloterdijk, Sferen, (Amsterdam: Boom, 2003) pp. 107-157.

xix Bergson, Matter and Memory, (New York: Zone Books, 1991) p. 39

xx Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 32

xxi With regard to my earlier interest in the concepts of generosity in relation to architecture see my The Necessity of Architecture, a study of Edward Lacy Garbett's Theory of Architecture (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Leiden University, 1996) accessible on www.voorthuis.net/Garbett

xxii See on this point, Arthur Schopenhauer, Essays and Aphorisms, (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985) p.41

xxiii Gregory Bateson was very, if rather unfashonably fond of Russel and Whitehead's notion of logical typing as dealt with in their Principia Mathematica, (Cambridge: Cambridge University

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Press, 1910-13) 3 vols. Despite my scepsis for categories of thought, or perhaps because of that scepsis, I have become very charmed with this way of explaining the proces of thought.

[xxiv] Gregory Bateson, & Mary Cathering Bateson, Angel's Fear, Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred, (New York: Macmillan, 1987) pp. 69-81.

[xxv] http://www.voorthuis.net/Caribbean2/Name.htm

[xxvi] The Caribbean philosopher Frantz Fanon argued in 1956 that the truly awful aspect of slavery was that the slave owner objectified the slave-person to an object with a univocal use. Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture" in Fred Lee Hord, ed., I Am Because We Are, readings in Black Philosophy, (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1995) pp. 172-181.

[xxvii] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-oedipus, capitalism and schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983) see especially "The Process" and "The Territorial Machine; see also Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia, (Minneapolis, Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987) especially "1837, Of the Refrain"

[xxviii] Martin Buber, Ik en Jij, (Utrecht, Erven J. Bijleveld, 1998)

[xxix] Involution is the word that stands for the increasing sophistication of our movements as we grow, mature and practice our movements.

[xxx] Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 93.

[xxxi] Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. 31.

[xxxii] Jean Baudrillard, The System of Objects, (London: Verso, 2005), p.3.

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